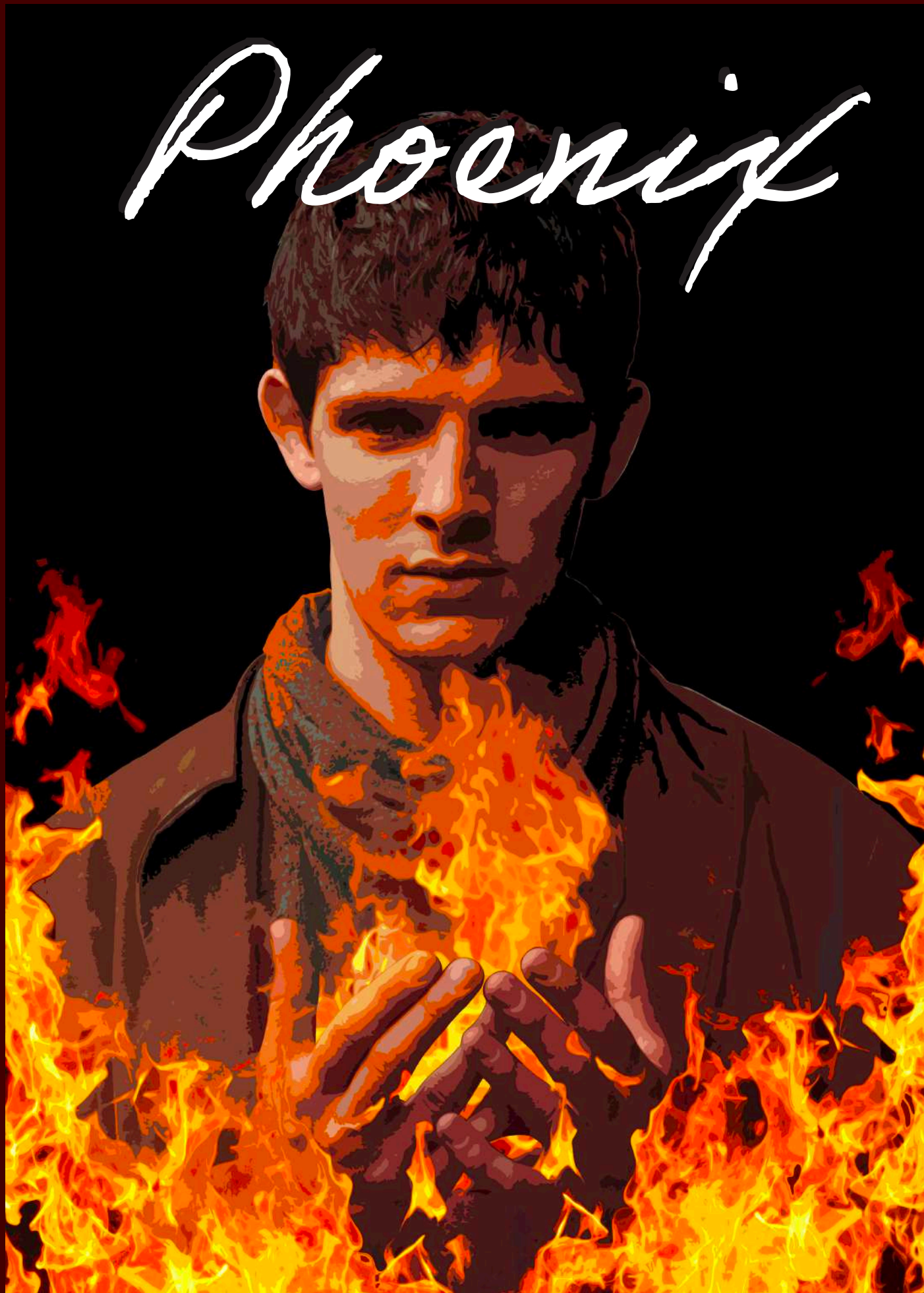


February 2021

Issue 2

Phoenix



The Medieval Issue

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Word of the Board



Charlotte van Houdt
Treasurer

Hi there!

New year, new opportunities! One of those opportunities will be exploring what this year has to offer. Try something new, something exciting or something old, just like how I first attended Castlefest in 2017. Seeing all these people dressed up as medieval characters, was brilliant and a new experience for me. Immersing myself in medieval music and instruments, how I wish I could play a citole! I remember drinking different kinds of mead and learning all about the process of making it. Furthermore, seeing castle Keukenhof was also one of the highlights for me, besides maybe practising some archery. I hope we can attend festivals again this year and meet wonderful, new people in interesting worlds.

Some time ago, I took the opportunity of trying out archery for the first time. At the time, I was obsessed with Ranger's Apprentice by John Flanagan (I even met Flanagan!). So, it was only natural for me to try archery. The first time I did, the people there gave me a standard recurve bow with a sight. I did not like the sight that much, but I needed to learn the basics. The people I befriended at the shooting range all used bare bows

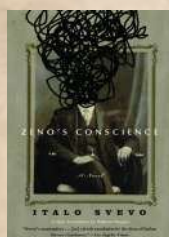
(meaning without a sight and often more historical looking bows). Longbows, flatbows, hunter recurve and more. One of my trainers used to shoot historical and would wear a medieval outfit for whenever he had an event he to go to. I loved attending those events from time to time. Being in nature and just concentrating on your next shot while having fun in a medieval setting was just lovely.

I am looking forward to seeing you all again this year (hopefully).

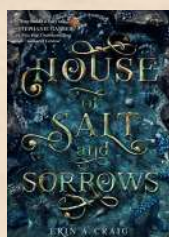
Love,

Charlotte

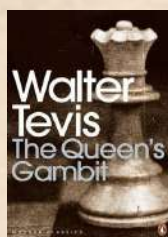
what we're reading



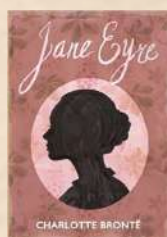
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Italo Svevo



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PHOENIX

Magazine for students of English Language and Culture at Utrecht University.

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The Shack

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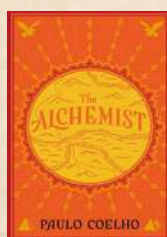
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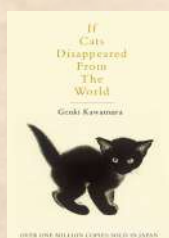
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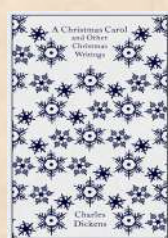
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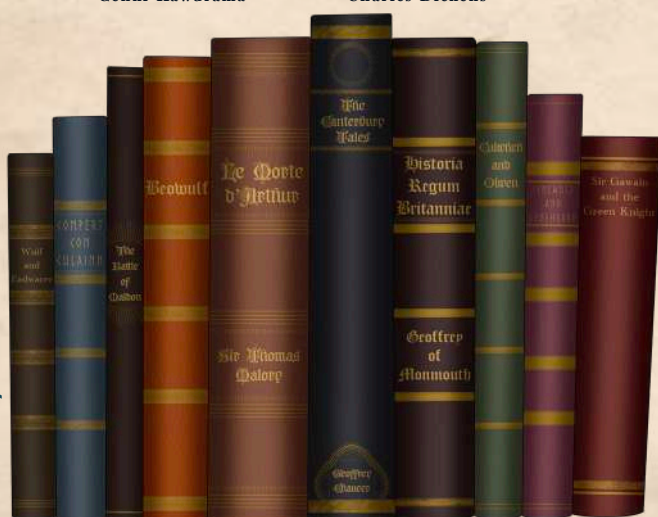


Rixt
If Cats Disappeared From the World
by
Genki Kawamura



Thijs
A Christmas Carol
by
Charles Dickens

Illustration by Cecilie Balemans-Højberg



The Curse of Camelot

Written by Eva Biesheuvel, Helenie Demir, Marit Vogels and Mohana Zwaga;
Edited by Hester Schneider and Julia Schuurmans; Illustrated by Marijn van de Visser

It's a warm evening, King Arthur and his most heroic knights sit together at the round table. The moonlight shines on everyone's faces, and the knights look healthy. Camelot is strong, but it hadn't always been this way. Some of the knights seem to drink their ale to forget about the past.

King Arthur speaks: "Noble friends, I'm glad you're here tonight."

"Of course, we're always here for you and your kingdom" Lancelot says.

Gawain and Percival nod and hold up their cups. They share a toast and smile at each other. Their eyes glisten in the moonlight.

After the moment of quiet, King Arthur speaks again: "I cannot believe it was only a few months ago that the first farmer came to tell me about his failed harvest. How foolish was I to think that it was just one unfortunate event."

"Don't blame yourself, anyone would have thought the same," Percival says and he takes another sip of his drink.

"Thank you for your kind words Percival, but it was foolish. All of you know what happened after that: fruit kept rotting, vegetables didn't grow, and livestock kept dying."

"It could have been a disease!" Sir Gawain utters, Percival and Lancelot both give a small nod.

"That's what I thought, but I should've known better. If something bad happens to Camelot, it's always on Mordred or Morgan le Fay. Of course, this wasn't an exception," Arthur continues.

"I still can't believe Morgan le Fay lay a curse on your lands," Gawain says while looking into his cup.

"It was her darkest curse yet. It slowly starved us so that Mordred could attack us at our weakest!" Percival continues, slowly getting lost in his memories of that time.

"And even Merlin discovered the curse late, it was only 25 days before the attack. We'd already lost too many people..." Lancelot continues with a

shake of his head.

King Arthur speaks once more: "At least Merlin gave us time to do something about it. Now, since we all went on a quest to save Camelot, let's share our stories as a way of restoring peace of mind once again."

Arthur closes his eyes and starts to tell his share of the tale.

"Saving Camelot was of the utmost importance to me as King. Together with my knights, I took on the quest that would help save my kingdom. Something had to be done, so I commenced my journey. What was once a vibrant landscape of lakes, beautiful green forests and many farm fields, had now become a dry and deserted piece of land. The blue mountains loomed in the distance, where at sunset, my quest would take me.

