

LEGENDS OF KING ARTHUR AND THE KNIGHTS OF THE ROUND TABLE

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REAL-LIFE ARTHUR

500 A.D. When the Roman Empire fell in Britain, there was probably a British general who resisted the invading hordes of barbarians. Legends of this general evolved into tales of a king who ruled during this turbulent time.



Throughout the Anglo-Saxon time period, legends of Arthur remained alive.

But it wasn't until knights and chivalry came to Britain that the stories took their most famous form.

1066 A.D.—William the Conqueror, the Duke of Normandy, crossed the English Channel and conquered Britain

This ended the Anglo-Saxon time period in Britain and marked the beginning of the Medieval Age.

**The Battle of Hastings
1066 A.D.**







THE NORMAN INVASION 1066

Several new ideas were brought into Britain

Stonework: William forced lords to build their castles out of stone

Feudalism: Instituted the system of Feudalism (High king, lord, knights, peasants)

The French Language

Chivalry: Knights were mounted warriors who operated by a strict code of conduct, subjecting themselves to the king and the church



Feudalism

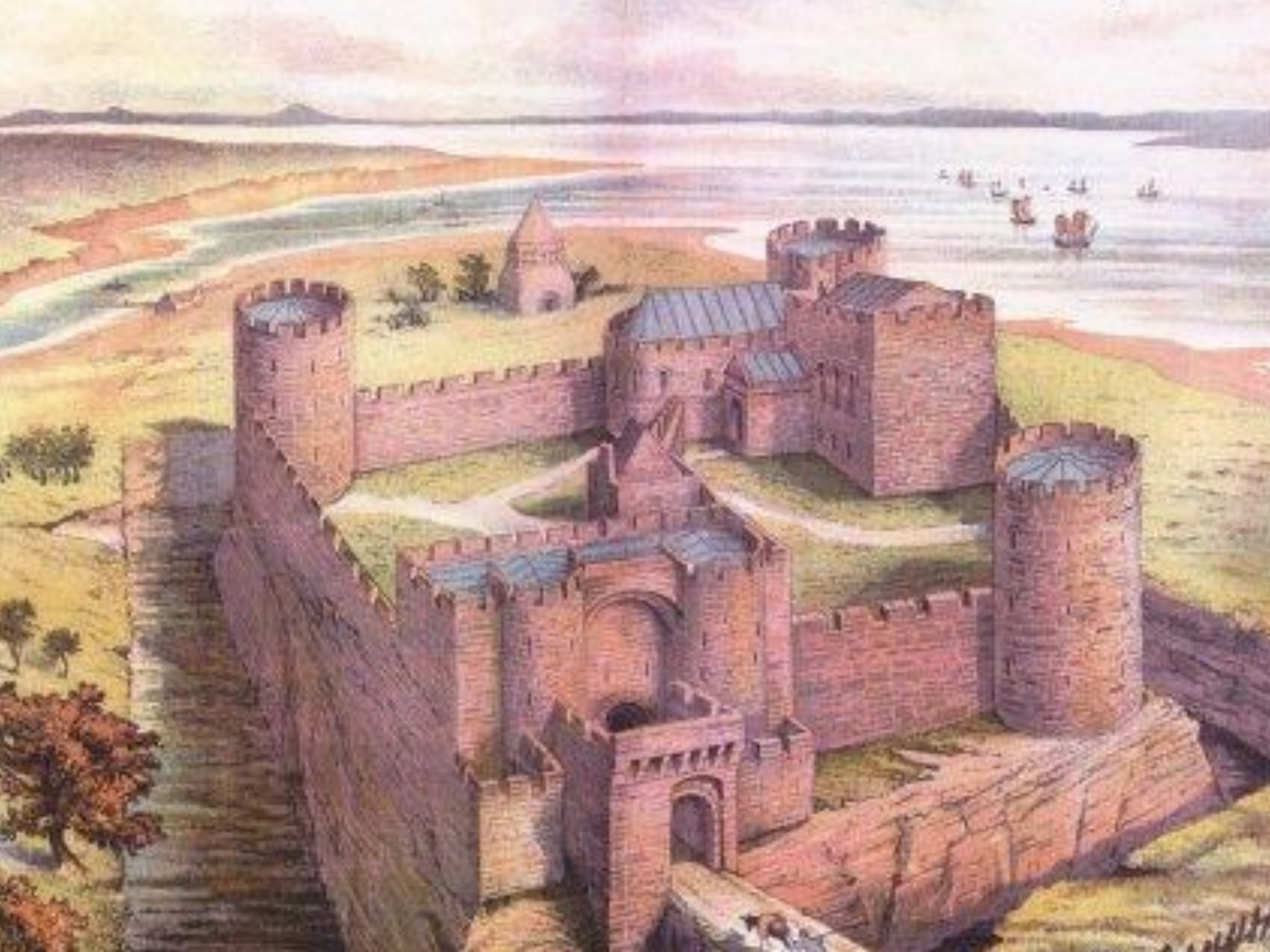
Under this system the King divided up his land among his lords for them to operate. In turn they owed him their loyalty and the use of their knights.

