魔術・予言・言葉の力：
中世アーサー王文学におけるマーリンの威光

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Magic, Prophecy and Word Power: Merlin's Authoritative Voice in the Middle Ages

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要旨

　魔術師マーリンにはアーサー王宮廷の騎士や王の言動にも影響を及ぼす言葉の力がある。中世ウェールズの伝説的予言者ミルズィン（Myrddin）が源泉とされているマーリンに関する伝説・文学作品は、ブリテン島内だけでなく、ヨーロッパ大陸へと広がっていき、ラテン語、フランス語、英語など、複数の言語で成文化された。このように地理的・言語的にも広範囲に発展をした中世アーサー王文学の中で、マーリンはブリテン島ケルト社会で実権を握っていたドルイド僧と同一視されることがある。その一方で、15 世紀後半サー・トマス・マロリー（Sir Thomas Malory）の『アーサー王の死』（*Le Morte Darthur*）におけるマーリンは、魔術師、予言者、ドルイド僧の範疇を超え、軍師のような一面も見せる。本稿では、マーリン像の起源と発展を確認した上で、彼の権威ある言葉が、ケルト文化やキリスト教などに強く影響されながらも、いかに騎士社会で異彩を放っているかについて論じる。

　Merlin, the magician from the Arthurian legends, uses influential words, which

coincides with his role as prophet for the future of the kingdom. This seems to indicate that Merlin has absolute authority. However, he is not a flawless prophet. When introducing the character, Michael Dames writes about Merlin that 'In short, despite his divine origins, he appears remarkably human'[1]. While Merlin has a supernatural background in terms of his birth, magic and prophetic skills, he falls in love with a female necromancer, Nimue. She confines Merlin under a huge rock, which results in Merlin's disappearance from the story. Dames' statement captures the gist of Merlin's characteristics. Nevertheless, without the character Merlin, the Arthurian legends could not have been developed from the Middle Ages up to the present[2]. Now, Merlin is widely known as the magician whose power influenced the reign of King Uther Pendragon and his son, Arthur. Merlin uses his authoritative words for controlling the nobles, in other words, his prophecies. This is why Merlin is regarded as not only a magician but also a prophet.

The character Merlin originates from 'the legendary Welsh seer Myrddin'[3]. Inspired by the Welsh legend of Myrddin, Geoffrey of Monmouth developed Merlin's stories into literary works in Latin in the twelfth century. After completing *Prophetiae Merlini* (*Prophecies of Merlin*, c. 1130), Geoffrey wrote *Historia Regum Britanniae* (*History of the Kings of Britain*, c. 1138), in which the first Arthurian legendary material is combined into a codified form[4]. Geoffrey's *Historia* influenced nobles in both Britain and France, triggering French writers to create imaginative romances. The Arthurian legends were eventually influenced by French court culture and philosophy, which are different from Britain's Celtic conventions. A late twelfth and early thirteenth-century French writer, Robert de Boron, focused in his *Merlin*

[1] Michael Dames, *Merlin and Wales: A Magician's Landscape* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2002), p.7.

[2] For a more detailed introduction to the development of Merlin from the Middle Ages to contemporary society, see Peter H. Goodrich 'Introduction' in *Merlin: A Casebook*, eds. by Goodrich, Peter H. and Raymond H. Thompson (New York: Routledge, 2003), pp.1–91.

[3] A. O. H. Jarman, 'The Merlin Legend and the Welsh Tradition of Prophecy', in *The Arthur of the Welsh: The Arthurian Legend in Medieval Welsh Literature*, eds., by Rachel Bromwich, A. O. H. Jarman and Brynley F. Roberts (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1991), p.117.

[4] See Kari Maund, *The Welsh Kings: Warriors, Warlords and Princes* (Stroud: History Press, 2006), p.22. Maund describes the strange birth situation of Ambrosius and his prophetic ability. This concerns one of the patterns of the Merlin legend in Arthurian myth.