I entered the shadows of the forest alone, in utter silence. This was not a place to draw attention. At the break of dawn, I was nearing my destination. The atmosphere suddenly shifted and I felt a warm



"Before I could reason my actions, I grabbed the dragon's tail and let myself be taken into the abyss."

breath around me. That could only mean one thing: the beast was nearby. Then, I heard its snoring, which slightly calmed my nerves. Nevertheless, I knew it wouldn't be too long before it woke up. Carefully and covered in sweat, I hid behind a tree. I was almost there. Suddenly, I heard a lot of noise and the feeling of the air around me changed. I felt the enormous beast, which turned out to be a dragon, closing in on me. 'Reveal yourself!' I yelled. My voice was shaking. The beast was enormous, larger than I could've ever imagined, it was beyond my wildest dreams. With trembling fingers, I tried to find the sword that I carried with me in my belt. Around the neck of the silver dragon dangled the little potion. Using my years of training, I did everything in my power to obtain it. I managed to distract the enormous dragon with a piece of meat I'd brought with me. Quickly, I threw the chunk to the bushes, so I could sprint towards the monstrous beast. Its warm breath had lingered, but I drew my sword and cut away the necklace with the potion. Inaudibly, it plummeted to the mushy ground of the forest. I threw myself onto the potion and rolled over just in time. But in that split second, the potion slipped out of my hands. Insanity almost took over when I saw the small vial roll down the hill, into the gaping abyss.

'Noooo!' I screamed. With its quick senses, the dragon spread its wings and flew to the cliff where the potion had disappeared. Before I could reason my actions, I grabbed the dragon's tail and let myself be taken into the abyss. In the corner of my eye, I saw the glass of the potion's flask shimmer. Without hesitation, I let go of the tail and let myself fall. With my bare hands, I dug into the cold ground, frantically trying to find the potion. And then there it was. I finally had it, the potion that was going to save my kingdom. I was going to be their saviour, their hero! Thus, relieved, I started my journey back home."

The knights were quiet when Arthur finished his story. After another shared toast, Sir Percival took over the tale and got lost in his memory.

"The wind blew by me violently, tearing at my clothes as I stood upon the hill, overlooking the clouded valley below. My horse's ears twitched nervously, and I had to admit I shared its unease. There hung a strange stillness over these hills,



"The metal of my sword dug its way into my palm and my hands were slick with sweat or blood..."

which weighed down on my shoulders. I took my horse by its reigns, and we carefully descended the slope. It didn't take long before we were enveloped by mist. The wind had gone now, but the unnatural silence remained. Even the sound of my own footsteps was smothered by the thick moss covering the forest floor. Finally, the trees began to clear and a lake appeared. In the centre of the water stood the ruins of a castle, now no more than a carcass of an age none remembered. I left my horse at the edge of the lake, dropping my heavy armour to the ground. Only my sword I took, as I waded into the shallow water, towards the ruins.

Carefully, I entered, looking up to the curved structure that was left of the roof, where vines had sought their way inside. I entered the remains of a large hall, and my eyes were drawn to a table that stood in the middle of the room, empty except for a silver box. I opened it quickly, sensing there was no time to waste. And there it was, the grimoire, its cover decorated with an intricate pattern of moonstone and silver.

The moment my fingers touched it, the energy in the hall shifted. I quickly pressed the grimoire under my jacket and ran as clouds began to gather and the final traces of daylight left the sky. Someone, or something, was hunting me, but I did not dare look. On I ran until I was back inside the forest. My horse had gone, its bridles lay on the



“After some convincing, he believed me, and he was foolish enough to tell me his whole diabolical plan.”

ground in a heap, but there was no time to search. The metal of my sword dug its way into my palm and my hands were slick with sweat or blood... In the dusk, I couldn't tell the difference. The tall pine trees seemed to go on for eternity and I couldn't help but wonder if I was moving at all. The shadows between the trees quivered as if they were not shadows at all, but a dark stream of water flowing, disembodied, through the air. From the corner of my eye, I saw it shift. My movement was swift as my sword made contact with the shadow before I could even see it. And with that, it was gone. I didn't look but kept running. Don't stop. As if to confirm I hadn't lost my mind just yet, my free hand found its way under my jacket. And there it was, pressed against my chest. Even though my skin was burning from fear and exhaustion, the binding of the book still felt cool to the touch. Its stones glowed in the moonlight. Run, I told myself. Home. Home to Camelot.”

“Thank you, Percival, for your bravery. You never disappoint.” Arthur says when Percival finished his story.

“My King, you are too kind.”

It is Gawain that asks: “Shall I take over now?”

“Well, of course.” Arthur answers.

“I remember very well the task I had to fulfil for our great King Arthur. Like many of you, I was assigned the task of finding an object that was

supposed to save Camelot of the evil that darkened our lands, that crushed the life out of it, that caused many of our own to lose their lives. I was not entirely sure where to look for my object, the Holy Grail, but I had heard that it possessed a great deal of power, and thus, I was prepared to face Mordred.

I was walking through the forest when I heard a rustle – the dead leaves on the ground were being crushed by footsteps, the wind blowing the broken parts up into the sky – the wind was the only part of nature still alive. Before I could turn around and draw my sword, my evil half-brother had already captured me in one of his dark spells.

‘I never thought to see you again, dear brother.’ Mordred said to me.

‘Out for a walk, Mordred? Getting a bit of fresh, dead air?’

‘Something like that, yes.’ An evil chuckle came out of him. Although he was my brother, he was still able to scare me. Or maybe he could because he was my brother, I knew what he was capable of. ‘I was actually looking for you, Gawain,’ he continued.

‘Oh, really? Is this how we greet each other now? Like enemies?’

‘Are we not exactly that?’ After he said that... I saw an opportunity, one I am sure any of you heroic knights would take as well. I saw the opportunity to trick him like he had done to many other poor souls before, one of those being me. So, I told him that loyalty lies within blood, not in gold. Forgive me, King Arthur, I meant no disrespect to you or your court, but I had to deceive him and I saw no other way.

After some convincing, he believed me, and he was foolish enough to tell me his whole diabolical plan.

I know what you are thinking, I have caused a lot of bloodshed, a lot of pain, let you lose your faith in me, but I did it all for a greater good. We managed to defeat our enemy. At what cost, you ask... Perhaps my sanity, but when do we use that in our swordfights? Stick them with the pointy end, and if the blood flows, you know you did the job well. My apologies, I should not be laughing.

It may have seemed as if I was truly engaged in my brother's evil notions, but I promise you all, I did not want to kill the men I have killed. If you think about it, I killed them with mercy. We all know what the dark mages do to people who get in their way. A quick death is better than a suffering fool who was too ambitious and more arrogant than we believe to be ourselves."

It is King Arthur that speaks first: "You did well Sir Gawain, even though we only realised after."

"Thank you, my King."

"Sir Lancelot, I guess that leaves you to finish our tale."

"Yes, my King."

Lancelot clears his throat and starts to speak.

My dear friends, only this ale makes me able to tell you my story, because I'm somewhat ashamed to share it. My task was to protect Guinevere, which might sound like a simple task to you, but of course, we didn't know what Mordred and Morgan le Fay were up to. It could've become very dangerous.

On the day that all of you left, I followed Guinevere around. At noon, she wanted to get some rest, so I brought her to her rooms. Don't get me wrong, I'm a very decent knight, so of course, I turned my back to her and walked away as soon as she lay in bed. Unfortunately, I fell asleep... in front of her door, that is!



"I mounted another horse and went through the barren lands full of dying plants, trying to find Guinevere."

I was awoken by a rat nibbling on my finger. The sun had already set, and I was shocked that I had been so foolish. I immediately saw that Guinevere was gone... I mean after I opened the door to her rooms, of course!

I asked around if anyone had seen her, and luckily someone told me that they had just noticed her going to the stables. I ran as fast as I could, but just before I reached the stables I saw Guinevere galloping away on my beautiful, white horse.

I mounted another horse and went through the barren lands full of dying plants, trying to find Guinevere. I looked for days. I was exhausted, not because of the lack of sleep or food, but because I knew I had failed my task.

One morning, seven days after Guinevere had gone missing, I came back to Camelot to get some rest and I saw her sitting peacefully next to my white horse in a field full of big crops. I was so glad that she was alive, that I didn't even realise that crops didn't look rotten anymore. I ran to her and asked where she had been.

She then told me that she knew a friendly witch who mastered the art of plants, herbs and potions. She had gone to this witch and asked for help. The witch had stopped the terrible curse that ruined Arthur's lands and had given Guinevere magical seeds that'd grow the most beautiful crops right away.

I was happy to see both our king and Percival arrive a few days later. They had succeeded in their quests, but it was all for nothing because Guinevere had already stopped the terrible curse.

As you all know, a few days later Camelot was attacked by Mordred. Fortunately, most of us were strengthened by the abundance of food we'd eaten the days before. However, sadly, we still lost amazing warriors. It was a shock to see Gawain fighting alongside Mordred, but we now know that it was for a good cause and helped us to beat Mordred. But honestly, I think we need to bring out a toast on Guinevere...

It is then that all the knights raise their cups and merrily say: "To Guinevere!"

Writing Credits: The Introduction (Eva), The Tale of King Arthur (Marit), The Tale of Sir

Percival (Mohana), The Tale of Sir Gawain (Helenie), The Tale of Sir Lancelot (Eva).

Tea Time Revisited

Written by Eva Biesheuvel; Edited by Julia Schuurmans *with Marcelle Cole*

Phoenix's medieval issue would be nothing without a lovely medievalist, and if you have to think of a lovely medievalist, Marcelle is probably one of the first people you think of, if not: sort out your priorities! It's Marcelle's second time being interviewed for Phoenix's Tea Time, but six years after the first interview seemed like an appropriate time to catch up with her. Unfortunately, the lockdown meant that it wasn't responsible to visit her, but we had a lovely time on Microsoft Teams nonetheless. We started chatting right away, starting the conversation by talking about her childhood.

Your mother is from Spain, but your father from Great Britain. How did they meet?

My mother came over to Britain around 1960 with the intention of learning English. This was before the EU, so even though she was from a European country there was very little work that was open for her. She could do either cleaning work or nursing, so she was trained as a nurse at a psychiatric hospital in North London, and this hospital was right next to the place where my father lived. The hospital was set in these beautiful grounds, which originally were the grounds of a mansion. They would organise parties in this mansion and my parents met at one of these parties.

What was your family like?

