King Arthur: Legends Based On Real Events And Can Be Used As Accurate Historical Documents

The Arthurian legends are some of the most well-known stories, recreated in many forms of media and familiar to much of the world. The existence of King Arthur has been deliberated over for years, with many theories surrounding his identity and life. If King Arthur did exist in the past, we must consider the level of veracity in the legends. Due to the nature of story-telling, facts and events may have been twisted or exaggerated from their origin over time. Because of this, we cannot use the legends as historical documents, but the morals within the stories hold true. It is the virtues displayed that keep the legends relevant to and well-known by many throughout the centuries.

While the Arthurian legends are enjoyed by many, they are scarcely believed in. It is not so much a religion as it is a set of tales featuring chivalrous knights, an idolised king, and magic. The first significant writing about Arthur was in Geoffrey of Monmouth's twelfth-century book The History of the Kings of Britain, which chronicles the lives of the earliest rulers. Monmouth gives the first extensive account of King Arthur's life and exploits. Chrétien de Troyes is credited to adding Lancelot and the holy grail to the stories, as well as stoking the flame of Arthurian romance as a genre. A 19th century monk, Nennius, wrote a book called the History of the Brittons, in which he gives the name Arthur to a sixth-century Roman- general who waged some successful battles against invading Saxons. It is likely that parts of Arthurs life were based on things real historical figures did, but there is no one that we can be certain he was modelled off of. Monmouth's writings claim Arthur was conceived at Tintagel castle, Cornwall, but there is no evidence of this at the site. Further stories additionally claimed it to be his birthplace. The earliest Arthurian legends may have been based on true events from different sources, but there is no concrete evidence outside of medieval literature that King Arthur really existed.

Even if King Arthur did exist, and the stories were true when written, they would have changed massively over time due to the nature of literature and story-telling. There were many versions and additional details added to the Arthurian legends over time. The morphing story has gone on for centuries, warping further from it's origin as time goes on. While the accumulated literature contains differing ideas, when the stories are discussed and shared across the medieval populous, facts can be forgotten, exaggerated, and ignored to become far different to the first stories. According to Bournemouth University archaeologist Miles Russell, many details were added to the stories in The History of the Kings of Britain centuries later to make Arthur a more appealing figure. "Truth be told, the Arthur of Geoffrey of Monmouth is a deeply unlikable sociopath, a violent, quick-to-anger, murderous thug," says Russell. "He is someone who very much fits the Dark Age idea of a successful king, but not a hero for the Middle Ages." The character King Arthur was altered to become more easily idolised, and what we know of him now is therefore inaccurate. We cannot use modern Arthurian legends to emulate medieval writing, let alone as historical documents.

Modern Arthurian legends are not accurate examples of medieval literature despite their origins, and cannot be used as historical documents due to lack of evidence of their central character, King Arthur's, existence. But why are they so well-known in both medieval and today's societies? The stories surrounding Arthur were morphed over time to have depict positive ideas

and practises, such as moral integrity, loyalty to one's friends and kin, abiding by the law and defending the weak. This is the foundation of the tales, and the core that has kept them relevant and to be re-told countless times over generations. It is the morals displayed in the legends that form the cornerstone of how Arthurian fellowship has been defined through the centuries. They offer the reassurance that doing the morally right thing is important, even if it might lead to temporary defeat. In the end, virtues and values prevail and it is these enduring features of the legends that have kept them alive in the hearts and minds of so many for so long. Audiences seek reassurance in the models of the past, and want a standard of visionary leadership and morality to look up to in this confusing and sometimes frightening world. They often look to the lore of King Arthur to occupy this role for them. While we cannot use Arthurian legends as true descriptions of the past, they remain relevant due to the lessons contained within them. This is the core that has held audience's attention all for centuries.

The existence of King Arthur has been considered and studied by countless historians to little effect. It is still highly doubted that he was real, but likely his story was quilted together from other kings' actions in history. Even if he did exist, the legends have been changed so much over time there will be little truth to the modern tales. There are many versions of the legends, and additional stories that have different events and details, many of these differences relating to the morals of the characters. They were altered to be idealistic examples of chivalry and other appealing attributes, and have been looked up to for centuries. It is the moral foundation of the stories that has kept them around for so long.