"I expected... something":
Imagination, legend, and history in TripAdvisor reviews of Tintagel Castle

Previous research (Robb 1998, Orange & Laviolette 2010) has described the interpretative tension at Tintagel Castle between history and Arthurian legend; since these articles were written, a sculpture 'inspired by the legend of King Arthur, by the historic kings and royal figures associated with Tintagel', and a carving of Merlin's face have been added to the site. Using discourse analysis of TripAdvisor reviews, this article explores how legend and history are experienced by visitors. Despite an 'inextricable' link with Arthur, his actual absence here in both physical and narrative realms equals an absence of imaginative stimulus, for which the statue, while enabling superficial physical interaction, cannot compensate. Likewise, many reviewers see the medieval remains not as a presence of ruins but an absence of castle, and are similarly uninspired to transport themselves into a historical narrative. It is only reviewers inspired by history who engage the ruins as a 'thing' whose imaginations immerse them in their visit.

Keywords: imagination; legend; place; Tintagel; King Arthur

Inextricably linked with the legend of King Arthur, for centuries this dramatic castle and coastline has fired the imaginations of writers, artists and even the brother of a king.
Now it's your turn to be inspired.

Tintagel website, English Heritage 2018

Tintagel Island, on Cornwall's north coast, is infused with history and legend. It was inhabited from the fourth to sixth centuries AD, Tintagel Castle being built in the 1230s by Richard, Earl of Cornwall and destroyed by 1337. Its ruins form the bulk of the material remains now visible (Rollason 2012; Thomas 1993). The legend narrative, in which King Arthur was conceived and born at Tintagel – appeared in Geoffrey of Monmouth's *History of the Kings of Britain* (1136)*,* a connection later taken up by Tennyson and other Victorian writers (overview in Orange & Laviolette 2010: 89-90).

Legend and history at Tintagel have been explored in the context of English Heritage's interpretative strategy[1] (Orange & Laviolette 2010; Robb 1998). Robb notes conflicting messages in interpretation, an 'officio-academic agnosticism' about Arthur (Robb 1998: 587), which Orange & Laviolette find still to be the case in 2010 when 'a significant number of visitors were left in a certain state of interpretive limbo' (Orange & Laviolette 2010: 105). Further renovations to the site were introduced in 2016, including more detailed information boards, a carving of Merlin's face, and a bronze sculpture 'inspired by the legend of King Arthur and Tintagel's royal past' (English Heritage 2016) as new 'highly imaginative outdoor interpretation across the site, bringing its history and legends to life' (Fenton 2016).

Stories at a site are not of course simply already 'there', since 'any "heritage" is socially produced and historically contingent' (Cohen & Cohen 2012: 13; cf. Bajc 2006, Bendix 2002, Harvey 2003). Rather, they are '…a form of transmission of collective memories in which time and place are conjoined through meta-framing practices' (Bajc 2006: 10), an individual yet socially situated process (Chronis 2006; Nuryanti 1996: 253; Urry 1990). One aspect of this 'meta-framing' involves situating legend in physical space (Bajc 2006), as noted by Robb and Orange & Laviolette. This is nothing new – at least three regions' tourism websites claim Arthur as their 'own' (Cornwall, Shropshire, and Wales) – as places are 'signposted so that tourists can find them as 'sites' and locate them within an imaginative landscape where they become meaningful as 'sights'' (Gregory 1988: 117). This creation of an imaginative landscape from narratives of place is linked to people's urge to 'find a physical place for their imaginings' (Gao et al. 2012: 200). But the effect of this rooting in place must vary as a

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[1] English Heritage is a registered charity that cares for over 400 historic buildings, monuments and sites across the UK.

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function of the *type* of narrative that is being situated. A historical event in a particular place is, while still subject to the mutability of a cultural imaginary (Chronis et al. 2012), inevitably attached in a different way to legend. As Robb observes, narratives of Arthur exist in a 'non-place realm' that excites visitors' expectations of a particular place even while being only ephemerally attached to them (Robb 1998: 581).

