

# Images of Legendary Figures, Genre, Toponymy: The Study of Mary Stewart's Arthurian Romance

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**Abstract** This paper focuses on Mary Stewart's Arthurian Saga pentalogy that represents the most significant stage in her writer's career. For a comprehensive study of Stewart's Arthurian Romance, the descriptive and historical methods in the collection and systematization of language material are applied. The study also reviews some elements of analysis and synthesis. The author of the article has made an attempt to specify the genre of Stewart's Arthurian Romance and analyse the main characters of the novels (Merlin, King Arthur, Mordred), with particular attention being paid to the place names that are considered from historical, geographical and linguistic points of view. The novels straddle the boundary between the historical novel and the fantasy genre. It is proposed to employ the new term 'historical-fantastic novel' to define the genre of the Arthurian pentalogy. M. Stewart combines a traditional idealization of the Arthurian legend, a detailed historical setting, and a vivid form of characterization. The novelist proposes the realistic depiction of Merlin: he is an ordinary human, having the visionary ability, but not a magician. Stewart's King Arthur is definitely idealized and portrayed as a wise politician and a fair ruler. Mordred is depicted as a pawn of fate following the path of self-destructive behaviour. In the novels native Celtic and Latinised Celtic toponyms are used along with modern English geographical names.

**Key words** Mary Stewart; Arthurian legends; fantasy; toponyms

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### **Introduction: Mary Stewart's Arthurian Pentalogy**

Mary Stewart (born Mary Florence Elinor Rainbow; 17 September 1916—9 May 2014) is a popular English novelist whose first books were published in the 1950s. They are considered romantic suspense novels. These novels are known for their settings, many in some exotic locations: Greece, Spain, etc. However, Mary Stewart is best known for her Arthurian Romance. All the five novels—*The Crystal Cave* (1970), *The Hollow Hills* (1973), *The Last Enchantment* (1979), *The Wicked Day* (1983) and *The Prince and the Pilgrim* (1995) portray Dark Age Britain (the fifth—sixth centuries). The characters of the novels are the heroes of the Arthurian legend—Merlin, King Arthur, Ygraine, Mordred, king Vortigern and others.

M. Stewart started writing her novels at the peak of her writer's career. The novels aroused keen interest and quite favorable responses in English and American literary criticism. For example, such researchers as Beverly Taylor, Elisabeth Brewer, Raymond Henry Thompson and others gave highest assessment of M. Stewart's novels. In Russia Mary Stewart became particularly popular after a Russian literary scholar Valentina Ivasheva first published a short review of the first three novels. V. Ivasheva called Mary Stewart "the best model of a British intellectual and a patriot" (Ivasheva 5). In her review V. Ivasheva noted that "at the beginning of the 1970s the problem of 'Englishness' was set in an unexpected form and great artistic expression by Mary Stewart, one of the most popular contemporary English novelists" (Ivasheva 6). The term "Englishness" relates to England, its people and culture. This term refers to the quality, state or characteristic of being English, to the features of the English national identity, which have distinguished the English people from other peoples for many centuries. For V. Ivasheva Mary Stewart contributed significantly to the process of English identity formation.

The British Empire had colonies and other territories around the world. At its peak, the British Empire stretched over one-fourth of the earth's surface. England was the largest empire in the world. However, in the twentieth century the British faced with the demise of their country on the world stage. Great Britain lost its colonies and faced with the Americanization of its society and with the prospect of integration into Europe. Moreover, some people in postwar-Britain began to look more closely at their national identity and their national history. Therefore, I think, Mary Stewart looked back upon the remote legendary past of King Arthur to show the former might and greatness of England.

Her husband, Sir Frederick Stewart, was Chairman of the Geology Department of Edinburgh University. He was a geologist and a historian. Sir Frederick Stewart conducted archeological excavations and learnt a lot about archaeological excavation sites at locations inhabited during the Dark Ages. There is no doubt that M. Stewart was aware of the results of the excavations.

### **Defining the Genre of the Arthurian Romance**

M. Stewart has successfully combined the legends with the historical background, employing the data of modern archeological research. The novelist tries to link the legends with some historical facts. As I have said, M. Stewart's Arthurian novels straddle the boundary between the historical novel and the fantasy genre.