We were really close. I think my mother had a massive influence because there was a lot of Spanish culture mixed in with the British culture. We weren't a family who were afraid of arguing with each other, but that was okay, arguments would quickly be forgotten. We were brought up Catholic, which was my mother's wish. Initially, Catholicism was just part of my upbringing, so I suppose as a young child I didn't resist it too much. I do, however, remember this really odd moment. I would've been about 7, and the teacher in religion class was talking about heaven and she was describing heaven as this really peaceful place, and I remember thinking that it sounded so dull! I thought you really had to live in a certain strict way to go to heaven and from the way that this teacher was describing it, it didn't sound very motivating to me. I remember being at the back of the class, thinking: No, she's got it wrong, I think heaven is a place where you can do whatever you want without feeling guilty about it! Interestingly enough, around the age of 12 or 13, I became very critical of the Catholic Church. I actually went through this phase where I became quite religious and even vaguely considered converting to the Church of England. It's so odd to me now, because now, I'm not religious at all.

Can you tell me about your university experience?

I did my first BA degree in the UK and I studied English, which was essentially English literature. When

I finished, I went to Spain. I'd always been fascinated by the idea of living abroad, particularly in Spain. We'd go to Spain every year. I thought it was a real shame that I hadn't been brought up bilingually, and I wanted to improve my Spanish. Being so fascinated by the idea of living in Spain, it was the first thing I did once I finished my degree. The idea was to stay for 3 months, but I ended up staying for almost twenty years. I lived quite a carefree existence for a few years, which I would recommend to anyone! I taught English as a way of paying the rent, but then it got to the point where I was becoming bored at work. I wasn't really challenged, and I wanted to do post-graduate study. The Spanish Ministry of Education wouldn't recognize my British BA degree, however, which meant that I had to go back to university and do the degree again. The syllabus for this degree in Spain included both literature and linguistics, so it introduced me to historical linguistics. At the time I was really frustrated by having to do a BA programme again, but looking back it was actually one of the best things I ever did because it introduced me to historical linguistics.

Why did you end up staying in Spain for so long?

I think initially my plan was always to come back to England and do post-graduate study, but what I discovered was that I really enjoyed living abroad and that I don't like living in the UK. Obviously, I miss family and friends, but I don't miss the UK. When you move abroad you go through this honeymoon period where you feel like you're on a constant holiday. Of course, a lot of it is actually quite routine and mundane, but even the routine and mundane, like going to the supermarket, can seem more exciting when you're doing it in a different country and in a different language. My initial plan was to go to Spain for 3 months, but then, of course, 3 months was very little time. I mean, you're only just starting to meet people and then you have to go back home, so I thought: okay, I'll stay another 3 months. I think I spend the first two years in Spain extending my stay in my own head by 3 months each time.

Did your love for the Middle Ages start during your time in Spain as well?

That's actually quite a funny story, that I'm not sure I should admit to. When I studied my first degree in the



UK, my main interest was in 19th-century literature, in the novel. Strangely enough, I remember to this day the first time that I took a look at the English literature syllabus. I saw a course on medieval literature and barely even read the course description because I immediately rejected it. I find this very ironic and amusing nowadays. So, I hadn't done any medieval literature courses yet, which meant I had to do all of those in Spain. That was my first major contact with medieval literature and I absolutely loved it.

In what way do you think knowledge about the Middle Ages is useful nowadays?

I don't know if I'd single out the Middle Ages in particular, but I think keeping a historical perspective in mind is always important. It's a difficult one with the Middle Ages because it's this period that suffers from a great deal of modern prejudice. I think some of that prejudice is justified since it was an unscientific period and a period in which people were superstitious and overly preoccupied with religion and the afterlife, but I also think it's a really surprising period. The early Middle Ages, for example, afforded women a surprisingly high degree of legal protection.

What's your favourite medieval story?

I think the ones that I probably like best, are the ones that challenge our modern prejudices of the Middle Ages. What I also particularly like about medieval literature is the historical context and the societal context, and the texts that create a picture of medieval concerns. But, I have to say, I really enjoy the saint's lives. I find them quite fascinating because they're a bizarre blend of fact and fantasy. The Old English *Judith* is a fun one as well; it ties in with what I was saying before about the portrayal of women. Judith is depicted very much in the same terms as a male warrior hero, so it really is a nice example of medieval girl power. I also love the romances, like *Floris and Blanche-flour*. The way in which men and romance heroes are depicted is surprising as well. The romances are full of these men that feel very tensely.

Do you have any plans to move countries again?

Not at the moment, I'm very happy in The Netherlands. My Dutch has also improved. I'm actually 'ingeburgerd'. Of course, that was mainly motivated by Brexit, and I'm now in a position whereby I could apply for Dutch nationality. The only problem with that is that I'd have to give up my British nationality, and although I don't imagine myself going back to the UK and I'm not in any way patriotic, it still feels like a big deal to give up your nationality. So, I'm a little bit on the fence there, but I might just bite the bullet and apply for a Dutch nationality because in that way I would remain in the EU, and that's important to me.

Since you're 'ingeburgerd', do you feel comfortable when you're speaking Dutch?

I don't feel that comfortable, unfortunately. I think my pronunciation is terrible, so I'm very self-conscious about that. Talking about more complicated topics is difficult for me but I can hold a kind of chit-chatty conversation. I can also understand a lot more. I think

the biggest problem for foreigners trying to learn Dutch is that the Dutch don't want to speak Dutch to us. I'll go into a shop and I will speak Dutch and the person, who is Dutch, will answer me in English. And I will think: No, I'm going to be bloody-minded here and just keep going in Dutch, so I keep going in Dutch and they keep going in English. And I think: well he must understand me because the conversation, even though it's bilingual, makes sense. And then at the end I will say 'Dag!' and he will say 'Bye!' And you think: what just happened?

Have you read any Dutch literature?

Yes, I have! But I have to admit that I read it in English... It's terrible, but I did actually want to get to the end, and reading a whole novel in Dutch is challenging for me. I've read a couple of your classics actually, hold on!

Marcelle walks to her bookshelves and comes back showing me her English edition of De Avonden by Gerard Reve.

So, what I really liked about *De Avonden* is that it's set in the area of Amsterdam where I live, when he goes off on his walks, I can imagine where he is going. I have also read Mulisch, but most Dutch people don't like him very much, I think you're made to read him in school... I read a couple of his, so *De Ontdekking van de Hemel* and *De Aanslag*.

Marcelle then holds up 'Linoleum Koorts: aantekeningen van een docent' by Asis Aynan.

This I am reading in Dutch! They are short stories so I can just about make it through. The author was a teacher at the 'hogeschool' here in Amsterdam and the stories are related to his students, so it's very relatable.

Do you have any advice for making the best out of the online study experience?

A problem at the moment is motivation; I think we're all suffering from that. It's just so bluhhh. I think creating small discussion groups with people that you feel comfortable with, may be a nice way to go. That could be a nice way to gain some motivation and some sense and purpose to what you're doing.

Are you currently doing any research?

The research I'm doing at the moment continues on from past research. I'm very into pronouns at the moment and I've been looking at the pronouns they, their, them which traditionally were considered to be Old Norse loanwords. I wrote a paper in which I argue that they actually derive from the Old English demonstrative pronouns, so I adopt this native hypothesis. The research I'd already done focused mainly on Northern data and now I've expanded the study to include data from the entire country. I'm presently working on a book on that topic, and I'm very happy about that!

On that happy note, we wrapped up our conversation. Marcelle: thank you for being so kind to me, hopefully, someone from Phoenix will interview you again in six years!

Culture Corner: Saints

To what saint do you belong?

Written by Michelle Moonen; Edited by Hester Schneider; Illustrated by Marlies Riemens

Most of us have had the following thought in their mind, at least once at a certain point in time: “Dear God, what the hell (heck).” However, it is not always God that people look up to for advice, complaints or safety. A lot of patron saints have been created to help specific people with specific needs.

However, some people went a bit wild with the specificity. This means there are saints for quite special things, with sometimes weird combinations. An example of this is Saint Phillip, who’s the patron saint of both the Special Forces and pastry chefs! What they have in common is unknown to me, but I’m sure medieval villagers could connect the two in some way.



Next up, we have a few saints who are more relevant to us as students; there is Saint Expeditus, the patron saint of procrastination, or Saint Drogo, the patron saint of coffee. Or maybe you could pray to Saint Joseph of Cupertino, who is the actual patron saint of students. However, it is said that Joseph was quite unclever, but accustomed to receiving intense ecstatic visions. Incidentally, this is pretty much how I feel when I suddenly get an insight for a paper subject. So, maybe I just have to devote myself more to Sir Joseph to get the job done.

If you ever feel you’re stuck with your studies or with your life and you feel there’s nothing else you can do to improve, just pray to one of the patron saints, because you’ll always be able to find one who fits your needs.

The Medieval Comic

A Basic Introduction to art History

Written by Mohana Zwaga; Edited by Michelle Moonen; Illustrated by Marijn van de Visser

During the ages of the Greek and Roman empires, art was thriving. Artists were able to create works more detailed than ever before, coming closer and closer to imitating life. Their sculptures were extremely life-like. The Greek had even mastered sculptures that did not need support to stay upright but stood in perfect balance on their own. Even though the Romans struggled to copy such incredible craft, their works remain impressively authentic. But as Europe changed, so did art. In the chaos of wars, migration and the fall of the Roman Empire, such skill was lost and forgotten.

But as Christianity thrived and the dust settled (to some extent), art slowly found its way back into people's lives. During this time, art was almost exclusively religious, and it was quite a touchy subject. Due to the commandments in the Bible, there was an ongoing discussion whether it would even be allowed to capture Jesus in an image! However, the artists of this age made great use of symbolic meaning. In the time that Christians still had to hide from the Roman emperors, people would carve a symbol for "Chi-Rho" in walls. This symbol stood for the first two letters of Christ's name, becoming XP, and later it was the image of a fish. This is why a fish can often be found in Medieval art as a symbol for Christ!

The discussion surrounding the taboo of creating an image on earth capturing what is in heaven lead to artists choosing a more stylistic approach. Although art was very much present in Christianity, there were many who objected to this. Some writers even saw painters and sculptors as workers of the devil. During the 7th century, this discussion led to a war in Eastern Europe and the rest of the Byzantine empire. This war raged for 113 years, between the supporters of Icons (a holy image of a saint to which they would pray) and the iconoclasts who were against this.