Indeed, legend can be represented by 'specific ''imaginative geographies'''(Gao et al. 2012: 201; Aitken & Valentine 2006; Cloke et al. 1999). Legend narratives can 'attach' to sites such that a 'myth or a story as a stimulus introduces a place and creates its collective public identity' (Gao et al. 2012: 208), being more or less salient depending on the individual (Bajc 2006; Busby & Laviolette 2006). Anchoring of legend with place is evident in other 'fantastical' narratives, notably Dracula (Huebner 2011; Light 2007; Stoleriu & Ibanescu 2014), Shangri-La (Gao et al. 2012), and Robin Hood (Everett & John Parakoottathil 2018; Lyth 2006). In all cases, a legend's association with a place is perpetuated and concretised by tourist boards, heritage sites, popular culture, and tourists themselves, including on social media. In this capacity for shift from a 'non-place realm' to a 'place realm' lies, as Robb and Orange & Laviolette note, the need for a historicising interpretative approach that rejects the mythical to establish its veracity but must simultaneously acknowledge it as integral to the site's meaning.

This dual identity and the relation of the stories to the physicality of the site gives rise to deeper questions that underlie and go beyond the tension in site interpretation discussed in earlier research: (How) do legend and history function and manifest in the visitor experience? Does engagement with one or other give rise to different experiences? The present article builds on those of Robb (1998) and Orange & Laviolette (2010) to explore further Tintagel's dual identity in the context of this imaginative sense of place and physicality, by considering legend and history and their function in visitors' expectations and experiences, using TripAdvisor reviews as data and discourse analysis as a mode of inquiry.

Methodology
TripAdvisor[2] is a valuable source of data on the heritage tourism experience (e.g. Carter 2015; Munar and Ooi 2012; Owens 2012), in addition to allowing reviewers to co-construct that experience (Lund et al. 2018, Ramirez-Gutierrez et al. 2018), passing impressions to future visitors to form expectations of a place (Gretzel 2007, Gretzel and Yoo 2008); recent research has considered the role of user-generated content in tourism (e.g. Gretzel 2007; Narangajavana et al. 2017; Öz 2015). An alternative to more formal review genres (and indeed more formal data collection methods), it allows reviewers to react with unfiltered immediacy (Ramirrez-Gutierrez et al. 2018: 644):

> In Tripadvisor the value of the review is based on the personal expression of feelings and emotions brought about by the travel experience […] contributors … take on a more personal and unpretentious tone. They express 'raw' positive and negative emotions such as pleasure, discontent, anxiety and relief. Most of these emotional expressions are not long, guarded reflections, but short, expressive exclamations of immediate pleasure or displeasure (Munar & Ooi 2012: 8).

While issues of objectivity and trust should be borne in mind (particularly a possible social desirability bias), it is the very subjectivity of the reviews that is of interest here. In addition, the sample is, of course, self-selecting, comprising only those who leave reviews, possibly not wholly representative of the visitor experience. Nevertheless, reviews' immediate, affective nature makes the genre an interesting lens through which to view tourists' impressions, whether positive or negative, affective or cognitive.

This subjectivity makes the data particularly germane to discourse analysis, since 'linguistic features point to the meaning of events or experiences for the teller' (Bazeley 2013: 69). Visitor reviews of Tintagel Castle from summer 2018 formed a corpus of 386 reviews (32,581 words), coded

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[2] https://tripadvisor.mediaroom.com/uk-about-us

using MaxQDA.[3] First, data was categorised into broad themes (legend, history, scenery, access). Reviews were coded as 'legend' if they mentioned, even in passing, the Arthur legend or magic and myth broadly; and as 'history' if they alluded to the castle as historic (rather than as scenery) or to any other aspect of the 'real' history of the site. Coding then focused on a subset of legend and history fragments identifying features of language such as vocabulary (including emphasis, pronouns, nominalization), voice (active or passive), tense, grammar, metaphor or cliché, and types of discourse (e.g. literary, commercial, political) (Fairclough 1995).