A professor and Arthurian scholar Raymond Henry Thompson interviewed Mary Stewart in 1989. At that time of the interview, M. Stewart lived in the village of Loch Awe in Scotland. Thompson asked her a question: How do you perceive your four Arthurian novels in relation to your other work? The novelist said: "I'd always wanted to write a historical novel. One of my main interests, as you will notice in my modern thrillers, was Roman history. I'd been to look at the Roman sites in England many a time, and tried to recreate things in my mind. Thus when I finally decided to write a historical novel, Roman Britain seemed the obvious place to start" (Thompson, *Taliesin's Successors*). As can be seen from the above, Mary Stewart regards her novels as historical ones.

Stewart's Arthurian novels have received a wide range of interpretations by literary scholars. British literary critics Beverly Taylor and Elizabeth Brewer state that Mary Stewart's "first three Arthurian novels are considered as quasi-historical novels" (13). While analysing *The Crystal Cave* they admit that "the characters are depicted in terms of modern psychology and moral attitudes, and set against the background of a romanticised fifth-century Romano-British society" (303). The researchers stated that "Mary Stewart's trilogy, in idealizing Arthur and making him a romantic hero, belongs to the older tradition of Arthurian literature, though in placing him in a fifth-century setting she takes advantage of recent scholarly research" (305).

The Russian researcher V. Ivasheva classifies Stewart's novels as historical. In addition, Raymond Henry Thompson comes up with a similar suggestion. In his book *The Return from Avalon* he views Stewart's Romance as "historical novels" (33).

The question I would like to raise in the article is "Do M. Stewart's Arthurian novels belong to historical fiction?" Mary Stewart pays special attention to the

image of 'local colour'. She depicts the life of the Early Middle Ages and explores the way medieval man perceives the world. The novelist paints the nature and landscape in bright colours. Thus, Mary Stewart directly follows the literary traditions built on by Walter Scott, the founder of the genre of the historical novel. Stewart's desire to reconstruct the past in all its originality is inspired by English Romanticism.

Describing the events of the remote past, M. Stewart pictures some historical figures, kings Vortigern and Ambrosius, queen Clotilde, that are minor characters in the novels. Fictitious characters are main characters in Stewart's novels. This is what relates Stewart's novels with Walter Scott's novels. Thus, it should be noted that there are some elements of the historical novel in M. Stewart's novels.

Currently, most of researchers consider that M. Stewart's Arthurian Romance belongs to the fantasy genre. An Arthurian scholar Dr. John Joseph Doherty thinks that Mary Stewart wrote a fantasy series. The researcher assumes that the novels are grounded in historical fact in a well-realised fifth-century Britain. Thus, they would seem to belong to the historical genre. Dr. Doherty states that by choosing Merlin as a narrator M. Stewart has written a fantasy series'. Kristina Hildebrand in *The Female Reader at the Round Table: Religion and Women in Three Contemporary Arthurian Texts* writes the following: "Mary Stewart has written a large number of works, but her Arthurian novels are the only ones which may be defined as fantasy" (68). The Russian literary scholar and translator Evgeny Zharinov also thinks that Mary Stewart's novels belong to the fantasy genre. However, Zharinov notes that "both Walter Scott and John Tolkien can be considered as the prominent figures in the fantasy genre" (320). Zharinov believes that "by continuing the romantic literary traditions of W. Scott and J. Tolkien, some contemporary authors, who write fantasy books, combine both the literary historical mystifications of the 'Scottish romanticist', and the mythological arrangement of the Oxford professor" (321).

It is beyond argument that Stewart's novels have some fantasy genre elements. According to the rules of the fantasy genre, Mary Stewart's novels depict the past events. The novelist tells about the age of chivalry. The novels are based on the Arthurian legend. In addition, there is always a quest that is a mandatory, primary element of the fantasy genre. In mythology and literature, a quest is a journey towards a goal. It serves as a plot device and frequently as a symbol. In literature, the object of quest requires great exertion on the part of the hero who has to overcome many obstacles and travel a lot. For example, in *The Hollow Hills* Merlin learns that Magnus Maximus (also known as Macsen Wledig), Western Roman Emperor, possessed a sword. Then, Merlin sets out in search of the sword

that he finds in a temple of Mithras in Wales. In fantasy, there is a well-known scheme of the quest, for example, Frodo Baggins's quest to destroy the One Ring in *The Lord of the Rings*. Thus, a quest is an important element of the fantasy genre. Nevertheless, Stewart's novels lack some primary plot elements of the fantasy fiction.