Paintings in churches, illustrations in manuscripts and images captured in stained glass were not meant to be a life-like representation of the world, but in their simplicity functioned as storytellers. The artworks were in a way like what comic are to us now: a means to tell a story not through reading, but through visual display. Meaning triumphed realism, as art was mostly without dept or shadows, and artists ignored most of the human anatomy. Instead, the images told those who could not read the stories from the Bible, telling them about Christ's goodness and the many miracles the Holy Book contains. On the walls of churches, they are often in chronological order, allowing the audience to walk past the story as is displayed. Every single decorative motif had a symbolic meaning, such as vines as a symbol for Jesus Christ. Perhaps next time you find yourself in a church, see if you too can read these medieval comics for yourself!



Reynard the Fox

Written by Thijs Biezen; Illustrated by Marlies Riemens

There once was a fox, Reynard
who went to the nearby barnyard
to speak to the farmer's boy
working outside with the loy.

"Boy," he said, with a sly smile
"can I get your attention for awhile?
See, I need something to eat
and as you know, I prefer meat."

The farmhand nodded: "Yes, milord,
we have meat aplenty, a whole hoard!"
Reynard's smile then grew tenfold
for this boy was easily controlled.

"Say, lad, I want two chickens, no three!
For the price of one! That's a steal, you see?"
To which the boy eagerly replied:
"Aye, milord!" He was wide-eyed.

And so the two made their deal
with Reynard muttering: "A steal...
from me, he thinks, the fool!
If I were human, I'd be cruel!"

"Old MacDomhnall! Old MacDomhnall!
I sold three chickens, I did! I sold all
for the price of one to that fox from yonder
and now we've got silver to squander!"

To the old man's credit, he did not yell.
"Boy, you've got a lot of things to tell
if you want to get out of this scot-free
or you'll wish you'd never met me."

The farmer made the lad see his fault
and together, they arranged the assault
of Reynard, should he think to return
which he would, hearing his stomach churn.

"Lad!" Reynard said again, the next day,
"I want more chickens, what do you say?"
"No, fox, you tricked me, I realised
and I've been properly chastised."

The fox licked his lips, blood on his teeth
there were no measures he was beneath
so he had one more trick up his sleeve
that he could use in order to thief.

"Please, I'll even pay you more:
two for the price of one, d'accord?"
The farmhand considered it, he saw,
before something took his paw.

"Let go of me!" Reynard exclaimed.
"When you steal from me, unashamed?"
It was the farmer, to the fox' fright,
"No, you chewed off more than you bite."

From that day on, the field's scarecrow
had a fox' tail on its hat to show
which did a great service to scare
off annoying birds with its glare.

Fearing that if he again should fail
it would cost him more than his tail,
honest Reynard, our good friend
decided his thievery should end.

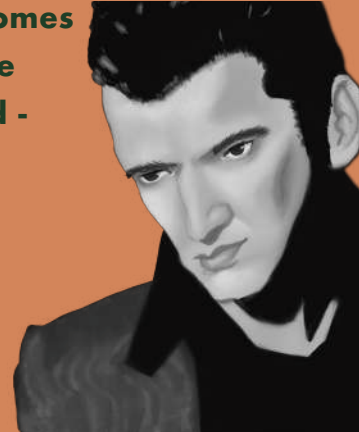
As he resolved, so did he do
having carefully thought it through
many a predator would think him insane
but Reynard would never steal again.



Playlist

by Marlies Riebens

1. Wicked Game - Chris Isaak
2. Dreams - Fleetwood Mac
3. Freedom '90 - George Michael
4. Another Day in Paradise - Phil Coulson
5. Sweet Child o'Mine - Guns N' Roses
6. Who's Lovin' You - The Jackson 5
7. No One - Alicia Keys
8. Bella's Lullaby - Carter Burtwell
9. What Goes Around.../...Comes Around - Justin Timberlake
10. What a Wonderful World - Louis Armstrong



Songs selected by Helenie Demir

1. ACME - Drangsal
2. Angel - Search Yiu
3. Bite - Mavi Phoenix
4. Butterfly - Yin Kalle
5. Dior 2001 - RIN
6. Ferrari - Yung Hurn
7. FRANKFURT CITY BLUES - reezy
8. ME\$\$ AROUND - BLVTH
9. Illegal - Yung Hurn
10. Labyrinth - Loredana



Songs selected by Anna Preindl

Culture Corner: Morgana

A Tragic Villain

Written by Leanne van Kampen;

Edited by Julia Schuurmans

This article will contain some spoilers for BBC's Merlin.

In a land of myth and a time of magic, the destruction of a great kingdom rests on the shoulders of a young witch; her name? Morgana. In *Merlin*, Morgana Pendragon is a witch and the ward of King Uther, who is notorious for his hatred of magic. Uther has banned magic from his kingdom, Camelot, and that's one of the reasons why Morgana had been spoon-fed a fear of magic. Merlin is a young warlock and the servant of Arthur who has not been taught to fear magic. Instead, he sees magic as a powerful force that can be used for good and for healing. Merlin, a good and loyal friend to Morgana, is the one person in Camelot that knows of Morgana's magic. However he needs to keep his own identity as a powerful warlock hidden, so he can't help her to show how magic can be used for good. When Morgana finds out she has magic, she is scared for her life, fearing that Uther will kill her if he discovers her gift. She feels utterly alone and begins to detest Uther for his hatred of magic. During the run of the show, Morgana turns out to be a villain, which isn't surprising per se because unlike Merlin, Morgana hasn't had many opportunities to use her magic for good and she



has been taught that magic is only a source for evil. For one, Morgana needs to keep her gifts hidden without anyone to guide her. Secondly, the people she feels most connected to, the druid folk, are persecuted and serve as a constant reminder that her identity could be her doom. And finally, evil people with magic keep turning up who manipulate her, including Morgana's half-sister, Morgause, who uses Morgana's magic for her own goal (destroying Camelot). One of the pivotal episodes in Morgana's villain-arc is season two's "The Fires of Idirsholas", where Merlin is torn because, to save the kingdom, he must kill Morgana, who, due to Morgause, is the source of Camelot's pending destruction. Merlin, not willing to reveal his true identity to Morgana, decides to betray her trust by poisoning her. In that moment, where she feels herself dying in Merlin's arms, she has lost her one true friend, the one who knew her secret and still cared for her. This loss pushes her over the edge and Morgana, who is saved by Morgause, falls into a spiral of hate: hatred for Merlin, for Uther, for Camelot. By not having faith in the glimmer of good left in Morgana, Merlin sets the path of fate in motion that ultimately causes the death of the great King Arthur.





Q & Alumni

Written by Hester Schneider; Edited by Julia Schuurmans

Mo Gordon finished her BA in English almost ten years ago, and already has a lot of experience in the work field. Having graduated with a Master's degree and earned her PhD, she has lectured at four different universities! The most outstanding of them seems to be in Switzerland. During our Skype call, Mo enthusiastically told me about her path from being a farrier to where she is now.

Why did you decide to study English? Was Utrecht a given?

That's a good question, for which I need to go back to the very past. Actually, I did something else before I started studying English. I was a bit older than most students, I think twenty-three or something like that. Originally, I was a farrier – basically a horse-smith – and I liked doing that, but it's physically very tough, and I also missed a bit of a mental challenge. So, because I'm half Scottish, it's part of my roots, why not study English? It was a bit impulsive because I didn't really have any sense of what that entailed. I just decided to do it, and Utrecht was closest by! It was practical, but it also just appealed to me most, when I went to the open day I liked the teachers a lot, that's what made me decide to go to Utrecht and study English there.

How did you like your studies?

The first year was quite challenging because I was a bit older than most and I kept my business as a farrier, so I worked alongside my studies, which was sometimes quite tough. Besides, I never went to VWO or anything like that, so I was a bit worried whether I was smart enough to keep up with everybody, but it was fine! I did quite well, and I enjoyed it. I was very linguistically centred from the start. I did like literature, but it wasn't really my cup of tea. As soon as I got the chance, I went into linguistics, and that's quite funny because I didn't even know it existed until I was introduced to it at Utrecht. Mostly historical linguistics got me really intrigued!

Do you have any favourite memories from your time as a student?

Well, it's different for you of course, but the first-year groups tend to really stick together (in compulsory courses), so you really bond over that as a group. I'm still in touch with most of the students from my first year, those I went through the same stuff with, studied for exams together etc. And that was quite a mixed bag because I remember the oldest student was in her fifties. There were nineteen-year-old students, me in my twenties, and then there was a lady in her fifties who all worked together, and I think that was quite interesting. That's definitely some of the fond memories I have.

Can you tell us something about your BA thesis?

I did my BA thesis on the Scots poet Robert Burns, again because of my roots, but from a historical point-of-view. So, I looked into the question of whether he was aware of the Southern English standard. In Scotland there used to be a standard English variety – or Scots variety – but Southern English won out at some point. The poet back then wanted to return to his roots, and write poetry in Scottish rather than Southern English. But at the same time, some of the Scottish features were kind of stigmatised, seen as less classy. And I was wondering if he was aware of that. So, I looked at whether he avoided these stigmatised and stereotypical forms that people would frown upon. Thus, he would keep his prestige, even in the south, not only in Scotland. He was aware of that and avoided these features that were seen as less classy. It was quite interesting to see!

What did you want to do after you graduated?

Did your plans turn out as expected?

I didn't really have any plans like I said it was kind of impulsive. I was just like 'I'm a farrier, I like this but I want to do something else' so then I just started studying without any plan. I just decided to enjoy myself, I did an MA after that because I

Curriculum Vitae



Dr. Moragh Gordon

Education

2003 – 2006

Graduated as farrier, AOC De Groene Welle, Zwolle, the Netherlands

2008 – 2011

BA English Language and Culture at Utrecht University

Thesis

Robert Burns as a Naive Genius: The Choices of an Eighteenth-Century Scots Writer in a Standard English World

2011 – 2012

MA Language, Mind and Society at Utrecht University

Thesis

"Making the Best Use of Bad Data"
-Phonological Variation and Historical Sociolinguistics

2013 – 2017

PhD Emerging Standards: Urbanisation and the Development of Standard English, c.1400-1700 Utrecht University

Thesis

The Urban Vernacular of Late Medieval and Renaissance Bristol

Jobs

May 2001 – November 2012

Part-time employee at Post NL

January 2007 – August 2012

Self-employed professional farrier

February 2017 – July 2017

Temporary lecturer in English Language and Linguistics at the University of Lausanne, Switzerland

September 2017 – September 2018

Temporary lecturer in English Linguistics and Sociolinguistics at University College Roosevelt, Middelburg

September 2018 – September 2020

Temporary lecturer in English language at Utrecht University

September 2019 – Present

Temporary lecturer in English language at Leiden University

still enjoyed it. Then, I did an internship which was again involved with historical linguistics, language from the eighteenth century. I enjoyed it so much that I ended up doing a PhD on that. None of this was planned, it just happened really! If you have a set plan, it can also impose quite a bit of pressure on you, so make sure to also just enjoy the process!