on Merlin's individual personalisation, from his birth to the establishment of King Arthur. Apart from Robert de Boron, French Arthurian materials were also widely disseminated. A thirteenth-century compilation of Arthurian stories, the Vulgate Cycle, contains the prose *Merlin*, in which Merlin's love for Nimue is introduced. The fifteenth-century English knight Sir Thomas Malory adapted the figure of Merlin from the prose *Merlin* in his masterpiece *Le Morte Darthur* (Caxton version, 1485). As its literal meaning, 'The Death of Arthur', demonstrates, it recounts how Arthur becomes king and how he dies. Although the focus of the narrative is on Arthur and his knights, at the very beginning of the story, the magician Merlin dominates the main stage and controls Arthur's destiny. By looking at the brief chronological development of Merlin's portrayal, we can discern that Merlin is the central character in the entire mediaeval corpus of Arthurian legends and that the legend itself is structured and controlled by the emergence of Merlin the wizard. Anne Lawrence-Mathers introduces Merlin's power in the following way:

His [Merlin's] most familiar incarnation is that of a 'mage' of great power, who can appear and disappear at will, read minds and change physical appearances. These powers, together with apparently unlimited knowledge of past, present and future, enable him to guide the destinies of kings, to provide magical weapons and to prophesy the future of kingdoms. With his powers he ensures the birth of King Arthur, and then shapes him into an ideal, if tragically fated, ruler[5].

This passage sums up how Merlin demonstrates his power as a shape-shifter, intelligent predictor and rightful director. Malory's *Le Morte Darthur* also follows this template. Merlin's ability to predict the future guides the knights, and he can also provide 'magical weapons' in the story. Hence, knights in the Arthurian realm are subject to follow his advice without any doubt. While Merlin helps knights and the king to thrive in chivalric society, he prevents himself from directly participating

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[5] Anne Lawrence-Mathers, *The True History of Merlin the Magician* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012), p.1.

in battle. Merlin can suddenly disappear from the main stage without any notice and can return from abrupt absence, which means that his ability to guide the knights is unpredictable. Considering his 'great power', Merlin's magical skills have been considered as important for the knights in the Arthurian realm in relation to the succession of their knightly careers. However, Merlin's prophetic words are also changeable, depending on the circumstances.

Merlin's mysteriousness drives scholars' imaginations. Ward Rutherford writes of Merlin's figure, 'Of all characters in Arthurian legend Merlin is surely the strangest and the one who most unmistakably seems to wear the marks of the past'[6]. This shows how Merlin's character is covered by layers of complicated history. However, there is a way to explore Merlin's identity. The key word is druidism from the British Celts. Merlin is often seen as a druid figure. Michael Dames explains that 'In pagan Celtic Britain, the druid was poet, prophet and priest (druid means "magician" but may also come from Celtic *dru* "to be strong" plus Celtic *uid* "to see, to know")'[7]. As 'prophet' was one of the notable roles of druids, Merlin's character demonstrated their existence and appearance. Although Merlin's characteristics seem similar to those of druids from Celtic culture, their images are unknown and remain fully obscured, so that nobody is able to signify their specific identity. However, some have used druid figures for inspiration and creation of works. For example, according to Catherine Barnes Stevenson, druids were regarded as similar to Merlin, and their prophetic abilities inspired the imaginations of a number of writers in the nineteenth century.[8] Only

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[6] Ward Rutherford, *Celtic Mythology: The Nature and Influence of Celtic Myth from Druidism to Arthurian Legend* (San Francisco: Weiser Books, 2015), p.150. Rutherford also mentions Merlin's relation with druids by stating that 'He is another of those court druids, like Cathbad and Mag Roth, even though, according to Malory, he advises churchmen like the Archbishop of Canterbury'. (p.150)

[7] Dames, *Merlin and Wales*, p. 39. For another example, Miranda J. Green introduces the Irish druid Cathbadh, who had more influential authority than King Conchobar of Ulster. See Miranda J. Green, *Dictionary of Celtic Myth and Legend* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1992), pp. 86-87; James Mackillop, *Dictionary of Celtic Mythology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp.300-301.

[8] Catherine Barnes Stevenson, 'Druids, Bards, and Tennyson's Merlin', in *Merlin: A Casebook*, eds., by Goodrich, Peter H. and Raymond H. Thompson (New York: Routledge, 2003), pp. 361–77 (364).

Roman texts about Britain enable us to imagine what druids were like, for druids did not leave any writings of their own. This is the only way to examine and identify the reality of these mystical druids. Julius Caesar's commentaries on his Gallic Wars, in which the most reliable information on druids can be found, explains the following about druids, as Caesar writes:

> The Druids officiate at the worship of the gods, regulate public and private sacrifices, and give rulings on all religious questions. Large numbers of young men flock to them for instruction, and they are held in great honour by the people. They act as judges in practically all disputes, whether between tribes or between individuals, when any crime is committed, or a murder takes place, or a dispute arises about an inheritance or a boundary, it is they who adjudicate the matter and appoint the compensation to be paid and received by the parties concerned[9].