Many works within the fantasy genre take place in imaginary worlds where magic and magical creatures are common. Fantasy fiction uses magic and supernatural phenomena as a primary plot element. Elements of the supernatural and the fantastic are mandatory elements of fantasy books. However, in Stewart's novels there are no supernatural and fantastic elements, no magic neither witchcraft. For example, Merlin uses his engineering skills to rebuild Stonehenge, not magic power. Merlin also helps King Uther Pendragon enter Tintagel Castle by stealth, not by magic power. "There was no enchantment about our entry into Tintagel, only disguise, and human treachery" (Stewart, *The Hollow Hills* 24).

In addition, in the novels there are no mythical and magical creatures or beasts: dwarfs, goblins, elves, dragons and others. As usual, such mythical creatures exist in almost all fantasy books. Therefore, I think that M. Stewart's novels do not belong to the fantasy fiction genre. It is quite difficult to categorize her novels neatly. I think her novels are not "pure fantasy." The novels can be classified as the novels with a peculiar genre that combine the historical novel and fantasy genre. Some researchers think Stewart's novels belong to historical fantasy. Nevertheless, I do not agree with them because historical fantasy is a sub-genre of fantasy. Historical fantasy incorporates fantastic elements (such as magic) into the narrative. However, there are no supernatural and fantastic elements in Stewart's novels. In my research, I have come up with a new term "historical-fantastic novels."

In M. Stewart's romance, there are also some elements of the Gothic novel. Incest is a frequent theme in the Gothic novel. At the start of his reign, King Arthur unwittingly commits incest with his half-sister Morgause, who becomes pregnant with Mordred. The description of the dark and gloomy castles of Morgause and Morgan le Fay is also an element of Gothic fiction. In addition, Mary Stewart continues traditions of a "bildungsroman"—"novel of formation," "novel of education," or "coming-of-age story." The author focuses on the psychological and moral growth of the protagonists (Merlin and Arthur) from youth to adulthood.

### **The Main Characters**

In the first three novels of the pentology, Merlin is the protagonist and narrator. According to the legend, Merlin is the great magician and wizard, the guardian

of Arthur. Merlin uses his magic arts to help those he is protecting. His father is believed to be an incubus, a demon in male form who often lies upon sleeping women in order to have sexual intercourse with them. Merlin's mother is a mortal woman.

In Mary Stewart's version, Merlin's father is Aurelius Ambrosius, the Roman war leader. Therefore, Merlin is Arthur's cousin, because Aurelius Ambrosius is Uther Pendragon's brother. This is a very interesting and realistic interpretation of the legend.

Stewart creates the figure of Merlin by showing him an ordinary human. Stewart's Merlin is not a magician but a prophet, "the voice of the god." Merlin is nothing without the power of the god: "I had found myself to be an empty husk; blind and deaf as men are blind and deaf; the great power gone" (Stewart, *The Hollow Hills* 36). Merlin is upset and depressed when he is deprived of his communication with the god. Kristina Hildebrand points out that "many of the magical acts of the traditional Merlin are changed into feats of skillful engineering" (Hildebrand 68). One should emphasize the realistic depiction of Merlin in Stewart's Arthurian Saga. British researchers B. Taylor and E. Brewer have also noted this realism in *The Return of King Arthur*.

The image of the legendary King Arthur and his name is linked to one of the turning points in the history of Britain. His image as well as images of other characters in Mary Stewart's novels are depicted amidst Ancient Britain after the Romans left it. Arthur is one of the main characters in the three novels: *The Hollow Hills*, *The Last Enchantment* and *The Wicked Day*. King Arthur emerges from the pages of the novel *The Last Enchantment* as a mighty monarch.

It is known that the Romans left the British soil a rich cultural heritage. Mary Stewart supports the version according to which the name "Arthur" has a Celtic and Roman origin. "This is a name meaning 'Bear' in Celtic... I tried the names over to myself, in Latin and then in the Celtic tongue. Artorius Ambrosius, last of the Romans... Artos Emrys, first of the British..." (Stewart, *The Hollow Hills* 168-169). Thus, Mary Stewart combines the Roman and Celtic origins in the image of King Arthur. From the moment of his conception until the enthronement, Stewart creates an aura of romance and mystery in the image of King Arthur. "Even then his was a personality that gathers legend as a drip-stone gathers lime" (Stewart, *The Hollow Hills* 350).