"If you have a set plan, it can also impose quite a bit of pressure on you, so make sure to also just enjoy the process!"

I noticed that you temporarily lectured English in Switzerland. Would you like to tell us more about that?

That was because of my PhD supervisor, she moved to Switzerland because she got a job there. She was part of an exchange project and got to teach in Venice, so I replaced her in Switzerland for the whole semester, six months. I got to stay in her lovely flat, it was quite a culture shock because it was in a French-speaking part of Switzerland. I do speak English but not French that well haha, it was quite an adventure. And uhm, Switzerland is very... bureaucratic. I had to get registered and go to the council house a lot. Half of the time I didn't even know what was happening, fingers crossed whenever I left an office, hoping I did it right and understood them correctly. Somehow I managed to! It's a beautiful country I have to say, on the weekends I would go on hikes and go to the mountains. I still miss the mountains, which is something I miss in the Netherlands anyway because in Scotland you still have hills, and it's just so flat here!

Do you have any advice for current students of English?

Thinking about my experience as a teacher (of English), I can say: try to also enjoy yourself while studying. What I notice increasingly is that (I'm not saying that applies to every single student), students are very concerned about their achievements and performances. I hope that they can focus more on the fun stuff, really try to find what they enjoy. When you have to write a paper, if you don't know what to do, ask yourself: what do you find interesting? Try to pursue that. That's kind of the theme of today as well, go with the flow! Follow your instincts and your interests! Try to enjoy it. Don't worry too much about the future. A bit of resilience will help you in the long run. Hang in there!

The Lady of Shalott

Original poem by Alfred Lord Tennyson

Written and Illustrated by Mohana Zwaga; Edited by Anna Preindl; Photo by Fenna Leeuwenburgh

In a time and age long lost, there once was a river which flowed all the way down to Camelot. In the middle of this river, surrounded by water lilies, was an island; an island named Shalott. Upon the island of Shalott stood a lonely, grey tower. In this bleak and lonely tower, lived a woman, equally lonely as her home. Her true name was Elaine, but none did know, as all her life she had been forbidden from leaving. Only in the early hours of the morning, the reapers in the fields would hear her sing. “The fairy Lady of Shalott”, they called her, as they whispered to each other at dawn.

In her tower, Lady Elaine sat at her loom, weaving the world she watched go by in a magical mirror that hung facing her. She wove the colourful lives she saw but was never to look down the river to Camelot, for she knew if she looked, a curse would befall her. And so, she sat and wove the shadows of the world, unable to catch the hues. The lack of vibrance saddened Lady Elaine and made her resent her shadows even more.

One day, a knight in armour of brass rode the way down to Camelot and passed the island of Shalott. His armour sparkled in the afternoon sun and as he rode, the gems on his horse’s bridle glimmered like a constellation of stars. The chime of the bells on his bridle reached the Lady of Shalott, and she watched him in her mirror. He began to sing, and as if spelled, Lady Elaine abandoned her loom and looked out of her window towards him, her eye following noble Lancelot on his way to Camelot. And just like that, the tapestry she had woven so carefully fell to dust, and her mirror cracked beyond repair. Doom dawned on the Lady of Shalott, and to herself, she whispered: “The curse has come upon me.”

And as the sky broke out in storm and heavy rain, the stricken Lady of Shalott left her lonely tower, for the first time and the last. Down to the wild water, she walked, until she came upon a boat. Into the wooden bow, she carved “The Lady of Shalott.” One last time Elaine looked along the stream to Camelot, solemn as a prophet foreseeing her own demise. As dusk fell and the stars appeared, the lady loosened the chain and lay herself down inside the boat. The current took her, floating down the river to Camelot.

And with the night, the cold came, and as Lady Elaine lay and sang, her blood slowly

froze inside her veins, until she finally died. Her boat sailed silently into Camelot, and all the knights and people of Camelot appeared from their rooms to behold the sight. On the bow of the boat, they read her name: “The Lady of Shalott.” Knight Lancelot, unaware of her until now, pushed aside the crowd and looked down on the dead Lady Elaine and remarked: “She has a lovely face; may God in his mercy lend her grace.”





Anna
Grendel



Cecilie
King Arthur



Eva
Lancelot
du Lac



Fenna
Sir Gawain



Helenie
Morgan
le Fay



Hester
Joan of Arc



Julia
Merlin



Leanne
Morgan
le Fay



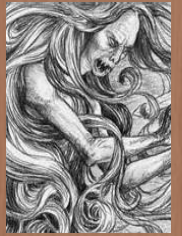
Marijn
Oonagh mac
Cumhaill



Marit
King Arthur



Marlies
The Green
Knight



Michelle
Grendel's
Mother



Mohana
Nimue



Rixt
Wife of Bath



Thijs
Reynard the
Fox

The Phoenix Team's Favourite Medieval Characters!

The Lady of the Lake



BOOKSHELF

Written by Eva Biesheuvel;

Edited by Marit Vogels;

Photos by Iris Bosma

in conversation with Iris Bosma

On a Sunday afternoon during the Christmas break, I called my lovely, fellow firstie, Iris. She was sitting on her bed with Grimm's "Complete Fairy Tales" laying next to her. She proudly showed it to me and told me she got it as a belated 'Sinterklaas' gift. Even though she wasn't feeling very well, she excitedly elaborated on it and smiled at me with the passion of a true book-lover. It was a great way to start off the interview, so it only felt appropriate to ask her more about her love for books after that.

What was your favourite book growing up?

I didn't really have a favourite book. I usually just went to the library with my mother and we hung around there and I'd get some books. Most of the time it was this huge stack and I'd read them all. I still have a few of the books I read as a kid because at some point I started collecting books and I don't like throwing them out. I used to reread them a lot, but then I grew older and now I don't really read those books anymore.

What is your favourite book now?

It's a hard question, but at the moment I'm reading *Memoirs of a Geisha* by Arthur Golden, and it's really good and I think this might actually be my new favourite book. It's about a girl that grows in a little village in Japan but at some point, she is sold and has to grow up as a Geisha. It's kind of hard to explain, though.

What was the last book you read for 'fun' and already finished?

The last book I finished was *The Name of The Wind* by Patrick Rothfuss, and then I started reading its sequel, *The Wise Man's Fear*, but I stopped reading that to read *Memoirs of a Geisha*. I bought *Memoirs of a Geisha* this summer and it has been staring at me for forever. At some point when reading *Wiseman's*



Fear, I needed to take a break because it's a long book and I just looked at the bookshelves like; Yeah, I'm going to read *Memoirs of a Geisha* now.

Do you have a favourite bookshop?

There's a bookstore in Den Bosch, it's called 'Adr. Heinen' and I usually go there. Whenever I'm shopping in Den Bosch, I go there as well. I can rarely leave a bookshop without buying a book.

Which book do you think is extremely over-rated?

I don't really have a book that I think is really over-rated, just because I don't personally like it doesn't mean it isn't good.

Which book are you most ashamed of for not reading?

I used to have *The Lord of the Rings* on my bookshelf for years and I kept planning on reading it and then I didn't read it, but I finally read it last summer, so I can't really give that as an answer anymore. I thought it was very hard to get through, but I really liked it.

Which books have you only read halfway through or less?

There are too many books that I've stopped reading probably, but I usually try to get through them anyway, because I feel guilty if I don't finish a book. I just have to push myself through them, and usually, it's not the book itself but just me not feeling like reading in general.

If you could recommend one of your books to me, which one would it be?

Memoirs of a Geisha. I'm a little bit over halfway through now, but I actually saw the film years ago, so



I know it has a good ending.

If you were to write a book, what would it be about?

That's a tough question because I actually really like writing in my spare time, but I just never have any proper ideas. I prefer writing fantasy or adventure because I just really love thinking of worldbuilding.

Which author have you read the most books of and why?

Sarah J. Maas. She's really good, I really like her books but I can't pick a favourite one, I think they're all great. I believe some people really don't like her, but I'm not one of those people. Her latest book *Crescent City* is very different from the books she has written before because it's set in this urban fantasy setting rather than like complete fantasy, but I liked it and I'm looking forward to the next book of this series.

Team literature or team linguistics?

Literature.

Are you already sure you're going to choose literature next year, then?

Well, I'm kind of just going to see how the new linguistics subjects will go, so I'm still going to wait to make my mind up definitely, but it's probably going to be literature.

What is your favourite film adaptation?

I think it could be *The Lord of the Rings* films. When I read the books I found that they were very different from the films, but I don't think that the films would've necessarily been better had they been more like the books. *The Lord of the Rings* films are already hours long and if they put every single detail in there it would've been impossible to get through the films.

What is your least favourite film adaptation?

There are a lot of them, but the first one that springs to my mind is *Eragon*. The film is terrible, even if it wasn't an adaptation and I hadn't read the books I would've thought it was terrible. It has been ages since I saw it, so I can't really explain what's so bad about it, but I just remember having this overall feeling, like; this is... no, just no.

Which book are you looking forward to reading next?

Oh god, too many. I've got too many unread books on my bookshelves, but I'm going to say *Grimm's Complete Fairy Tales* because it's right in front of me and I'm really excited to read it. I read some of the child-proof adaptations as a kid, but I've never read any of the original fairy tales by the Grimm brothers.

Do you have a favourite fairy tale from your childhood?

Well, I was always really into Disney princesses,



especially Belle, because I just love reading and she loves reading as well, so I always identified with her.

What is the best novel you read for a course?

We've only read *The Namesake* by Jhumpa Lahiri so far, but I know we're going to read *Pride and Prejudice* next block and I really love that book, so I think I'm going to pick that one. When I first finished *Pride and Prejudice* I bought a boxset with all of Jane Austen's novels. I haven't read all of them yet, but I'm really excited to read them.

Who is your favourite fictional character?