These lords granted lands to knights, who in turn had to fight for the lords.

Peasants lived in squalid huts on the lands of the lords and knights, working the land in order to keep part of the crop for themselves.







CASTLES

Feudalism caused the lords to prosper, and soon there were over 500 stone castles in England

Most castles came with the newest defenses:

Drawbridge Portcullis

Arrow Loops Moat

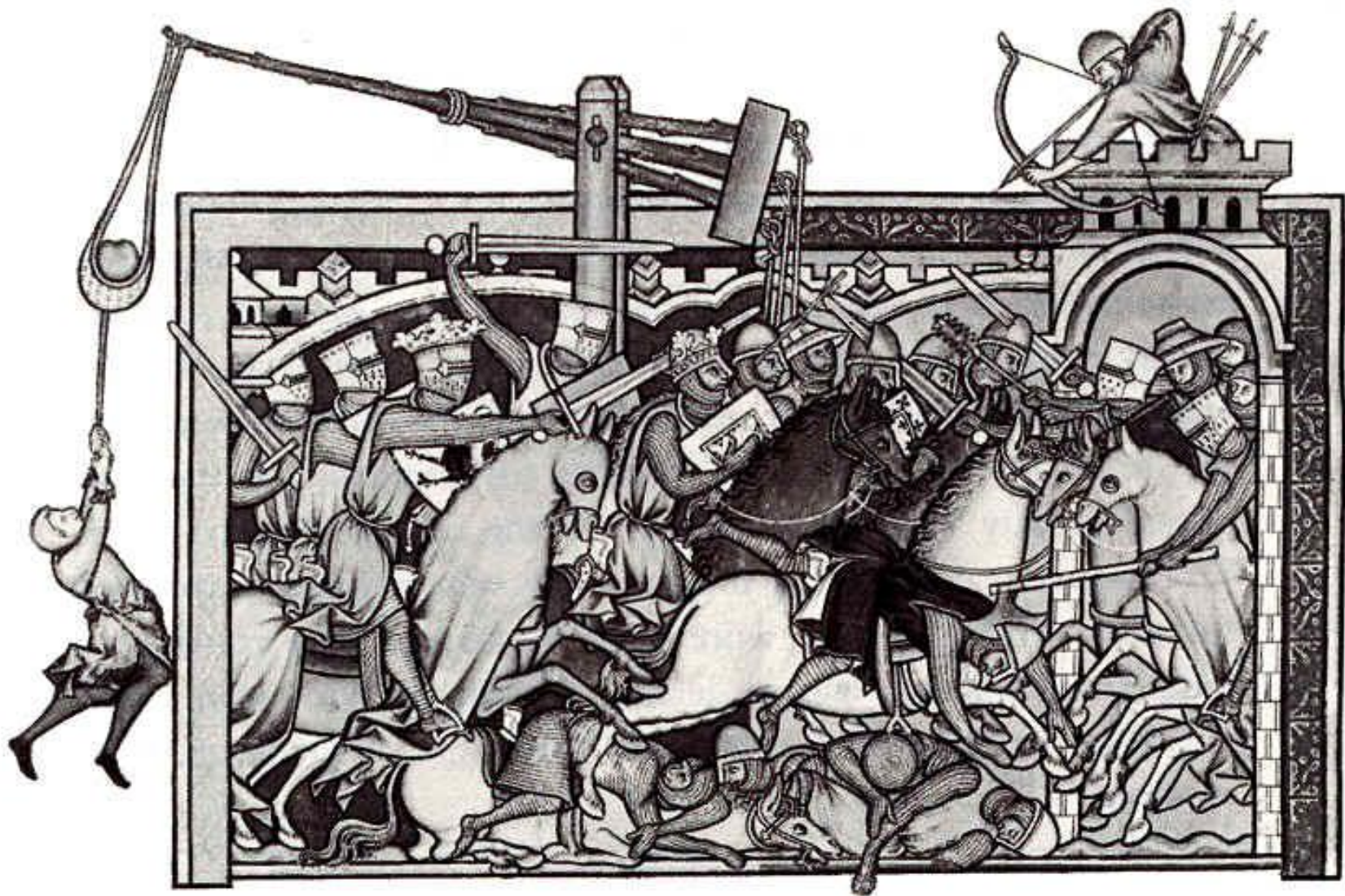
Machicolations = overhangs through which projectiles could be dropped or boiling liquids poured