Distinguishing history and legend
Considering history and legend as dichotomous, or differing, concepts is not entirely straightforward, in theory or in the reviews. The distinction has not always been as clear-cut as fiction versus fact (Heehs 1994; Lorenz 1985; McNeill 1986; Veyne 1988: 7).[4] Robb, following Hewison, points to the distinction of 'cultural' truth and historical truth (Hewison 1989: 17 cit. Robb 1998: 581; Lowenthal *passim*).[5] While 'history' is not objective, being subject to bias and inaccuracy (Chronis 2005: 393; Lowenthal e.g. 1998: 126ff.), legend resides in collective memory, in the stories that societies tell (Bajc 2006; Gedi & Elam 1996; Nora 1989: 8).

The extent to which our reviewers are aware of a distinction varies. Some reflect explicitly on the relationship, describing a '13th century castle wrapped in Arthurian legend' ('Soak up the magic at Tintagel Castle', UK) or asking 'Did King Arthur exist? Who knows, but the Rock has been inhabited since the 400's and the Castle has been here 900 years' ('Magical place, amazing views, not for elderly or toddlers', US). However, others blur the boundary: it is a magnificent place to visit 'whether the <u>history has any truth</u> or not…' ('try to make it to the top', np, my emphasis) and another describes the '…old <u>legendary castle…</u>' ('A walk around the ruins', UK). The underlined phrases suggest that, for some, '[i]n the world of tourism, fantasy and reality are interwoven' (Nuryanti 1996: 250), terms even conflated by English Heritage, where the statue '<u>inspired by the legend</u> of King Arthur […] is the centrepiece of new <u>interpretation which explores the history</u> of the Cornish castle' (English Heritage 2016); Robb notes this practice in other guidebooks (Robb 1998: 593).

Motivations and expectations: awareness of narratives
The majority of Orange & Laviolette's interviewees were familiar with the legend (Orange & Laviolette 2010), but it is interesting to observe in the context of discourse analysis what reviewers choose to include and exclude. Reviews were coded 'Preconception' if they explicitly or implicitly alluded to motivations or expectations (41 text fragments) (Kladou et al. 2015; Poria, Butler & Airey 2004). Many reviewers 'did not know what to expect' ('<u>Breathtaking views</u>' 1, UK), 'came with few expectations' ('<u>Breathtaking views</u>' 2, UK), or came because it 'was included in our pass so we decided it was worth a visit!' ('<u>Amazing Views</u>', Australia). Review titles are short and describe the view using a superlative adjective, perhaps deriving from their very lack of narrative: with no expectations, there is no 'experience gap' (Bendix 2002: 475). In terms of the functioning of place, it seems the scenery here is the focal point.

A second group has specific but rather begrudging motivations, suggested by the language of mandate ('must see', 'felt had to') (MacCannell 1976) and passive rather than active verbs ('was considered'):

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[3] TripAdvisor allows a rating of 1-5 stars: this is not considered here due to the small sample. Each reviewer must provide a 'title', used here to designate each review instead of username or star rating. Reviewer's country of location is indicated; 'np' indicates that 'no place' is provided.

[4] Whilst 'legend' and 'myth' are distinct – the former based more on realism and the latter more on the supernatural – the terms are often used interchangeably.

[5] There is not space in this article to consider Tintagel explicitly in the context of authenticity *per se*, although there would be much to be said in the light of accusations of its 'Disneyfication', particularly from the local community (Fenton 2016; e.g. Knudsen & Rickly-Boyd 2012; Rickly-Boyd 2010).

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This <u>was considered</u> a <u>"must see"</u> while in Cornwall... ('Spiritual Experience', US)

Having been to Cornwall many times <u>felt had to</u> finally visit ('Underwhelming....', UK)

Others are more positively motivated without elaborating a specific narrative, italicised phrases showing their positive, affective experiences:

On my holiday to Cornwall <u>there was one place I wanted to visit</u> and this was it. I personally wasn't disappointed *I loved it*. ('Fantastic place !!!', UK)

<u>I was planning to visit this castle for ages</u> and *I was so happy* finally I got there. ('Must visit', np)

Others (n=10) brought personal stories from previous visits, for whom involving family in their ongoing relationship with the place was important motivation (Crang 1994: 23; Poria et al. 2006), the repeated use of 'we' and personal details ('for my birthday', 'first visit for 50 years') reflect the visits' intimate, communal nature:

<u>We</u> last visited it in 1968 so <u>were looking forward to stirring up some good memories</u>. <u>We</u> were not disappointed ('<u>First visit for 50 years</u>', np)