I feel like this is a really hard question, it's like picking a favourite book. It's just... there are so many different ones you can pick from and they all have their own qualities. But I think maybe Jane Eyre. I just really admire her because she went from basically nothing to finding her own path in this world. She's definitely an inspiring character.

Is there a book that took you by surprise when you read it because it was gifted to you without being on your wishlist?

A few years ago a friend got me *Heartless* by Marissa Meyer, and I didn't know Marissa Meyer yet, and I actually really enjoyed the book. The opposite happened when someone got me a children's book called *De Wolventemmer* when I was fifteen. I was like, 'dude, I'm not going to read this.' Well, I didn't say this to that person, but I never actually read it.

Since you didn't enjoy getting *De Wolventemmer*, do you not like reading young-adult books anymore?

I used to read a lot of YA, but I'm starting to feel like it's a little boring and predictable but I still enjoy it sometimes.

Judging a book by its cover is obviously something you aren't supposed to do, but do you have a book cover that you just really love?

I think I'm going to go with *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. I got this edition from Barnes and Noble, and it has a really nice cover and gold sprayed edges.

With that question, we ended our interview and wished each other a nice Christmas break filled with lots of amazing books.

Culture Corner: Cù Chulainn

Written by Hester Schneider; Edited by Julia Schuurmans; Illustrated by Marijn van de Visser

The name Cù Chulainn practically translates to 'the hound of Chulainn'. Now, why would a demigod be called a dog? As a kid, he apparently murdered the guard dog that protected a local smith. He felt bad and offered his services to replace him. So, in essence, Cù Chulainn was once a guard dog.

If you think this is shocking, prepare yourself. On the battlefield, Cù Chulainn basically entered these trances of superhuman rage, terrifying battle frenzies that are called *ríastrad*. I find 'warp spasm' more fun. People feared him and thought a wife would calm his rage (he was still a teen but oh well). The only woman he showed interest in was Emer. However, her father, Forgall Monach, was not fond of this idea. He sends Cù Chulainn off to go on a quest in Scotland (to train with the badass warrior woman Scathach), in the hopes that it would kill him. However, as these stories go, instead of dying in training, Cù Chulainn actually learns the arts of war. Scathach teaches him (along with his training buddy Ferdiad) how to use the *Gáe Bulg*, the spear of mortal pain. Scathach is then haunted by her evil sister Aife, she thought her trainee was too young for a battle this big. So, she gives him a sleeping potion to keep him safe, but Cù Chulainn sleeps off the potion much quicker than expected and joins the battle anyways. He ends up defeating Aife – yes he's just a kid, but don't forget the warp spasm. Cù Chulainn decides to spare her in exchange for a promise: Aife has to bear his child (yes, he is still just a kid). Oh, spoiler alert, Cù Chulainn accidentally kills this son.

Returning safe and sound from Scotland, technically, Forgall Monach has to allow him to marry his daughter Emer. However, he refuses again. So what does Cù Chulainn do? Like a sensible human, he just decides to storm the castle and kidnap Emer.

Later, at the age of 17, Cù Chulainn has to single-handedly defeat an entire army led by queen Maeve. Why is he alone you ask? Well, the rest of the army was apparently cursed with labour-pains (I'm not kidding!). So, he invokes the right of single combat and starts the killing.

After a weird encounter with the goddess Morrigan, Cù Chulainn faces a huge part of Maeve's army all at once. He gets injured, is healed by his father Lugh, and comes back as never before in his *ríastrad*: 'hulk' state. Then, he faces his training buddy Ferdiad and kills him with the magical spear of torture (it electrocutes you). Eventually, Cù Chulainn dies quite a heroic death – he ties himself to a stone so he can die standing. But no, the story is not over. His enemies don't believe that he is dead until a raven lands on his shoulder. At that point, some guy decides to cut off his head – then Cù Chulainn explodes with holy light, and the sword falls down, chopping off the guy's hand!



Culture Corner: Culhwch and Olwen

Written by Helenie Demir; Edited by Julia Schuurmans; Illustrated by Marijn van de Visser

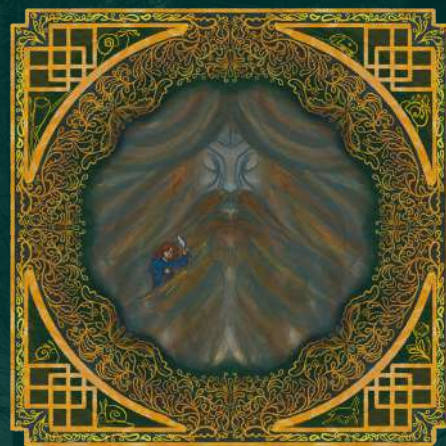
Love... Just as you thought it couldn't get any more complicated, the father of the only woman you can marry challenges you to do a couple of tasks. Just another 'normal' day in the Arthurian world.

After Culhwch (pronounced Kulwich) was born in a pig run, his mother, the queen, died, leaving him to be raised by pigs... because why not? His father, the king, remarries and when his new wife finds out about Culhwch's existence, she has the brilliant idea to couple him with her daughter. Culhwch refuses this marriage, so his stepmother curses him: the only woman Culhwch is allowed to marry is the daughter of Ubbaddaden the Giant: Olwen. Fate foretold that if Olwen were to get married, her father would die. And so, Culhwch sets out to find Olwen with the company of six warriors lent to him by his cousin King Arthur.

They set out on their journey and come across a shepherd who is Ubbaddaden's brother. He sets up a meeting between Culhwch and his, hopefully, soon-to-be wife. Olwen leads them to her father's castle, where the warriors and Culhwch attack him.

Ubbaddaden agrees to his daughter's hand in marriage if Culhwch completes a set of tasks. These all relate to the ceremonial cutting of Ubbaddaden's hair and shaving.

The party continues their adventure and completes the tasks given to them. After a lot of hunting and bloodshed, they return to the castle with everything they need to defeat the big Ubbaddaden. They put his head on a spike and so Olwen is finally free to marry Culhwch, they lived happily ever after.



Word of the Month: February "Apricity"

/ˈæprɪsɪti/

Noun

1. The warmth of the sun in the winter; basking in the sun.

Despite most people loving the heat and loving summer, my preference, by far, is winter. Since I'm allergic to the sun and heat I can barely go outside in the hot summer months or even in early spring without my skin suffering for it. That's why I love winter as much as I do. I sometimes get upset when people speak of their longing for summer and heat as I'll never be able to experience that in the same way. But that being said, I've learned to appreciate winter more and more as years passed. Especially since I grew up in the snowy landscapes of Scandinavia, I have developed a certain love for barren snowy landscapes; in real life as well as in literature and poetry. February, in particular, is special to me as it's the final month I can go outside and feel the warmth of the sun on my skin without any repercussions. You could see this as my final ode to winter before I'll go back into my room to live like a hermit until the winter cold returns. I look forward to feeling the sun shining on my face again in October, see you then!



Written and Illustrated by Cecilie Balemans-Højberg

Brwydr Camlan

King Arthur's Final Battle

Written by Cecilie Balemans-Højberg; Edited by Anna Preindl

'The Battle of Camlann', or more famously known as 'King Arthur's final battle' is, in my opinion, the most interesting story of the Arthurian legends, or even the most fascinating story in Medieval literature overall. This famous battle has, because of its popularity, been adapted into plenty of other forms of art, whether it'll be paintings, films or other literature, you'll likely come across it at some point in your life.

My favourite modern adaptation of the Arthurian stories, by far, is the BBC series *Merlin* as it follows the general line of the older Arthurian legends quite accurately (spoilers ahead!). If you're familiar with the Arthurian Legends, like me, you may have shrieked upon hearing that Arthur was planning on meeting Mordred at Camlann in the final episodes of the series. The series sets two clear opposing sides: Arthur, Merlin and the Knights of Camelot vs Mordred and Morgana. At the end of the battle, Mordred immediately dies, Morgana is mortally wounded but dies shortly after and Arthur is left mortally wounded. Merlin hopelessly tries to rescue the passing king by taking him to the lake of Avalon. Still, Arthur does not make it in the end, and Queen Guinevere is left to reign over Camelot. While the BBC Series may seem to have a pretty clear image regarding Arthur's final battle and seems to have a plan for what happens after Arthur's death, this has not always been the case. BBC *Merlin* ends with the message that Arthur is never gone, and will return when Albion is in dire need, however, most of the medieval manuscripts that describe Arthur's life and death are left quite vague. This is the case for many stories involving King Arthur, we are not completely sure as to if it really happened or not. The first mention of this final battle stems from the year 537 in the text *Annales Cambriae* which speaks of when King Arthur and Sir Mordred fell. The sad part is though, that this early version had very few details, for example, we do not even know if Mordred and Arthur were actually enemies or fighting alongside each other. Quite strange, isn't it?

I would say the real blueprint for the modern adaptation of 'The Battle of Camlann' can be found in Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae*, which was written roughly 500 years after this first manuscript. Books IX and X speak of how King Arthur left to fight the Romans, leaving Sir Mordred in charge. Yet Mordred betrays his nephew and marries Queen Guinevere in secret and claims the throne now that Arthur is gone. Upon Arthur's return, he and his army come to face Mordred at Camlann. In this version of the battle, there's a clear divide between Arthur and Mordred, which is left quite vague in the *Annales Cambriae*. Geoffrey of Monmouth's writing ends with the death of Sir Mordred and leaves King Arthur mortally wounded. Arthur is taken to Avalon in the hopes to recover, but, as the words 'mortally wounded' have already predicted, he does not make it and passes his legacy on to Constantine. The fact that Constantine is depicted as Arthur's heir in this blueprint story leads him to become the heir to King Arthur in many adaptations or later versions that speak of the death of Arthur and the future of Albion.

As previously mentioned, Geoffrey of Monmouth's version of 'The Battle of Camlann' has become the textual source for many Arthurian stories, the most notable being *Culhwch and Olwen* and of course Sir Thomas Malory's *Le Morte d'Arthur*. The latter might be the first book about King Arthur that comes to mind, as this had become the main source for the literary revival that took place in the 19th century. The striking thing about Malory's version is that contrasted to *Historia Regum Britanniae* there is no final resolution, we don't know Arthur's fate, there's no prophecy for the future. Some adaptations, like BBC *Merlin*, for example, state that King Arthur will one day return when Albion needs him most. That's the fun thing about Arthurian Legends, whether or not they agree on a certain outcome, they are not only very enjoyable on their own, but they also spark other beautiful adaptations and works of art for everyone to revel in!