Dungeons and Oubliettes (or deep pits filled with adders and toads)









Defending the Castle

Siege: Surrounding your enemy's castle, attempting to starve them out or fight your way in

Sieges were much more common than large battles. Some castles kept a year's worth of food and supplies on hand in case of a siege.

For a siege to be withstood the castle well had to stay active. One siege ended very quickly after the well dried up and the castle-dwellers resorted to drinking the blood of their horses and each other's urine.

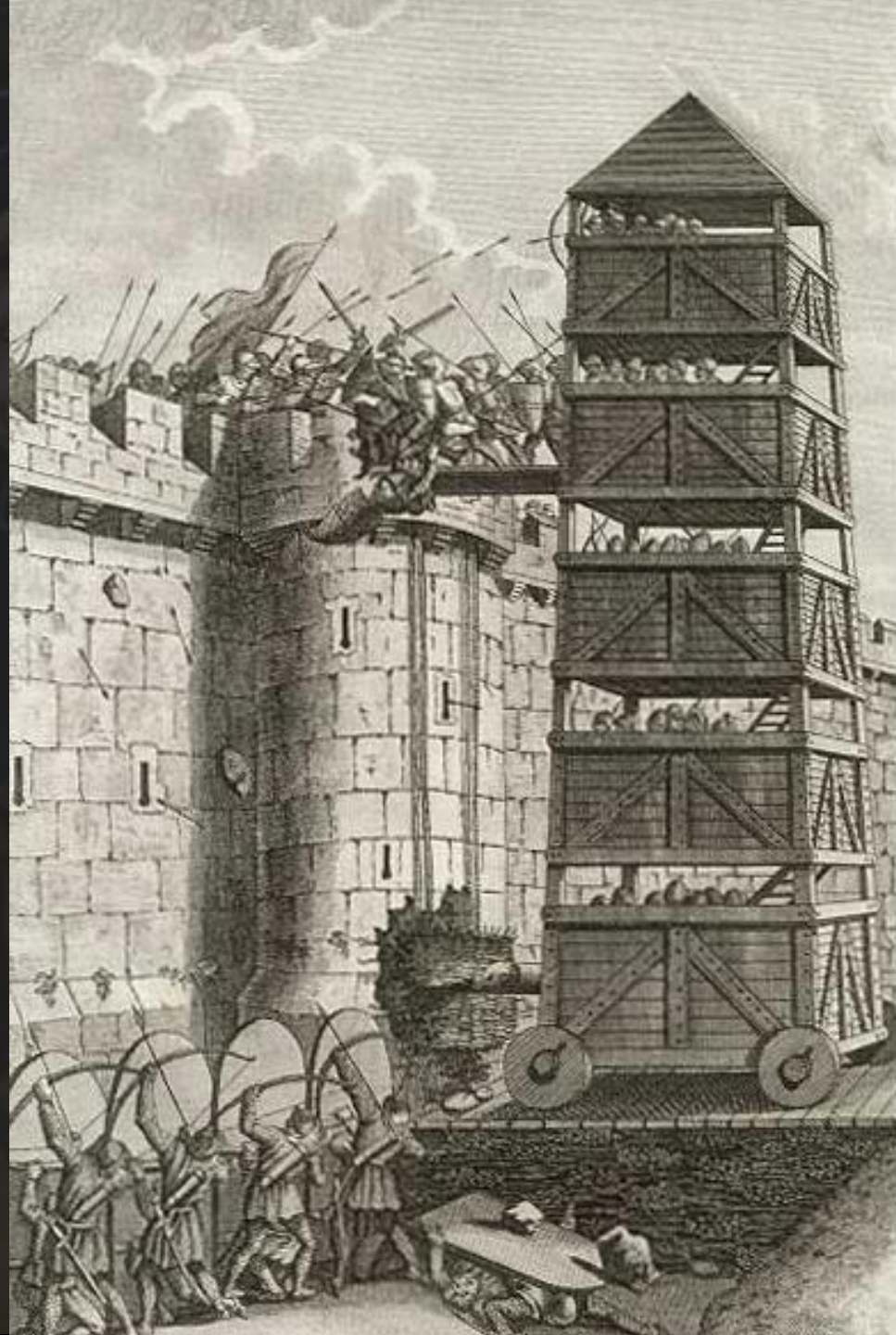