I visited <u>about 35 years ago</u> and wanted to come back and see the castle ruins again <u>and my wife for my birthday</u> booked a trip [...] lots to see if you like ruins <u>as we do</u> ('Breathtaking views', UK)

Many reviews (n=24) did indicate history- or legend-based expectations, what that 'history' would look like:

I didn't read up about Tintagel before going and <u>if I'm honest I was expecting a castle</u> and for it to be similar-ish to St Michaels Mount - but it's nothing like it! ('Make sure you have a big breakfast!', UK)

Or how the history and legend would be interpreted:

Being <u>a fan of Arthurian legend but also a keen historian know</u> it is based on myth rather than legend I was expecting a rather tacky exhibition filled with myth. How wrong was I! ('More than I expected!' UK)

Others brought a particular story of Arthur with expectations of the tangible: 'Wanted <u>to see the legend</u> on King Arthur' ('History and Climbing all in one', UK), the desire to 'see' a 'legend' again conflating the concepts. Similarly, another '...went to Tintagel to specifically <u>see King Arthurs castle</u> ruins' ('I need to be fitter', UK), attaching a legendary narrative to an expectation of physical (historical) remains.

Two reviewers had legend motivations from childhood. One is broadly positive yet perhaps brief for such a long-held ambition: 'Somewhere I had wanted to visit since being a school girl, I wasn't disappointed' ('Mini break', np). The other uses exclamation marks and superlatives, describing 'growing up watching movies about King Arthur, and the legends of old!! ('Tintagel castle and eating experience', np), but despite this there follows a nearly 300-word narrative only of a disappointing café experience.

Reviews with no particular expectations, or whose expectations are personal, have scenery or family acting as the focal point of place; the reviews of those who do bring expectations based in legend or history are more polarised in enthusiasm.

Thematic overview

The analysis below considers all reviews that fall into the category of 'legend', 'history', or both, as part of a data subset. Removed reviews pertain largely to access practicalities,[6] typical of this genre (Munar and Ooi 2012: 9-10; Lund et al. 2018).

An additional theme is the dramatic coastal scenery, about which a great many reviewers enthuse, though there is no space to consider this in detail here. Scenery can provide a place-based focal point for visitors whether legend- or history-inspired, arguably incorporating both into a wider aesthetic experience in which the stories are at most atmospheric details. Indeed, it can enhance not just the aesthetic experience, but the interpretative. Rickly-Boyd & Metro-Roland describe 'nature and wildlife as preparatory catalysts to imagination prior to arriving' at a site, with '...pre-existing, background features (its stream, forest, and wildlife), which work in consort with its structures to create an atmosphere that once validated by the tourists' imaginations allows them to further engage with the site's story' (Rickly-Boyd & Metro-Roland 2010: 1176). Whilst most reviewers – even those whose visit overall seems disappointing – enthuse about the scenery in and of itself, there are many (61) for whom scenery and history *together* provide an aesthetic experience (e.g. 'the <u>views from the castle ruins</u> are spectacular' ('Mythical and magical', UK)). History here is as much aesthetic and emotive, as rocks or cliffs might be, as it is a source of information; but similarly many (22) link scenery with legend. As Robb observes, '...the heritage complex is the attraction, rather than the Castle alone' (Robb 1998: 582; cf. Gao et al. 2012). Since it is unclear whether the allusion to the Castle comprises a legend- or a history-narrative, these instances are not included in the data subset.

Remaining reviews, which evoke the archaeology or a vaguer presence (e.g. 'steeped in history') were coded as 'History'; and those alluding to the Arthur story or to 'magic' more generally as 'Legend'. Some mention both history and legend consecutively rather than together, and these were coded as separate fragments. The number of samples therefore refers to coded fragments, not unique reviews:

Code	N
History	120
Legend	54
History + legend	25
Total fragments in subset	*199*

Table 1: Codes in data subset

'Legend' reviews: in search of Arthur

Tintagel village and the site giftshop provide ample significations of "Arthur" and other fantasy narratives such as *The Lord of the Rings* even before the visitor has reached the castle (Orange & Laviolette 2010: 92). This likely plays a role in how legend is evoked: 13 reviewers use general, evocative words such as 'magic', 'myth' and 'mystery' without explicitly referring to Arthur, and 'would highly recommend a visit to <u>soak up the magic</u>...' ('Soak up the magic at Tintagel Castle', UK) or feel that 'this ruin <u>holds a magical spell</u> [...]!' ('Magnificent ruins ......', UK). Legend plays an unarticulated role: experiences are not explicitly linked to a particular object or narrative. The presence of place in relation to legend is strong, but the narrative itself is ephemeral.