According to a Russian researcher G.A. Kozlova, in the relationship between Merlin and Arthur "M. Stewart implements the traditional features of the Bildungsroman ('novel of formation, education, culture', or 'coming-of-age story'),

and its main theme closely echoes the relationship between Galapas and Merlin as well as between Belezius and Merlin” (104). However, the novelist comes from the fact that the education of a wise ruler must be different from the prophet and teacher education. Merlin does not try to teach Arthur as once he was taught by Galapas. Art, music, medicine, knowledge of machines—all this passes by the young Arthur. Like Merlin, Arthur has a love of learning and foreign languages. Therefore, in Brittany communicating with the residents of the mountains, Arthur begins to study the ancient language of their ancestors. In the image of King Arthur from his early age, we can observe the distinctive features of the true knight and ideal ruler, who dearly loves the people of Britain. The very presence of King Arthur gives strength to the wounded, and comfort to the dying.

In *The Hollow Hills* young Arthur appears as a brave warrior, full of ideas and plans related to the upcoming battles. However, he has to wage wars against his enemies not so much as gaining his cherished goals or seizing new lands but defending the independence of Britain and bringing peace and calmness into the lives of his fellow citizens. It should be noted that in contrast to Merlin, the romantic image of young Arthur is disconnected from ordinary people.

Mary Stewart accompanies the acts of young Arthur with the romantic symbols of goodness and light: Arthur is portrayed in a white coat sitting on a white horse. The novelist embellishes the image of King Arthur and subtly examines the path of his spiritual quest, creating a believable character. Stewart definitely idealizes the legendary king and the role that he played in the history of Britain. Idealizing and making Arthur a Romantic hero, M. Stewart continues the ancient Arthurian tradition—she depicts the king as a strong, wise and fair ruler.

King Arthur is a main character of *The Last Enchantment* where he is represented in a different way than in *The Hollow Hills*. The image of King Arthur overflows with pride and confidence, experience and maturity come to him. He is capable of weighing the consequences of his own actions and take an unbiased look at the real world.

Arthur is represented as an astute, visionary and true leader who is busy at implementing his public administration plans. He embodies the formidable greatness of the monarch. The image of the warrior king is replaced by the image of the fair king who is inspired by a higher purpose to defend his country. Like his mentor Merlin, Arthur is quite indifferent to Christianity. The ceremony of the coronation according to the Christian tradition he perceives as a mandatory procedure that he has to undergo in order to win recognition from the public. Arthur’s primary focus is on the stalwart devotion to his people and the protection of the national interests

as well as respect for customs, traditions and beliefs.

It is worth noting that King Arthur serves as a protector of ordinary people, on the one hand, and the “Sword of Justice” to the nobility, on the other hand. Thus, the Society of gallant Knights of the Round Table established by King Arthur is a sort of Supreme Court. The representatives of the nobles and rulers who violate the laws of the kingdom, and neglect the interests of the people are severely punished. For example, King Urien of Gorre is depicted as a ruler who break the state laws. King Arthur is merciless to those whom he sees as a threat to peace and security.

A Russian literary critic G.A. Kozlova states that in *The Last Enchantment* “Mary Stewart’s writing skills as a novelist of deeply psychological line are disclosed in the internal characteristics of the characters, the psychological motivation of their actions, which leads to deepening of the lyrical element in the novel” (126).

The greatness of a wise ruler is combined in the image of King Arthur with the cardinal virtues - prudence, fortitude, temperance, justice. In *The Last Enchantment* Arthur is represented in the image of a humanist king whose philosophy of life lies in the following idea: “. . . But a man must do right, even to his own hurt” (402). Mary Stewart especially focuses on wisdom and noble qualities of King Arthur: “There was something in the smile that did not speak of youth and power at all. But of a wisdom perhaps greater, because more purely human ...” (332). Therefore, he is reconciled with the absence of his heir; he forgives his wife Guinevere and his friend Bedevere, considering them innocent in their fatal love. King Arthur realizes the depth of his own loneliness and finds the strength and serenity to accept it. The novelist tactfully describes the tragic loneliness of King Arthur. His loneliness is the result of unhappy marriage and life. Prophecy of Merlin concerning the misfortune in Arthur’s marriage to Guinevere has come true: the first Arthur’s wife dies during childbirth, Arthur’s second marriage is unhappy—Guinevere remains childless.