As this quotation shows, druids at that time were playing significant roles in terms of rulemaking, religion and education. In other words, from Caesar's perspective, druids had the ultimate power of decision-making, which means that their words must have had supremacy. This certainly provided inspiration for the creation of prophetic characters in oral literature. However, then again, from Caesar's perspective, druids did not devote themselves to knightly practice, as druids and knights were separate occupations. Despite the uncertainty of whether Merlin is exactly the same figure as a druid, the separation of the professions concerned with fighting and prophesising seems to argue for Merlin's distance from the actual fighting on the battlefield. In this way, Merlin's mystery can be solved by delving deeper into druids and their roles. However, there is still a reason why writers adhere rigidly to the use of Merlin for magic and prophecy. John Davies comments upon the relationship between Celt and the priesthood.

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[9] Caesar, *The Conquest of Gaul*, trans., by S. A. Handford rev., by Jane F. Gardner (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1982), p.140.

> The function of the priesthood was to propitiate the omnipresent magical powers and to organize the rituals which governed the activities of the community—that is, it was the priesthood which maintained and safeguarded the culture of the Celts.[10]

As Davies emphasises, the combination of magic and priesthood was fairly common among the Celtic people. Simultaneously, Davies' statement examines the attempt to protect Celtic indigenous religion by maintaining the priesthood. Druids were worshipped, but druidism was also performed by the people. This custom has led to the idea of creating the figure of Merlin to protect the Celtic tradition, especially by preserving the art of magic. It is inevitable that Merlin's obscurity has been maintained throughout the ages. In this context, much imagination has accompanied and shaped the character of Merlin.

Apart from druidism and its relation to Merlin, the use of magic started to appear in Celtic mythologies and stories from the mediaeval period onwards. One of the most significant examples of such characters is illustrated in the *Mabinogion*, a collection of mediaeval Welsh prose stories compiled in the twelfth–thirteenth century. In particular, the fourth episode, 'Math Son of Mathonwy', exhibits the shape-shifting ability. One of the main characters, Gwydyon, uses this ability in the following way:

> he conjured up twelve stallions, and twelve greyhounds, all black with white breasts, and twelve collars and leashes. Anyone who looked at the collars and leashes would think they were gold; moreover there was a saddle for each horse, and all the places that ought to have been iron were solid gold, and the bridles were of the same workmanship[11].

As this passage shows, transformation through the use of magic was already known in Wales. Gwydyon's magic presents the actual utilisation of power to change the

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[10] John Davies, *A History of Wales* (London: Penguin, 2007), pp.23–24.

[11] *The Mabinogion*, trans., by Jeffrey Gantz (London: Penguin, 1976), p.101.

shape of objects, so that magic actually influences people's lives. In addition to this, Math's magic stick and shape-shifting skill are also described:

> Math took his magic wand and struck Gilvaethwy so that the latter became a large hind; then quickly seized Gwydyon (who wanted to escape but could not) and struck him so that he became a stag[12].

Thus, Celtic culture kept residing in mediaeval Wales, as the concept of magic transformation was already there. As the *Mabinogion* showcases examples of shape-shifting, there was already a tradition in Celtic cultures whereby magic could control the knights' community and influence the destinies of the realm. However, the reason why magic and prophecy were frequently used in real life and in the literary world is still unknown. Wales was oppressed from the Roman invasion until the Norman Conquest. The people there always had to struggle to find their identity as either Britons or Welsh. In this situation, supernatural magic and prophecy provided a way for people to maintain hope. R. R. Davies argues that the use of prophecy was often connected to the figure of the magician Merlin. Davies continues as follows:

> Hope was the great theme of the Merlinic prophecies—hope of delivery from, and extermination of, the Saxons and hope of the advent of a messianic deliverer who would once more restore the Britons to their rightful control of the Island of Britain[13].

As this passage indicates, Merlin's prophecies are regarded as the hopes for the Britons. Therefore, the words of the prophet Merlin have been influencing society and culture. Davies' comment emphasises that, in the oppressed region, magic was the people's only hope for thinking about their future. Merlin was the appropriate object on which to focus this kind of desire. Evidently, Merlin appears in Welsh

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12) *The Mabinogion*, p.104.

