



The Book of Arthur: Lost Tales from the Round Table: The Lost Legends of King Arthur and His Knights of the Round Table

John Matthews

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The tales of Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table are universally known and loved. Countless retellings exist, based for the most part on Sir Thomas Malory's great work, *Le Morte d'Arthur*. Yet Malory drew on only a fraction of the vast cycles of stories that circulated throughout the Middle Ages. Many of them are as every bit as exciting as those we know so well but have been almost completely overlooked, remaining lost in dusty tomes of 19th- and early 20th-century scholarship.

The Book of Arthur offers an extensive selection of those 'forgotten tales' together with an introduction detailing their origins, the traditions that gave rise to them and their place in the Arthurian tradition. They include the adventures of Sir Jaufre in his romantic quest for the fair Brunnisend, and the story of Gawain's strange birth, his upbringing among poor folk and his final rise to Emperor of Rome. There is also a range of the earliest accounts of Arthur, deriving from the Celtic storytelling tradition. Here is the original Arthur, represented in such powerful tales as 'The Life of Merlin' and 'The Tale of Lanval'. Also included is the saga of 'Melora and Orlando', in which we meet King Arthur's daughter, and the first modern retelling of the strange and wondrous romances from medieval Ireland, 'The Crop-eared Dog' and 'The visit of the Grey-hammed Lady'.

This fascinating compendium of lore, adventure, magic and romance will extend the knowledge of Arthur and his knights far beyond hitherto known and familiar boundaries. In so doing, it will redefine many of the accepted myths and legends surrounding the charismatic figure of Arthur.

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Date : Published May 28th 2003 by Robson Books Ltd (first published May 28th 2002)

ISBN : 9781843336129

Author : John Matthews

Format : Hardcover 416 pages

Genre : Fantasy, Historical, Historical Fiction, Mythology, Arthurian, Fiction



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Laurel Bradshaw says

A nice collection of little-known stories (mostly post-Malory), translated and paraphrased by John Matthews. I intend to purchase this book.

Lisa says

2008 - Read many of the stories. Not terribly engaging.

2011 - picked up again, in between two of Mary Stewart's four Arthurian books. At least I have a little more perspective now. These tales are truly built from the oral legends. If I can slow down and make myself "hear" them as if I were in the 11th century being entertained by these tales, I'm a little more understanding of their style. We'll see if I can increase my star-rating when I've finished them all. I have no interest in finishing these - again. Library donation.

Meadow Frisbie says

A lot has been told of King Arthur. And here is a new collection of stories told between bards and villages for centuries.

All the stories have been translated for this volume and each one brings a new idea and adventure to the life of Arthur and all his faithful knights, friends and family. They contain monsters and sword fights, fair maidens and adventure. All are about 5-10 pages long, so great for a quick mediaeval story.

Kim says

An interesting book with many of the little-known Arthurian tales. I certainly never knew of stories that included a daughter for Arthur -- he usually has a pack of sons to contend with...

Carolyn says

These are Arthurian tales - not exactly lost, but overlooked, not included in the canon - and many are B-stories, knock-offs, told by lesser bards. But that is what makes them so interesting - they fill out the picture of an oral tradition of story-telling, tale weaving, that changed with every telling and every audience. Definitely makes for a richer fabric of legend. (Matthews' notes are especially good and complete the picture.)

Danny Alvarez says

If you're into Arthurian legend, this is a really good read. Lot's of pre-Christian influence stories.