In *The Wicked Day* the image of King Arthur should be viewed through the lens of social and political relations with the rulers of other countries (Theodoric—a ruler of the Western Roman Empire, Childebert—a Frankish king, Justinian—a Byzantine Emperor). This is a significant achievement of the novelist in a realistic interpretation of the image of King Arthur. Mary Stewart perfectly reveals the dignity of King Arthur as a politician. For example, during the negotiations with Cerdic, the king of the West Saxons, Arthur is portrayed as a subtle diplomat. “For a beginning, the discussion kept mainly to home matters, trade and markets, and a possible revision, in the future, of the boundary between the kingdoms. Only as a corollary to this, the talk turned eventually on the possibility of mutual military



aid” (259). In *The Wicked Day* Arthur faces complicated internal struggle and tries to overcome hostility to his illegitimate son, Mordred, caused by the realization that Mordred should be his “punishing sword of Destiny.” Stewart describes King Arthur as a very cautious and prudent man. He learns Mordred usurped the throne, concluded an alliance with the Saxons and took the Queen Guinevere from Camelot to Kaerleon. Arthur accepts it with dignity and exercises much forbearance.

Thus, the image of King Arthur created by Mary Stewart is complex and multifaceted. In world literature, there are numerous versions of the image of the legendary king—a warrior, a defender, a deceived husband, a wise old man, a despotic king, etc. King Arthur in Stewart’s novels does not resemble any of those images. He is portrayed as a wise politician, a humanist king, a fair ruler, as well as a lonely man. M. Stewart “presents Arthur as a strong, competent and just king” (Taylor, Brewer, *The Return* 305). This image of King Arthur is in no way divorced from the literary tradition, but on the contrary, it is a logical continuation of replenishing and enriching it with qualitatively new philosophical and psychological motifs. Such is the image of King Arthur as seen through the eyes of Mary Stewart.

Another character of the Arthurian Legend is Mordred (Welsh: Medraut or Medrawt), the protagonist of the novel *The Wicked Day*. Mordred is best known as a notorious traitor who fought King Arthur at the Battle of Camlann, where he was killed and Arthur fatally wounded. In Scottish tradition, there is sympathy for Mordred. For example, in *The Chronica Gentis Scotorum* (*Chronicles of the Scottish People*), the first substantial work of Scottish history, that was written by a Scottish chronicler John of Fordun (XIV c.), Mordred was regarded as the legitimate heir to the throne of Britain. According to John of Fordun, Arthur was an illegitimate child, while Mordred was the legitimate son of Lot and Anna, who is Uther’s sister. Making reference to Geoffrey of Monmouth, John of Fordun states: “Geoffroy, however, writes that Modred and Galwanus were the sons of Anna, sister of Aurelius, Arthur’s uncle. He says: Loth, who, in the time of Aurelius Ambrosius, had married his sister, of whom he begat Galwanus and Modred [...] I believe it be nearer the truth that Modred [...] was Arthur’s sister’s son” (102-103).

In *The Wicked Day* Mary Stewart portrays Mordred as a pawn of fate unlike many tales that paint him as the villain. Mordred is able to make some improvements on himself but he follows the path of self-destructive behavior.

In *The Hollow Hills* Arthur sleeps with Morgause before she marries Lot of Lothian. This makes Mordred her eldest son, whereas in the legend he was her youngest. In *The Last Enchantment* Merlin says that he never met and spoke to Mordred. Thus when M. Stewart wrote *The Wicked Day*, she could not let Mordred

meet Merlin.

It is interesting to note that M. Stewart visited Orkney as part of her research, when she was writing *The Wicked Day*. The writer placed the home of Mordred's adoptive parents near the shore. She mentioned that Mordred gathered birds' eggs, and it is a very commonly known fact that the Orkney people have always gathered gulls' eggs for eating (Thompson, *Taliesin's Successors*).

### Using Toponyms

I view the author's use of place names as historically-based. In the novels native Celtic and Latinised Celtic toponyms are used along with modern English geographical names. In the article the place names are considered from historical, geographical and linguistic points of view. In my research I apply the following terms of place names: toponym, the general term for any place or geographical entity; hydronym, a name of water object (rivers, lakes, seas, bays, etc.); oikonym, a name of a settlement (town, village); oronym, an element of relief (mountains, plains, forests, islands, etc.).

