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Professor Koster

English 510

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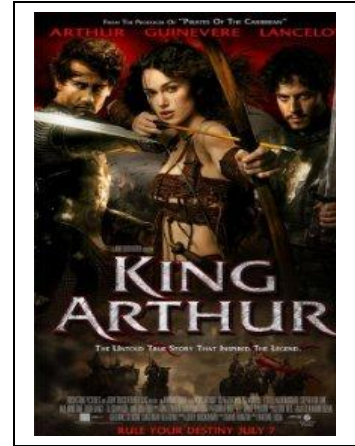
Filmography for *King Arthur* (2004)

Director: Antoine Fuqua

DVD: Touchstone Pictures and Jerry Bruckheimer Films

Also Known As: *King Arthur: Director's Cut*

IMDB Site: <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0349683/>



Cast:

Olive Owen	Arthur
Ioan Gruffudd Owen	Lancelot
Mads Mikkelsen	Tristram
Joel Edgerton	Gawain
Hugh Dancy	Galahad
Ray Stevenson	Dagonet
Keira Knightley	Guinevere
Stephen Dillane	Merlin
Stellan Skargard	Cerdic
Til Schweiger	Cynic
Sean Gilder	Jols
Pat Kinevane	Horton Ivano
Ivano Marescotti	Bishop Germanius
Ken Stott	Marius Honorius

Script: Not available

Major Reviews:

Sun Times,

<http://rogerebert.suntimes.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20040707/REVIEWS/407070301/1023>

London Times Online,

http://entertainment.timesonline.co.uk/tol/arts_and_entertainment/film/article457977.ece

King Arthur Website: <http://video.movies.go.com/kingarthur/mainsite.html>

Synopsis:

In an attempt to create a more historical version of the Arthur story, director Antoine Fuqua sets his Arthur story in the middle of the 5th century a.d., when the Romans are leaving Britain, creating a power vacuum in which the Anglo-Saxons, led by warrior Cerdic, are gaining a foothold in Britain.

The character of Arthur, renamed Artorius Castus, is loyal to Rome and a Christian, and was chosen to lead a group of Sarmatian knights, including Lancelot, to defend the “civilized” half of the island. When the time comes for Arthur and his men to receive their freedom from service, the Bishop Germanus, a man who holds influence over Arthur, withholds the necessary papers in order to demand that the knights go on their most dangerous mission yet: to save the Roman family of Marius from the Anglo-Saxon invaders who have an estate behind Hadrian’s Wall because the son, Alecto, is important to Roman officials.

Upon arriving at the Roman estate, Artorius’s belief in an idealized Rome, based on his experiences with a Roman Bishop, is shaken due to the tyranny that the estate owner practices, and, although it risks the lives of both the knights and the Roman family, Arthur decides to evacuate the entire settlement. Among the people in this settlement is Guinevere, a woman who would do anything to protect the native peoples of Britain. She has been brutally beaten and imprisoned, along with a small boy and others, and Arthur releases the prisoners, basing this in his belief of equality and freedom for all men.

Along the route, Guinevere reveals Arthur to be half Celt, on his mother’s side, and her loyalty to the Woads, Merlin’s clan, is established. She takes Arthur to meet with Merlin, and during a flashback, Arthur’s mother is shown being killed in a Woad attack on a Roman settlement. As a young boy, Arthur releases Excalibur, the sword of Arthur’s father and at his burial site, in an attempt to avenge his mother’s death. Merlin tries to reason with Arthur, saying that they had not intended on killing her because she was of their blood, and suggests an alliance with Arthur to fight the Saxons.

Marius takes the small boy hostage in an attempt to take control of the camp, and Guinevere shoots him dead. It is also on this stretch of the journey that Arthur learns that the Roman Bishop whose ideas he has believed in has been killed as a heretic by none other than Bishop Germanus himself.

When Tristan tells Arthur that the invading Saxons are catching up to them, Arthur decided to gain the peasants time to reach Hadrian’s Wall by having a standoff with part of the Saxon’s army on an ice-covered lake. Guinevere aids in the fighting, and although the knights emerge victorious, they lose one of their members and become greatly disillusioned about the nature and cost of their freedom.

Upon reaching Hadrian's Wall, Guinevere aids in persuading Arthur to forsake his allegiance to Rome and help the Woads in the fight against the Saxons. Although the knights disagree with his decision at first, they eventually join with him.

As the battle ensues, Guinevere, dressed in Woad gear, nearly falls victim, but Lancelot saves her life and loses his own in the process, bringing to conclusion a subtle relationship between the two.

Several other knights die, but the Woads and Arthur are victorious. Arthur and Guinevere are married, and Arthur is crowned king of the Britons, ushering in an age based on the ideals that Arthur never gave up.

Suggested Readings:

Jockel, Sven, and Thomas Dobler. "The Event Movie: Marketing Filmed Entertainment for Transnational Media Corporations." *JMM: The International Journal on Media Management* 8.2 (2006): 84-91. Web.

Link to pdf: <http://0-web.ebscohost.com.library.winthrop.edu/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?sid=fa15c925-b10e-42ca-a869-cafe52c61aa6%40sessionmgr13&vid=2&hid=15>

Haydock, Nicholas. "Digital Divagations in a Hyperreal Camelot: Antoine Fuqua's *King Arthur*." *A Companion to Arthurian Literature*. Ed. Helen Fulton. Singapore: Blackwell Publishing, 2009. 525-542. Print.

Link to ebook:
http://books.google.com/books?id=IzzEI3nnFpgC&pg=PA525&dq=Digital+Divagations+in+a+Hyperreal+Camelot:+Antoine+Fuqua's+King+Arthur&hl=en&ei=Di7dTbDPNZG3twe-j_HDDw&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=1&ved=0CCoQ6AEwAA#v=onepage&q=Digital%20Divagations%20in%20a%20Hyperreal%20Camelot%3A%20Antoine%20Fuqua's%20King%20Arthur&f=false

Note: This is NOT the entire text. I only included it so that if anyone is interested in reading this, they would be able to have a preview. I am not sure if this is available through Pascal or ILL. -Jessica

Suggested Questions:

1. What Middle Ages are evident through the scenes in the film? Explain your answer.
2. How is the director's portrayal of the Middle Ages appropriate for contemporary viewing audiences?

3. Contrast the Middle Ages in the three modern films *Beowulf*, *The Thirteenth Warrior*, and *King Arthur*. How does each of these “pop culture” films provide a “trust” factor as indicated by Umberto Eco?
4. How does this medieval film present a “convincing picture of life” as described in William Woods’ work?
5. Does *King Arthur* provide an imaginative “immediacy and reality” as argued by Driver? (21) Defend your answer.
6. In our reading for today, Shippey argues that “Even historians, however, have been very reluctant to give up the knightly image [of Arthur] learned in childhood” (311). Contrast what you know of “low” medieval life to the image that Fuqua forwards in *King Arthur*. Why would the director make these changes?
7. As Shippey points out, there is an incredible emphasis on the word “freedom” in this movie. How might that be based in the modern “dreaming” of the Middle Ages?