Prophecy of King Arthur's Death

"Let loose the hounds of war,
Let the dreadfire of the last Priestess
rain down from angry skies,
For brother will slaughter brother,
For friend will murder friend,
As the great horn sounds a cold dawn at Camlann,
The prophets do not lie,
There, Arthur will meet his end,
Upon that mighty plain."

From BBC Merlin



Illustration by Marijn van de Visser and Marlies Riemens

Modern Depictions of the Arthurian Legend

Written by Cecilie Balemans-Højberg; Abstracted by Leanne van Kampen;

Edited by Michelle Moonen; Photo by Fenna Leeuwenburgh

How come Tennyson, in *Idylls of the King* and Twain, in *A Connecticut Yankee at King Arthur's Court*, approach the topic of King Arthur in such different ways despite the books being written quite closely together timewise, and how does their vision of the Middle Ages feature in their works? The texts contrast each other in the sense that Tennyson resorts to idolising and idealising Arthur, whereas Twain merely resorts to satirising it, despite both books being written during a time when the Middle Ages were starting to get more recognition as well as being viewed more positively.

An explanation for why Tennyson resorts to idolising and idealising Arthur while Twain does not, despite both books being written during the 19th century, might be found when looking at the historical context. While Tennyson lived in a place where the medieval revival had taken place already, Twain had not yet experienced this. It makes sense that Twain was still stuck in the 19th-century American view, where the Middle Ages were indeed dark and inferior to the technological advancements and values of the modern age, while Tennyson, on the other hand, was now viewing the Middle Ages as a Golden Age where everything was better than the current era.

Between the two books, Tennyson's *Idylls of the King* adheres to the more modern view of the Middle Ages in which the Arthurian era is idealised and idolised, whereas Twain's *A Connecticut Yankee at King Arthur's Court* results to satirise the Arthurian era. Tennyson, and the people in the Victorian age, appreciated nature and the idea of courtly love more. This is reflected in Arthur who embodies the chivalric values that Tennyson admires. In Twain, however, the protagonist's impression of the Middle Ages is not positive at all and he suggests that the medieval lifestyle was inferior to his 19th century way of living. Twain uses the protagonist to tear down the myth and glory that surrounds Arthur's court.

When it comes to looking at how the authors approach the topic of King Arthur in such different ways and how their vision of the Middle Ages is featured in their works, it is quite simple to explain. While Tennyson grew up in a time and place where the Middle Ages were romanticised, Twain did not. Therefore, it makes sense that Tennyson resorts to idolising Arthurian England. Meanwhile, for Twain, it makes sense that he ridicules it since there had not been a medieval revival yet at the time of writing. In the end, Tennyson sticks to the courtliness and glory that surrounds the Arthurian legend, while Twain strips away the idyllic and courtly aspects and satirises the world of King Arthur instead.



Illustration by Mohana Zwaga

The Rune Poem

1915 Translation by Bruce Dickens; Selected by Cecilie Balemans-Højberg

ƿ Wealth is a comfort to all men;
yet must every man bestow it freely,
if he wish to gain honour in the sight of the Lord.

ᚢ The aurochs is proud and has great horns;
it is a very savage beast and fights with its horns;
a great ranger of the moors, it is a creature of mettle.

ᚦ The thorn is exceedingly sharp,
an evil thing for any knight to touch,
uncommonly severe on all who sit among them.

ᚷ The mouth is the source of all language,
a pillar of wisdom and a comfort to wise men,
a blessing and a joy to every knight.

ᚹ Riding seems easy to every warrior while he is indoors
and very courageous to him who traverses the high-roads
on the back of a stout horse.

ᚺ The torch is known to every living man by its pale, bright flame;
it always burns where princes sit within.

ᚷ Generosity brings credit and honour, which support one's dignity;
it furnishes help and subsistence
to all broken men who are devoid of aught else.

ᚦ Bliss he enjoys who knows not suffering, sorrow nor anxiety,
and has prosperity and happiness and a good enough house.

ᚱ Hail is the whitest of grain;
it is whirled from the vault of heaven
and is tossed about by gusts of wind
and then it melts into water.

ᚦ Trouble is oppressive to the heart;
yet often it proves a source of help and salvation
to the children of men, to everyone who heeds it betimes.

ᚪ Ice is very cold and immeasurably slippery;
it glistens as clear as glass and most like to gems;
it is a floor wrought by the frost, fair to look upon.

ᚫ Summer is a joy to men, when God, the holy King of Heaven,
suffers the earth to bring forth shining fruits
for rich and poor alike.

ᚷ The yew is a tree with rough bark,
hard and fast in the earth, supported by its roots,
a guardian of flame and a joy upon an estate.

ᚫ Peorth is a source of recreation and amusement to the great,
where warriors sit blithely together in the banqueting-hall.

ᚷ The Eolh-sedge is mostly to be found in a marsh;
it grows in the water and makes a ghastly mound,
covering with blood every warrior who touches it.

ᚷ The sun is ever a joy in the hopes of seafarers
when they journey away over the fishes' bath,
until the courser of the deep bears them to land.

ᚷ Tiw is a guiding star; well does it keep faith with princes;
it is ever on its course over the mists of night and never fails.

ᚷ The poplar bears no fruit; yet without seed it brings forth suckers,
for it is generated from its leaves.
Splendid are its branches and gloriously adorned
its lofty crown which reaches to the skies.

ᚷ The horse is a joy to princes in the presence of warriors.
A steed in the pride of its hoofs,
when rich men on horseback bandy words about it;
and it is ever a source of comfort to the restless.

ᚷ The joyous man is dear to his kinsmen;
yet every man is doomed to fail his fellow,
since the Lord by his decree will commit the vile carrion to the earth.

ᚷ The ocean seems interminable to men,
if they venture on the rolling bark
and the waves of the sea terrify them
and the courser of the deep heed not its bridle.

ᚷ Ing was first seen by men among the East-Danes,
till, followed by his chariot,
he departed eastwards over the waves.
So the Heardingas named the hero.

ᚷ An estate is very dear to every man,
if he can enjoy there in his house
whatever is right and proper in constant prosperity.

ᚷ Day, the glorious light of the Creator, is sent by the Lord;
it is beloved of men, a source of hope and happiness to rich and poor,
and of service to all.

ᚷ The oak fattens the flesh of pigs for the children of men.
Often it traverses the gannet's bath,
and the ocean proves whether the oak keeps faith
in honourable fashion.

ᚷ The ash is exceedingly high and precious to men.
With its sturdy trunk it offers a stubborn resistance,
though attacked by many a man.

ᚷ Yr is a source of joy and honour to every prince and knight;
it looks well on a horse and is a reliable equipment for a journey.

ᚷ Iar is a river fish and yet it always feeds on land;
it has a fair abode encompassed by water, where it lives in happiness.

ᚷ The grave is horrible to every knight,
when the corpse quickly begins to cool
and is laid in the bosom of the dark earth.
Prosperity declines, happiness passes away
and covenants are broken.

Beowulf & Bilbo

Two heroes fighting a dragon

Written by Julia Schuurmans; Edited by Marit Vogels; Illustrated by Marijn van de Visser

For an issue about the Middle Ages, J.R.R. Tolkien might not be the first writer that pops up in your head. However, because of his influence in the modern fantasy genre, I did want to give him some time to shine and explain why he fits in this issue. Most of us will be familiar with the epic poem *Beowulf*; one of the most important works in Old English Literature. When I was reading *Beowulf*, I saw many similarities to Tolkien's *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* series. At the time, I'd only seen the films, since then I've read *The Hobbit*, and I am now reading *The Lord of the Rings*.

Beowulf is an epic poem set in the 6th century in Scandinavia. The hero is Beowulf, he helps the King of the Danes, Hrothgar, because his mead hall has been attacked several times by the monster Grendel. Beowulf slays the monster and later also its mother. After being praised for his victories, Beowulf returns to Geatland, where he becomes the King of the Geats. The poem fasts forward to fifty years later, Beowulf needs to fight a dragon that became enraged after the theft of a golden cup. During the battle Beowulf is wounded, so Wiglaf helps Beowulf, together, they slay the dragon. Beowulf dies of his wounds, after his death, the people build a barrow to remember him.

Tolkien was specialised in Old English Literature, some say the criticism on *Beowulf* started with him. In his essay (first delivered as lecture) "*Beowulf: The Monsters and the Critics*", he argued that *Beowulf* should be looked at as a work of art and not just a historical document. Tolkien also drew attention to previously neglected literary qualities of the work. He definitely was familiar with *Beowulf*, when he wrote his books. His novels were important in the development of the fantasy genre.

In the works of Tolkien, many different influences are visible, so is Middle Earth based on the Norse Mythological 'Midgard', and there are a lot of Christian themes. In *The Hobbit*, Bilbo and his company, are on their way to fight a dragon, Smaug, who has claimed the gold of the dwarves. Bilbo, although small and 'just' a hobbit, seems to surprise everyone while he saves his friends multiple times. After Bilbo stole from Smaug's treasure, Smaug burns everything down, similarly to *Beowulf*'s dragon. Another well-known character is Gollum, inspired by *Beowulf*'s monster Grendel. Like Grendel's description in *Beowulf*, Tolkien chooses to only describe Gollum's eyes. Besides these obvious similarities, subtle ones can be found too. Many of the names in Tolkien's works have some kind of origin in Old English or are from different mythologies.

I wanted to conclude this article by saying that, even nowadays, writers can take a lot of inspiration for the Middle Ages and medieval works. Some stories are well-known yet when "put in a new jacket", as we Dutch people like to say, they can once again become extremely popular.