The British Isles have a variety of toponyms. Many languages and cultures have had an impact on geographical names including the Anglo-Normans, the Anglo Saxons, the Romans and the Vikings. I pay particular attention to the historical aspect, considering a place name as a source of information to study settlement of a territory, and the linguistic aspect, regarding place-names in their evolution from ancient to modern times.

Each novel is provided by a map of Britain with marked locations of towns, forts, as well as historic areas. At the end of the novels ("Author's Note") Mary Stewart gives her views on the issue of place names: "In a period of history when Celt, Saxon, Roman, Gaul, and who knows who else shuttled to and fro across a turbulent and divided Britain, every place must have had at least three names, and anybody's guess is good as to what was common usage at any given time" (Stewart, *The Crystal Cave* 490).

Mary Stewart's main principle in usage of place names is to make the story clear. Sometimes the novelist gives the current names along with old ones taken from the maps of the Dark Ages and the Roman Empire: "Maesbeli, near Conan's Fort, or Kaerconan, that men sometimes call Conisburgh" (Stewart, *The Hollow Hills* 496). Thus, M. Stewart includes native Celtic, Latinised Celtic and modern English place names.

The novels are set primarily in the British Isles, partly in Brittany, Gaul and the Middle East. All the toponyms in the novels can be roughly divided into three

groups. The first group covers the place names mentioned in connection with King Arthur in the chronicles, legends and Arthurian Cycle of Romances. The second group includes the British place names and the toponyms of Brittany, not directly related to the Arthurian legend. And, finally, the third group consists of the geographical names outside the British Isles and Brittany, and having no direct connection with the Arthurian legend. Let me consider the first group.

According to Geoffrey of Monmouth, Tintagel is a place of King Arthur's conception and birth. King Uther Pendragon is disguised by Merlin's magic as Gorlois, Duke of Cornwall, and enters Tintagel and sleeps with Ygraine, Gorlois' wife, and then Arthur is conceived. The researchers have had difficulty explaining the origin of the word "Tintagel." This word derives from the Cornish language (the first element "tin" means "fortress," the second element may have an outdated form of a proper name). *Tintaieol* is an Old English form. Nowadays Tintagel is a small village on the north coast of Cornwall. There are the ruins of an ancient castle dating from the twelfth century. The remains of fortifications relating to the Dark Ages (the fifth — sixth centuries) and the twelfth century have been found in the course of archaeological excavations.

Cornwall is the place associated with many Arthurian legends. In *The Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology* the word "Cornwall" derives from the Brythonic language. The Old English form "Cornwallas" is a hybrid word: the first element of which comes from the Celtic word "Cornovii"—the name of the tribe, meaning "the people living on the Cape"; and the second element "walas" ("wealas") is the Old English name of the Celts, meaning "Strangers" (cf. *Br Kernéō*; *W Cernyw* (n. Cornwall), *Cernywaidd* (adj. Cornish)) (56).

On the map of Great Britain, there is no exact match of the historical Camelot, while other geographical names of the Arthurian legend more or less coincide with actually existing place names. Mary Stewart identifies Camelot with the hill near South Cadbury. The novelist also associates the legendary Camlann, the place of the last battle between Arthur and Mordred, with that hill. By placing Camlann, like Camelot, near South Cadbury M. Stewart in favour of her idea indicates that "recent archaeological excavations of the hill showed that in Arthurian times there was a strong fortress, perhaps even Camelot" (Stewart, *The Last Enchantment* 455).

Avalon (or *Ynys Afallon* in Welsh) is a legendary island featured in the Arthurian legend. It first appears in Geoffrey of Monmouth's *The History of the Kings of Britain* as the place where King Arthur's sword Excalibur (Caliburnus) was forged and later where Arthur was taken to recover from his wounds after the Battle of Camlann. Etymologically, Avalon comes from the Welsh word "*afalau*"

or “*afallon*,” which means “apple.” Since the end of the twelfth century, Avalon has been associated with Glastonbury Abbey, a monastery in Glastonbury, Somerset. Some etymologists think that the original name of Glastonbury was Glastonia, derived from the Celtic word “*glaston*” (“blue-green,” or, more precisely, “woad”—a flowering plant from which a blue-green dye is produced). During Roman times, the area was known as Glasnonium—Celtic Latinized place name (the Celtic stem + the Latin ending *-ium*). The modern English form “*Glastonbury*” is the result of distortion introduced by the Anglo-Saxons. They called the inhabitants of Glastonia “*Glaestingas*,” and then attached “*byrig*” (“city,” “town”) to the word, which gave *Glaestingabyrig*. There is also a hypothesis that “*Glast*” or “*Glasteing*” could be the name of the settlement’s founder (Chekhonadskaya, *Svyatoi Gilda* 122). Mary Stewart identifies modern Glastonbury as Avalon, mentioning at the same time the Celtic name of the area—*Ynys Witrin*: “[...] the Island was called Ynys Witrin, the Isle of Glass. Sometimes, now, men call it Avalon” (Stewart, *The Last Enchantment* 229). *Ynys Witrin* is a Celtic name. It can be translated from Welsh as “glass island.”