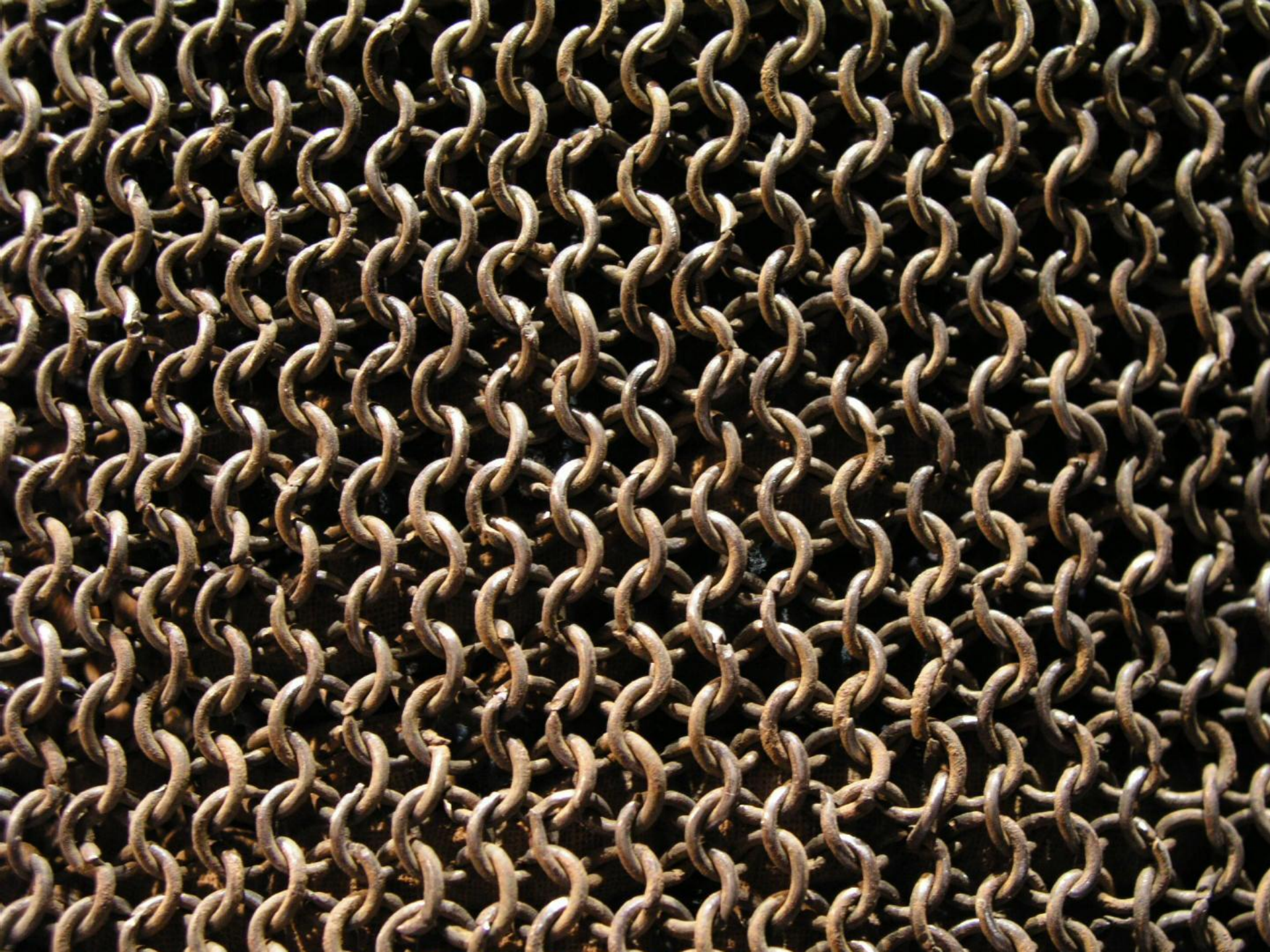
Castle Weaknesses:

- Siege towers
- Filling the moat
- Trebuchet attack
- Grappling up the wall
- Sneaking up the latrine













LE MORTE D'ARTHUR (The Death of Arthur)

The most famous version of
the King Arthur legends

Set the stories firmly in the
medieval time period

Combined many of the
previous legends into one long
version of the life of Arthur

Written in 1485 by **Sir Thomas
Malory**, an actual knight

Malory wrote *Le Morte
D'Arthur* in prison, while
serving time for charges of rape
and theft