Other 'legend' reviewers interacted with the recent additions that speak to the Arthur narrative: the *Gallos* statue and Merlin carving. Although English Heritage claim *Gallos* is 'inspired by the legend of King Arthur, by the historic kings and royal figures associated with Tintagel' (English Heritage 2016),[7] if Arthur was only part inspiration for the sculpture, visitors have other ideas. Most reviews that mention the statue (24) assume that it *is* Arthur – one even refers to his 'well known

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[6] The vast majority refer to the steps and steep hill; at the time of writing a new footbridge is due to be launched and it will be interesting to see how and whether the thematic emphasis shifts in the discourse overall once it is open.

[7] https://www.english-heritage.org.uk/about-us/search-news/tintagel-outdoor-press-release

sword' ('Unbelievably fascinating', np). Even Cornwall tourist board implies it is Arthur himself (Visit Cornwall 2018). Reviewers are enthusiastic about the sculpture, many admiring it as art but not mentioning Arthur, instead linking it to scenery.

Not only has the sculpture become synonymous with Arthur: some reviewers personify it, removing the 'statue' qualifier as though meeting a celebrity (Owens 2012: 20), making Arthur subject of the verb: 'King Arthur is up on the highest of hills' ('Superb', UK) or intimating the chance is fleeting and valuable: 'Don't miss the opportunity of a photo with Arthur' ('Spectacular', UK). Indeed, references to photo opportunities abound (13), and it is interesting to note a begrudging passivity indicated by the underlined phrases:

> Had the customary photo with the King Arthur statue. ('Tough walk on a hot day', UK)

> We just had a quick look around, few snaps and a selfie with the King Arthur statue. ('Great open space and views', UK)

> The bronze statue at the top is lovely and people were taking it in turns to get their photo's done. ('Beautiful place', UK)

This language expresses superficiality and intimates celebrity culture with little agency or affect from reviewers (Edensor 2010). Interestingly, Voase argues that tourists' interactions with Madame Tussaud's wax figures since barriers were removed are more immersive, 'offering the visitors an opportunity to immerse themselves in the feelings and emotions' (Voase 2002: 395). However, based on the linguistic nuances here, while experiences seem broadly positive the words 'customary', 'just', 'quick' and 'get their photo's done' are emphatically unaffective and unimmersive.

Two 'statue' reviews evoke Arthur in terms that perhaps subconsciously allude to the Arthurian quest narrative, exhorting readers to 'Go up the furthest cliff to see King Arthur's metal statue. ('Beautiful', UAE)' or promising '… a superb sculpture of King Arthur as the reward when you conquer all the steps! ('A must see', UK)'. Quest imagery also appears alongside the Merlin carving: only two of the c.50 reviewers who mention Merlin's Cave mention it, and it functions like the bobbing seals as a diverting feature to 'spot':

> Look out for the Merlin face carving, hidden away and definitely not noticeable unless you know to look for it... ('Mystical, magical, stunning landscape', UK)

> Try to spot Merlin's carved face… ('Beautiful', UAE)

While the first reviewer here alludes to the 'mystical, magical' landscape in their title, notably neither mentions the narrative that inspired the cove's name: the infant Arthur being washed ashore to Merlin's protection.