I have gradually come to consider a second group of place names—namely, geographical and topographical names of the British Isles and Brittany, which are not directly associated with the Arthurian legend. They are both modern toponyms and the place names taken from the maps of the Dark Age and those of the Roman Empire. This group is the most numerous one represented by native Celtic, Celtic Latinised and modern English place names.

The first substrate layer of British place names is Celtic in origin. It is difficult to judge about the Celtic toponymy of the British Isles in the pre-Roman period, since there are no geographical maps of this period. The information about the Celtic toponymy can be found in the writings of Ptolemy, Tacitus, and Caesar. In Stewart’s novels there are such Celtic place names as *Caer Bannog*, *Caer Eidyn*, *Caer Mord*, *Caer Y n’a Von*, *Bryn Myrddin*, etc. For example, *Caer Bannog* in Old Celtic means “the castle of the peaks” (Stewart, *The Hollow Hills* 498).

According to a Russian historian M.S. Sadovskaya, a small group of Romanized Celtic nobility, only a small percentage of the population, belonged to the bilingual community, and the interaction of the Celts and the Romans was mostly limited (Sadovskaya 19). This explains the fact that the majority of geographical names of Roman Britain remained Celtic, and was only partially latinized. Oikonyms (names of towns and villages) were also latinized, while names of rivers, lakes and mountains were mostly Celtic. However, the Romans and the Celts had language contact for a long time (from 43 to 410 A.D.), which could not

but affect the formation of Roman Britain's toponymy.

One of the most important elements in Celtic-Latin toponymy is "*dunum*" ("fort," "fortification"). Apparently, it was a form of Celtic "*dūnōs*" (neuter, stem + *-s*), the Latin form is "*dūnum*" (neuter). M. Gelling supposes that "*dunum*" in the so-called "Vulgar Latin" was an independent form borrowed from Celtic (140). About 16 toponyms were formed from this element in Britain. The element "*dunum*" was spread out over a huge geographical area—Britain, Gaul, and even Northern Italy. For example, in Stewart's novels we can find the oikonym "*Camulodunum*" (*C* "Camolos"—the god of war and "*dunon*" ("*dunos*")—"fortress"). In this oikonym the Latin ending *-um* is added to a Celtic stem.

There is no doubt that the construction of towns and roads by the Romans was a great progress in the material culture of the Celts. Towns could appear on former tribal settlements and markets, for example, the oikonym with a Latin component "*venta*" ("market"). In the Arthurian novels we can find the oikonym "Glannaventa" (*C* *glanna*, *L* *venta*), in which the second element is of Latin origin. This place name of the Roman period provides information about the development of trade. According to M.S. Sadvskaya, Romanization of the Celtic traditional culture affected only a small percentage of the population. She explains this by noting that "the freedom-loving Britons could not accept the culture of the conquerors" (18). Oikonyms of Celtic origin, formed by Latin endings *-um* (*-ium*) and a hybrid ending *-onium*, are regarded as Latinized Celtic place names based on the theory of a Russian philologist T.N. Melnikova (223). Among the Latinized Celtic place names found in the novels by M. Stewart, Celtic-stem oikonyms with Latin endings *-ium* (*Segontium*, *Luguvallium*, *Bremenium*, *Blestium*), *-um* (*Eboracum*, *Glevum*, *Brocavum*, etc.) and hybrid ending *-onium* (*Bravonium*, *Viroconium*) are the most frequently used. The culture of the ancient Celts is reflected in toponymy (toponymy motivated by the names of gods and religious rituals). The Celts were polytheists. The most revered Celtic god was the god of war, who was called by several names—*Belatucardus*, *Camulos*, *Coccidios* (*Mars* in Roman mythology) (Oman 25). So, this name is found in the place name *Camulodunum*.

