

The Politics of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *The History of the Kings of Britain*

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My research deals with the transmission of political thinking found within Geoffrey of Monmouth's twelfth-century chronicle, *The History of the Kings of Britain*, to later works of the Arthurian tradition. The research I conducted involved reading history, focused on the 12th-century period that Geoffrey wrote in, and literary criticism examining his work and its relationship to other Arthurian literature. From this research I drafted an article that shares my results suitable for an interdisciplinary journal such as *Crossing Borders*. In the article, I explore the social and political climate of the twelfth-century period Geoffrey wrote in, explain how those politics were incorporated into his *Historia* about the ancient British kings, and finally consider how those politics continue to manifest in later works about King Arthur. In the process of my research and writing, I made two discoveries: first, some aspects of the original politics that characterized Geoffrey's account of Arthur survived beyond his history and others did not, and, second, the King Arthur stories have been utilized politically long after Geoffrey. The value of this research is that it reveals how plot, character, and even political themes continue to speak across time and place. Specifically, my research shows that although the political and social institutions that produced Geoffrey's *History* no longer exist, the socio-political themes of that time are so ingrained into the story of Arthur that later works in the tradition often adapt them to new political situations. In our current society where politics and political leadership change

rapidly, I maintain it is important to track the politics reflected in our literary culture and to understand how King Arthur is relevant even in democracies like ours.