ARTHUR

King of Britain

Founder of the Round Table

Wielder of Excalibur

His reign meant a period of justice and peace for Britain

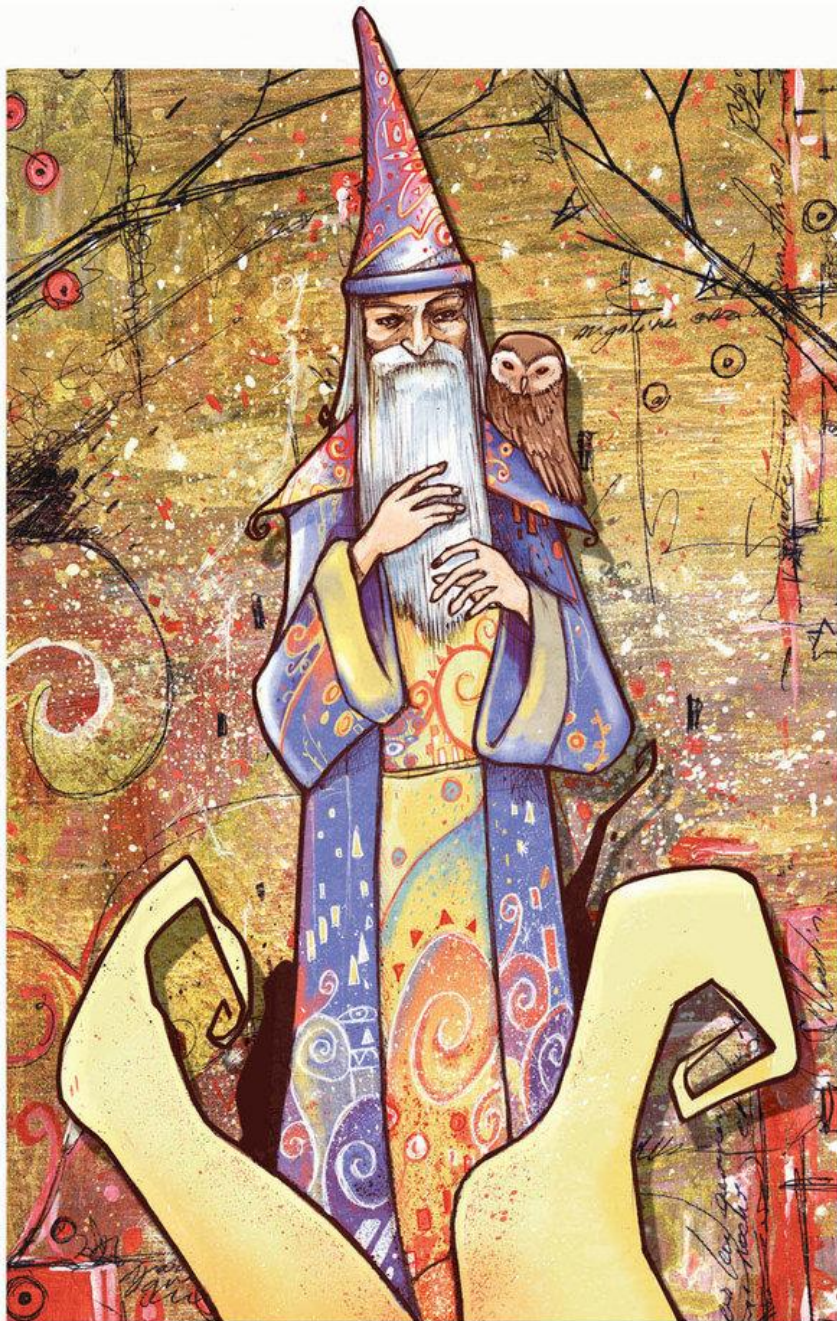
Described as a medieval Christian king











MERLIN

Prophet and magician

Born without a father

Sired by a devil

Arthur's mentor from the time he was crowned king to his union with Guinevere

Symbolizes the old pagan past of Britain

Oversaw the construction of Stonehenge



ceste



MERLIN





EXCALIBUR

King Arthur's sword

Given to him by the Lady
of the Lake

Symbolizes his right to rule











GUINEVERE

Wife of King Arthur and
Queen of Britain

The Round Table came as part
of her dowry



QUEEN GUINEVERE







LANCELOT

King Arthur's best knight

Raised by the Lady of the Lake in her magical underwater palace

Example of the ultimate knight, the epitome of chivalry









MORGAN le FAY

Le Fay means
“of the faeries”