Mary Stewart makes use of another oikonym *Luguvallium* that is located within present-day Carlisle, Cumbria. In *The Hollow Hills* the young Arthur was first involved in the battle between the Saxons and Uther Pendragon's troops that occurred near this place. This oikonym is a borrowed Brittonic place name reconstructed as *Luguwalion* which means "city of *Luguwalos*," *Luguwalos* being a masculine Celtic given name meaning "strength of *Lugus*" (Jackson 39). *Luguvallium* comes from the name of a pagan god *Lug* (the patron deity of

smithcraft, music, and poetry in Irish mythology) and the Latin word “*valeo*” (“strong,” “healthy”).

Oronyms are presented in the novels by the names of the mountains: Snowdon (*W Yr Wyddfa*), High Cheviot, etc.; the names of islands: the Isle of Mona, the Isle of Thanet; the names of forests: the Celidon Forest, the Wild Forest. The names of almost all the regions and areas found in M. Stewart’s novels are of Celtic origin, for example, Dumnonia, Cornwall, Rheged, Elmet, Strathclyde, Dyfed, etc. Dumnonia (*OE Defnas*) comes from the Celtic word “*dumnonii*” (‘deep’). It refers to the deep mines located in Devon. The etymology of such toponyms as Dyfed, Guent, Gwynedd could not be revealed. P.H. Reaney supposes that these toponyms come from the name of tribes (48). Ethnonyms (place names applied to an ethnic group) are widely represented in Brythonic toponyms.

Moreover, the novelist presents modern English toponyms: Winchester, York, London, etc. For example, a modern place name often found in the novels is the oikonym “York.” Mary Stewart also uses the ancient name of this city—Eboracum, but much less frequently. Eboracum is a Latinised Celtic oikonym. Using the term suggested by T.N. Melnikova, we can identify this oikonym as a “suffixal hybrid with a Latinised patronymic suffix” *-(i)acum*. Eboracum is derived from the Celtic personal name “Eburos.” T.N. Melnikova convinces that the oikonoms with patronymic suffixes come from the names of the tribal leaders (109).

The third group of toponyms consists of geographical places located outside the British Isles and Brittany. These place names have no direct connection with the Arthurian legend. For example, we can see such well-known names of cities and countries as Constantinople, Rome, Athens, Gallia, Italy, Greece, Jerusalem, Tours, Orleans, Paris. However, only Jerusalem and Tours are cities where the events in *The Prince and the Pilgrim* take place. Thus, the other toponyms are only mentioned in connection with the adventures of the characters. Describing the journey of Merlin to Byzantium and the East in *The Hollow Hills*, Mary Stewart gives geographical names of Ancient Times—Corinth, Pergamum, Antioch, Massilia, etc.

Summing up the analysis of place names in M. Stewart’s novels it should be noted that the language contacts between the Britons and the Romans, and later between the Britons and the Anglo-Saxons, lead to the fact that the Celtic elements have left an imprint on the British toponymy. Although the overall number of Celtic borrowings in the English language is relatively small. This in turn means greater dependence of toponymy on language contacts, compared with the other layers of vocabulary, for obvious reasons: place names are directly linked to displacement of tribes and ethnic composition of the population.

## Conclusion

In my research, I have come up with a new term “historical-fantastic novels” to define the genre of the Arthurian pentalogy, although the novels are widely viewed as a blend of fantasy and the historical novel.

Merlin, the protagonist and narrator in the first three novels of the pentalogy, is presented as an ordinary human, not as a great magician and wizard. Mary Stewart proposes a very interesting and realistic interpretation of the legend. In world literature, there are numerous versions of the image of King Arthur. In Stewart’s novels, Arthur does not resemble any of those ones. He is portrayed as a wise politician, a humanist king, a fair ruler, as well as a lonely man.

Mary Stewart has formed her own style over the years of intense creative work. The novelist truly brings the “Dark Age” to life in her novels, and aims at recreating the mindset of those distant times using the expressive language. “The spirit of Dark Age” has been created by means of a few typical linguistic features of the time described. Mary Stewart employs native Celtic and Latinised Celtic toponyms along with modern English geographical names. Due to the non-English vocabulary, the author presents the “local colour” of the Early Middle Ages. Mary Stewart is primarily guided by the sense of proportionality and congruity.

## Contractions

*Br*—Breton

*C*—Celtic

*Corn*—Cornish

*L*—Latin

*OE*—Old English

*W*—Welsh

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