Minor Market

Brains and Bodies at Utrecht University

Written by Imke van Dam; Edited by Anna Preindl

As an English Literature student, it feels like quite a brag to tell people I follow a neuroscience minor. However, in this minor, called Brains and Bodies, it isn't all brainwaves and mind games - it's actually not much of that at all. When I first discovered this program while browsing through the minor catalogue, it presented itself to me as "cognitive neuroscience made for and related to humanities." I thought: "that sounds like fun," and went on choosing that minor (I know, not a very ground-breaking, soul-searching story). The minor is spread over the four blocks of an academic year and the courses have beautiful names: The Narrative Human Being in block 4, The Sensitive Communicator in block 3, The Thinking Body in block 2 and, best of all, Neuroscience for Dummies in block 1. (Don't worry, they'll remove the for Dummies part on your diploma.) So far, I've completed the first course and am on my way to finish the second, and I have to say I'm really enjoying myself! I'm quite interested in matters concerning the brain or mind, but the best thing about this minor is that they take you beyond the stereotypical take on cognitive

neuroscience. It's not just the brain, but also some psychology, your body, the environment and a little philosophizing and the best thing is that you can relate it to whatever you find interesting within humanities. Language, art, culture; it all comes from us as humans. Because of this (and because this minor is made for humanities) you're free to relate the course materials to your own interests. For the first course, we could choose a field within cognition to write our papers about. I chose eye-tracking because I found its usefulness for literary studies very interesting. For the second course, we could choose anything and relate it to a newer, very media-grounded form of embodied cognition. So, I'll be writing about Hamilton the musical and on how Burr's movements and use of metaphors relate to his way of thinking and his performative role in society. Sounds great, right? This minor opened my eyes to all the possibilities that lie before us as humanities students. I have even decided to write my BA thesis within empirical literary studies, a combination of cognition and literature, a field I'll get to know in

Master Market

Ancient, Medieval and Renaissance Studies at Utrecht University

Written by Juliane Witte; Edited by Anna Preindl

Roughly a year ago, I found myself wanting to go back to university, which didn't surprise any of my friends or family. I already completed a BA and MA in the UK and had then spent four years working in China, but I missed studying and learning. Having tasted the independence of working and creating my own schedule, however, I knew I needed to look for a programme that would allow me a similar kind of freedom. My previous studies had been in literature - specifically medieval literature - and I knew the Middle Ages were what I wanted to continue specialising on. There are quite a few programmes around the Netherlands focusing on the Middle Ages and many have their benefits, but it was the RMA Ancient, Medieval, and Renaissance Studies at the UU that truly caught my eye. To be able to follow the Medieval track offered me plenty of freedom to choose my electives, thus the RMA track turned out to be the perfect programme for me. The first year of the programme is a good balance of core-courses and electives, meaning that every student gets to create their own RMA schedule. This means I was able to continue focusing

on literature while learning more about Medieval history. It is up to you to shape your programme and it is expected that you take the initiative on this. The core modules focus on making sure you develop and enhance both your understanding of your chosen time period and your research skills, while the electives allow for further depth. This then prepares you for the second year during which you have the options of attending classes at other universities, do a term abroad or complete an internship, before spending the last two blocks writing your thesis. My experience so far has been very positive! While still in my first year, I have already been able to reach out and discuss my next steps with my lecturers, whether it is plans for my dissertation or hopes for afterwards. That is actually the main thing that has struck me during this RMA. The openness and support from the lecturers have been great, especially considering the current COVID situation. If you're looking for a supportive environment that will help you develop your historical or literary interest, this is the place!

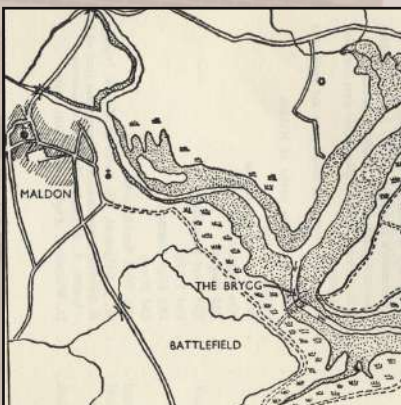
Phoenix ranks

Written by Marit Vogels; Edited by Michelle Moonen; Photo by Fenna Leeuwenburgh



Beowulf is an epic poem written in the Anglo-Saxon period. The poem begins with Hrothgar, king of the Danes. He and his people lived peacefully, until a monster called Grendel, who is a descendant from Cain, attacks his people. What's interesting about this poem is the way it grabs the reader's attention almost immediately. The epicness of this epic poem is quickly introduced and never fades after that. It's conflict after conflict, which makes the poem easy to read. The storyline is engaging and draws the reader in. If you are looking for a poem that will keep you at the edge of your seat the entire time, *Beowulf* it is.

Wulf and Eadwacer is an Old English Poem, which is preserved in the Exeter Book of the late 10th century. The poem follows a female and is enriched with imagery and wording that leaves room for interpretation. Since there is no fixed meaning to the poem, it leaves room for your thoughts, which is nice. You can interpret every sentence the way you think it was meant, without being wrong or right.



The Battle of Maldon, also an Old English poem, is a fairly short poem, which makes it easy to read. Since the beginning and end of the poem no longer exist, only the middle part is readable, which means that the part that has survived is very intriguing and exciting. The Battle of Maldon is about the Anglo-Saxon army fighting against the Vikings. The poem is mostly about defeat and grief. But loyalty to the lord and fellow warriors are big themes in this poem too. This poem is a must-read if you like Old English poems because all I can do is grieve that the rest of the poem has been lost.

Cynewulf and Cyneheard, a short story written in 786 AD, absolutely belongs on this list as well. It is a retelling of a true story about the King of Wessex called Cynewulf. The story is quite short, which is too bad because the story itself is pretty good. The writer sets some really good scenes and it almost felt as if I was there. However, the dialogue in the story was a bit disappointing. The conversations felt rushed and very stilted. But, if the story was a bit longer that might not have been a big deal, since the story itself was highly entertaining and full of action.



Phoenix Reviews

A CONNECTICUT YANKEE AT KING ARTHUR'S COURT BY MARK TWAIN

Written by Marit Vogels; Edited by Julia Schuurmans; Photo by Fenna Leeuwenburgh

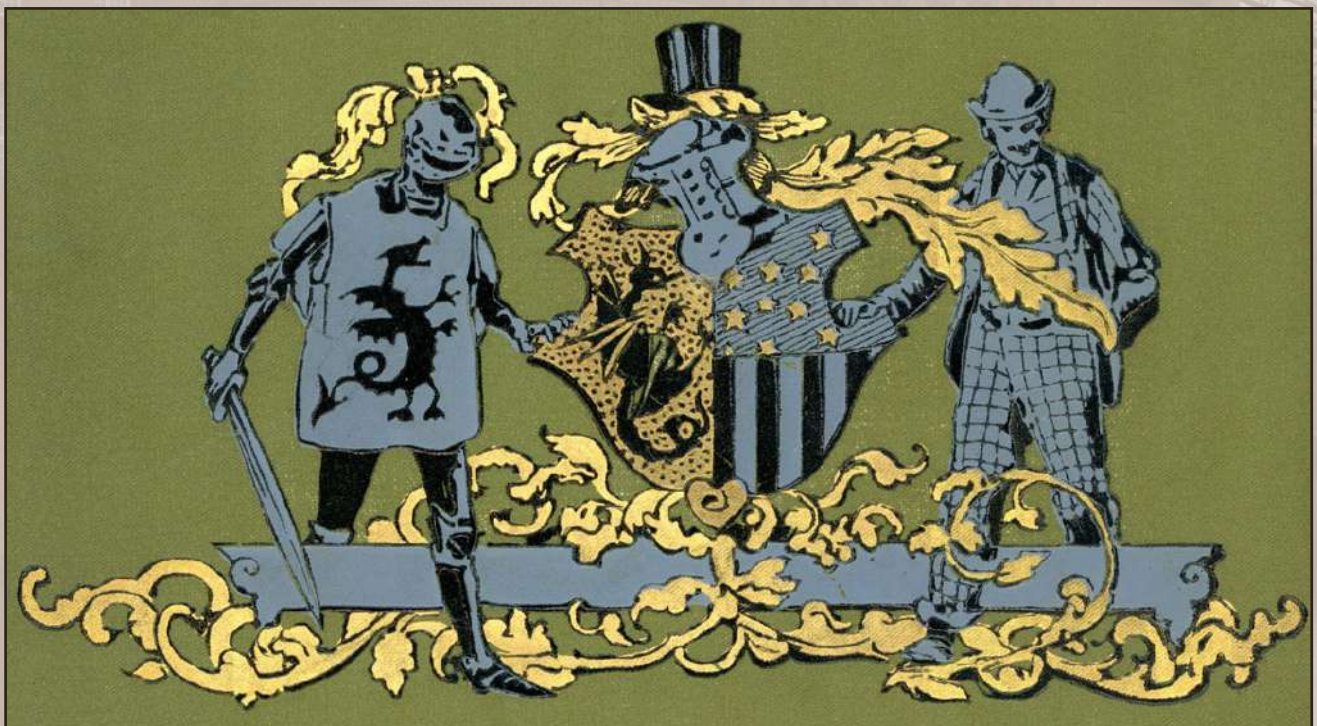
I give this book 4 stars! ★★★★★

A Connecticut Yankee at King Arthur's Court, written by Mark Twain, tells the story of a Yankee engineer, Hank Morgan, who lives in Connecticut in the 19th century. When Hank suffers from a severe blow to the head by a crowbar, he is transported thirteen centuries back into the past. He enters Britain during the reign of King Arthur, which were known as the Dark Ages. When his execution is ordered, he tricks the people into believing he is a magician. From this moment on, he tries to modernize the past.

This novel was believed to be the foundational time-travel work in the science fiction genre. This time-travel tale demonstrates how technology and science would affect a medieval society. It was interesting to read how the medieval characters reacted to such changes. It was very thought-provoking to read about what would happen if we were to travel back in time with the knowledge we have now.

However, this book is quite long for the story. Sometimes parts felt repetitive and even unnecessary. Although the writing of Mark Twain makes up for it and made the book enjoyable. This novel is not a light read, but that is unimportant since it is still a great look into the witty mind of Mark Twain.

This book has something for everyone. Whether you like fantasy, satire, science fiction or King Arthur, this book is for you. It is funny, thought-provoking and a great "what-if".



The Griffin

Written by Thijs Biezen; Illustrated by Marlies Riemens

a red cloak sweeps behind me
as a calloused hand holds my blade
and a dented shield protects me
metal plates over a vest of rings
ricochet the pounding of my heart
that beats in my throat

visor pulled down, forming slits
through which I gaze ahead
at my formidable opponent

a lion, no, a griffin, rears back
before it charges, and I dive
to the side, out of death's path

but the beast does not surrender
and pounces, its front legs on my chest
as it... meows?

I close my eyes, open them again
and I'm back home, staring at my cat
clutching a sword made of cardboard