13) R. R. Davies, *The Age of Conquest: Wales 1063–1415* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p.79.

narratives as Myrddin, in Geoffrey's *Historia* in Latin and in the Vulgate Cycle in French, all of which show that the character of Merlin, in terms of his image, role and magic, has been disseminated not only in Britain but also in Europe in a wider context. There is no language barrier for the subject of Merlin's emergence.

Merlin became popular in the English language in the fifteenth century, owing to Malory's accomplishment of writing *Le Morte Darthur*. Malory's contribution to spoken and written English is the fact that *Le Morte Darthur* regenerates Merlin's significance for the people who can read English, because the work itself is written in English prose. In it, Merlin is portrayed as the important character that created the Arthurian realm from the very beginning. Merlin's role in Malory is somewhat fixed to his image as a knowledgeable prophet. Robert de Boron and the Vulgate Cycle represented Merlin's childhood in detail, but Malory omitted it entirely. The first emergence of Merlin in Malory is when Uther Pendragon, Arthur's father, becomes sick and needs help. This scene recounts what Merlin is expected to do for the king. One of Uther's knights, Ulfius, suggests that he will find Merlin to obtain the remedy for the king's illness. The situation is described as follows:

> So Ulfius departed and by adventure he mette Merlyn in a beggars aray, and ther Merlyn asked Ulfius whome he soughte, and he said he had lytyl ado to telle hym.
> 'Well', saide Merlyn, 'I knowe whome thou sekest, for thou sekest Merlyn; therfore seke no ferther, for I am he. And yf kynge Uther wille wel rewarde me and be sworne unto me to fulfille my desyre, that shall be his honour and profite more than myn, for I shalle cause hym to have all his desyre[14].'

This conversation reveals Merlin's first role in *Le Morte Darthur*. Merlin is supposed to heal the King's mental disease, like a doctor. However, he disguises his identity as a 'beggar', so that Ulfius does not realise that he is actually Merlin. Merlin's

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[14] Thomas Malory, *The Works of Sir Thomas Malory*, ed. by Eugène Vinaver, 3rd edn, rev. by P. J. C. Field, 3 vols (Oxford: Clarendon, 1990), p.8. Henceforth, all references from this book will be cited in brackets.

unknown first appearance in *Le Morte Darthur* suggests that Merlin is an enigmatic character from the very beginning. His complicated but knowledgeable characteristics, which make people rely on him, resemble those of druids from the Celtic tradition, yet druids are not considered to appear in beggars' clothes. This truly sets the Celtic Merlin apart. Another aspect that can be derived from this is the fact that Merlin knows the future and therefore can predict all events concerning that realm. Stereotypically, without any detailed explanation, Malory uses Merlin's characteristic as prophet with a wide range of knowledge, including how to cure psychological illnesses. In accordance with this image, King Lot, one of the characters in *Le Morte Darthur*, describes Merlin as 'dreme-reder' (Malory, p. 18). The knights also understand Merlin's special talent. Therefore, the conversation between Ulfius and Merlin develops Malory's intended use of the magician, who has two specific roles: one is disguise and the other is his exceptional ability to prophesise. In Malory, Merlin is based upon the character from Old French sources, but Christian connotations are omitted and instead his foreshadowing skills are emphasised. By looking at his first appearance in Malory's *Le Morte Darthur*, we can see how Merlin's conventional prophetic skills are famously known even to the English-oriented country.

Malory's *Le Morte Darthur* also shows how Merlin creates his kingdom in accordance with his own imagination and wishes by using his own skills. This means that Merlin's powerful prophetic words keep affecting the direction in which the Arthurian society heads. The important events, such as Uther's invasion into Igraine's chamber, Igraine's pregnancy, Arthur's birth and his privileged obtainment of the sword from the stone, are meticulously organised and completed by Merlin's decisions. All these actions by Merlin create the circumstances that prove Arthur to be king of England. Merlin controls Arthur's destiny and manipulates the world, time and Arthur's legitimacy. This aim seems to welcome a new kingdom, which is different from Uther's realm. Nevertheless, Merlin cannot escape from the reality that Arthur is opposed by the lords who cannot agree to the idea that such a child is to govern the country, which inevitably leads to the war between Arthur and the other strong nobles. In this situation, Merlin also showcases his war tactics and

military knowledge. War and magicians seem to have no direct connection, however, Malory's *Le Morte Darthur* signifies this relationship by illustrating Merlin's performance, regarding both his swift movements and his deployment of the army:

> Ryght so Merlion passed the see well vitayled bothe by watir and by londe. And whan he com to the see he sente home the footemen agayne, and toke no mo with hym but ten thousand men on horsebake, the moste party of men of armys; and so [s]hipped and passed the see into Inglonde and londed at Dovir. And thorow the wytte of Merlion he ledde the oste northwarde the pryvéyst wey that coude be thought, unto the foreste of Bedgrayne, and there in a valey lodged h[e]m secretely. Than rode Merlion to Arthure and to the two kynges, and tolde hem how he had spedde, whereof they had grete mervayle that ony man on erthe myght spede so sone to go and com. (Malory, pp. 24–25)

This quotation crucially demonstrates that Merlin commands soldiers towards the right place and right situation. Merlin is a prophet and not a military captain or supervisor on this campaign, but he suddenly appears as a specialist deploying knights, exceeding in his talent for military tactics. The knights are astonished by the fact that Merlin could so smoothly and speedily make the knights move. This image is not in accordance with that of the druids from the Celtic tradition. Druids specifically provide prophecies. Technically speaking, using intelligence and tactics may indicate the possibility that Merlin is a war tactician. For instance, in the fifteenth century, Christine de Pizan's *Le Livre des Fais d'armes et de chevallerie* (*The Book of Deeds of Arms and of Chivalry*, c. 1410) had a huge impact on French and English nobles in relation to battle management. Fifteenth-century English society necessitated the use of practical manoeuvres to survive in that period[15]. Notwithstanding, Merlin's role expands from being only a prophet to an

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[15] England and France in the fifteenth century were engulfed in the War of the Roses. For further analysis, see A. J. Pollard, *The Wars of the Roses*, 3rd edn. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013); Nigel Saul, *For Honour and Fame: Chivalry in England, 1066–1500* (London: Pimlico, 2011), pp.325–46.

indispensable war leader. Merlin and war are closely related in Malory's *Le Morte Darthur*.

Merlin's powerful words concerning war have an effect on Arthur's decision-making process. Merlin surpasses Arthur in leading the knights in battle, despite Arthur's kingly status, which might have triggered an opportunity for Merlin to provoke more battles to win. Nonetheless, Merlin finds it more important to limit the war. Merlin seems to manipulate the world and Arthur himself, but strangely his words explicitly imply anti-war connotations. When Arthur nearly triumphs over his enemies, he tries to annihilate them. However, Merlin says the following to Arthur:

> 'Thou hast never done. Hast thou nat done inow? Of three score thousande thys day hast thou leffte on lyve but fyftene thousand! Therefore hit ys tyme to sey "Who!" for God ys wroth with the for thou wolt never have done. For yondir a eleven kynges at thys tyme woll nat be overthrowyn, but and thou tary on them ony lenger thy fortune woll turne and they shall encres. And therefore withdraw you unto youre lodgynge and reste you as soon as ye may, and rewarde youre good knyghtes with golde and with sylver, for they have well deserved hit. There may no riches be to dere for them, for of so fewe men as ye have there was never men dud more worshipfully in proues than ye have done to-day: for ye have macched thys day with the beste fyghters of the worlde'. (Malory, pp. 36–37)

This passage includes three elements to be discussed. First, Merlin's attempt to stop Arthur from committing useless acts of war is emphasised. This includes the fact that Merlin can be regarded as another type of druid. However, Caesar does not particularly mention druids' war-leading skills, although they had magnificent political power. This may have caused the circumstances whereby Merlin could control battles to enhance their effectiveness, and yet, Merlin teaches Arthur that meaningless war results in miserable consequences. Secondly, Merlin knows what sort of reward warriors need after battles. In Malory's *Le Morte Darthur*, Arthur tries to give his knights properties after triumphing over the lords in battle. Thirdly,