King Arthur’s half-sister

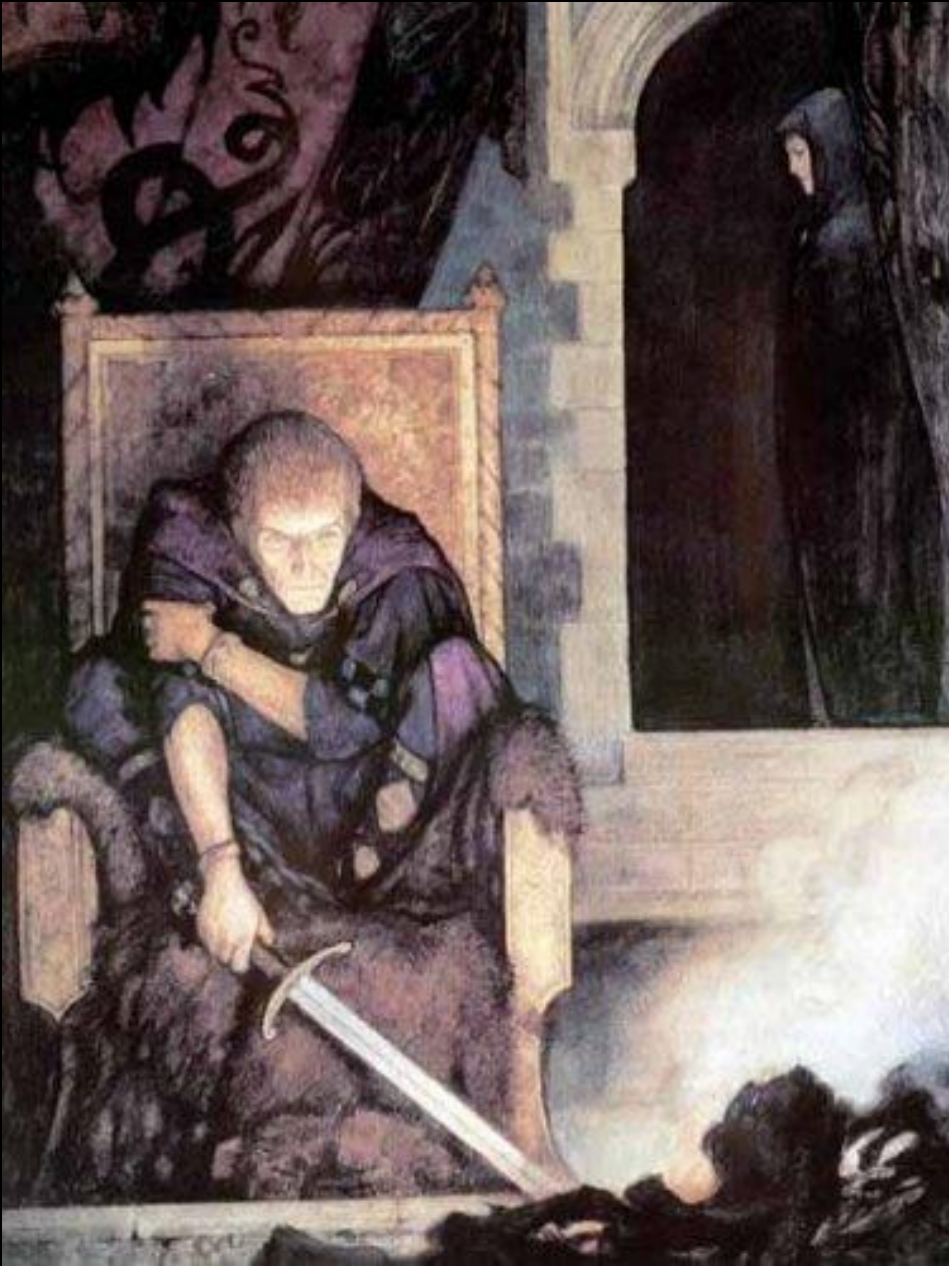
Evil sorceress

Constantly tries to usurp
Arthur and defeat his
knights









MORDRED

King Arthur's
illegitimate son

Becomes his father's
enemy





CAMELOT

Arthur's castle and capital city

Home of the Round Table

Symbolizes the ideal society based on the concepts of chivalry

It is a fictional city, but it has been identified with the ruins of Cadbury Castle in Somerset, England.









Cadbury Hill in Somerset, England



Cadbury Hill in Somerset, England



Shield discovered at Cadbury Hill