Merlin mentions 'God' in relation to losing knights in the meaningless war. This causes a huge confusion. He is basically not a devout religious man, for his lineage is half-devil, while simultaneously he had a pious mother[16]. In this way, Merlin's body and mind are literally half-devil and half-pious human. Merlin seems to have possessed aspects similar to those of druids from the Celtic tradition, but in Malory's *Le Morte Darthur* he is created in line with Christian philosophy. Merlin's prophecies have the power to give people of Celtic culture hope for being independent from the control of the Romans and the Normans, but by his actual portrayal in *Le Morte Darthur* he is destined to appear as one of the messengers of the Christian God, who opposes the senseless war. Stephen Knight develops the argument by focusing on Merlin's knowledgeable and authoritative portrayal from the Middle Ages to modern society. In this fashion, Knight concludes that

> Malory seems to have no interest in Merlin as a figure whose knowledge, past and future, could run through the whole story and who could act as a transmitter of Christian morality; rather he uses him effectively early in the story to establish the Arthurian platform on which both knightly adventures and the strongly moralized late action will develop. Merlin's knowledge establishes Arthur's power, but does not go very far in supervising or, especially, criticizing it[17].

As Merlin has inherited his characteristics from the Celtic past, Christianity is not particularly included in his philosophy. However, he also has a Christian aspect because French writers added religious connotations to his birth background. He had a devil father and a pious Christian mother. However, in Malory's narrative, this fact is not so significantly described, although Nimue, the female necromancer, mentions that Merlin is a 'devyls son' (Malory, p. 126). Thus, Malory's Merlin maintains his

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[16] Norris J. Lacy ed., *Lancelot-Grail: The Old French Arthurian Vulgate and Post-Vulgate in Translation*, 5 vols (New York: Garland, 1993–96), vol I, p.172.

[17] Stephen Knight, *Merlin: Knowledge and Power through the Ages* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009), p.96.

ability to control the destinies of the knights. As Knight argues, Merlin does not overtly claim that Arthur goes in the wrong direction, although he vaguely mentions that Arthur's marriage to Guinevere turns out to be a failure. Malory's Merlin suggests that his prophecy can move the knights' destinies, but that the actions of the knights are totally self determined.

Merlin, known as Myrddin in mediaeval Wales, has been changing in terms of his role and appearance, yet his ability—prophecy—has not been removed from his characteristics. The literary history of Merlin shows how his power of prediction has been inherited throughout the ages. First, the legendary Welsh druidic poet Myrddin was featured in local poems. Then, Geoffrey of Monmouth adapted Myrddin in his pseudo-British chronology *Historia Regum Britanniae*. Thereafter, French writers such as Robert de Boron created the humanistic aspects of Merlin, and Malory's *Le Morte Darthur* displayed the significance of the magician's role in English prose. This background explains how Merlin's important role has developed without any geographical limitations. At least four languages—Welsh, Latin, French and English—were used to delineate the magician's exploits in Arthurian society.

To summarise, this essay has shown that Merlin is also used as a leader in war or battle. There was conflict between the Lancastrian and Yorkist houses in England in the fifteenth century. Malory's *Le Morte Darthur* is also related to the struggle to protect the Arthurian realm from enemies. To this end, Merlin's assistance of Arthur's army is clearly illustrated in detail. His ability to organise the knights is extraordinary. In addition to this, Merlin is able to stop the meaningless, excessive battles. Indeed, this is derived from the French sources, and Malory could have omitted it but he did not. This may mean that Malory needed Merlin to control battles as well as organise the realm itself. By doing this, Merlin's authority would be increased in Arthurian society, so that the hope for the British Celts would remain. There are a number of elements in Merlin that delineate Welsh identity. The Roman and Norman invasions of Britain threatened the British indigenous culture and language. Druidism might have been considered as a dangerous form of worship by the Romans. Celtic religion and tradition were on the verge of extinction. Druids were threatened by the Romans, like how Merlin himself was confined by Nimue,

who was written into the legends by a French writer. The matter is further complicated because Christian aspects have been added to Merlin's birth by French writers. He had a devil father and pious Christian mother, which gives Merlin a complicated identity. Still, the exploration of Merlin's authoritative words and prophecies entices profound arguments about how people expressed their thoughts through specific characters, Merlin in this case. Additionally, Malory's *Le Morte Darthu*r provided the appropriate opportunity to mix Arthurian Celtic materials with French court culture and chivalry, and Christian divinity; this can be observed in its miscellaneous knightly, courtly and religious episodes. Therefore, Merlin, the magician and prophet, has been reflecting the historical background of various periods, keeping his words powerful regardless of the different languages in which they appear.

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