Based on the stimulus provided by the Arthur objects, then, reviewers are engaged but only seemingly superficially. Perhaps Arthur is not the vital spark to the imagination that he is assumed to be. Interviewing visitors who had watched an interpretive film, Orange and Laviolette found that:

> When asked if they still believed in Arthur […] visitors indicated a discomfort with the myth-busting. Some still wished to believe in an historical Arthur revealing a desire to suspend disbelief as well as the power of popular perceptions of the past (Orange & Laviolette 2010: 96)

But, interestingly, there was no such desire for a historical Arthur in these reviews. On the contrary, 14 reviewers who evoked Arthur took care to distance themselves, using exclamations, informative-sounding discourse, or rhetorical questions:

> The relationship to King Arthur, pretty much as fantastical as the story! ('Really bad experience', np)

The Castle is <u>supposedly</u> connected to King Arthur's story <u>though it is entirely fictional</u>. ('Historical Ruins amidst breathtaking views!', UK)

To those who gave a poor rating stating there's no castle here should have researched first, <u>let's face it is King Arthur even real anyway</u>? ('Excellent', UK)

<u>Did King Arthur exist? Who knows,</u> but the Rock <u>has been inhabited since the 400's</u> and the Castle has been here <u>900 years</u>. ('Magical place, amazing views, not for elderly or toddlers', US)

These reviewers' refusal to participate fully in the Arthurian narrative is interesting given Orange and Laviolette's findings and English Heritage's emphasis on the importance of the legend to the site. Only a couple of these sceptical reviews explicitly describe legend enhancing their experience: one suggests 'the myth gives some edge to the visit' ('A feeling of the ancient', Sweden) and another that the tales 'add hugely to the setting and experience!' ('Soak up the magic at Tintagel Castle', UK). Perhaps surprisingly, for a site 'inextricably' linked with Arthur this link seems to do little for these reviewers in enhancing their visits.

'History' reviews: a castle or not a castle?
More reviews were coded 'history' than 'legend', possibly due in part to the scope of 'history' entailing detailed mention of the castle, which is after all the most prominent tangible presence on the site. Unlike 'legend' reviewers, history reviewers fall into two distinct categories. One (55) focuses on the fact that the castle as ruins, which any deny can be defined as a castle *at all*:

<u>This is no castle</u> this is a ruin where a castle once stood ('Stunning views but should be called tintagel ruin', UK)

Went there thoroughly looking forward to seeing a medieval castle! […]. Steep steps up to ""castle"" […] Views spectacular but <u>absolutely NO CASTLE.</u> Its a ruin completely open barely any remnants left. Its more for the views not if your into castles at all. I was very disappointed. ('<u>What castle!</u>', UK)

<u>There is no castle</u> it's just some stone walls… ('Read this (families)', Cornwall, UK)

To these reviewers the site's name 'Tintagel Castle' is actively misleading. The disdainful double inverted commas in the second example, the sentiment prominently included in the review title in the first two, and the explicit statement 'no castle' by all three, makes a claim for absence whereas the site itself is contingent on the castle's presence. They claim that remains cannot be defined as a 'castle', only a wholly or mainly intact building (Lowenthal 1987: 271ff.). The destination image of a 'castle' is one in which the interpretative work has already been done – by preservation, restoration, or building – and is likely based on more intact exemplars such as Warwick, Dover, or Carcassonne, or perhaps even a simulacrum. This discrepancy, between imagined presence and actual absence, is so stark as to entail poor value for money:

<u>There is no longer a castle on this site</u> so <u>you are effectively paying £10.50 to climb a very steep set of steps to take in a view</u>. ('Spend some of the rip off fees on the toilets', UK)

[T]here is no castle to visit, only ruins with barely any explanation whatsoever. I understand that most of it come from the Dark Ages and we know close to nothing about it, but <u>at the price we pay to get in (close to 10 pounds), I expected.... something</u>. ('Way way waaaaaaaaaaaaaayy overpriced', Canada)

This desire to *experience* a castle rather than encounter this castle in its socio-historical context derives from the expectation of a heritage rather than a historical experience (Lowenthal 1998 *passim*; Lyth 2006: 3). The lack of a medieval storyworld that would be evoked by a preserved structure leads to a gap between expectations and reality (Huebner 2011: 61), since 'A past lacking

tangible relics seems too tenuous to be credible' (Lowenthal 1985: 247). Unlike the legend reviewers who engage with the physical objects of legend albeit superficially, these history reviewers find nothing to engage with at all.

Conversely, other history reviewers accept the castle ruins as a thing – rather than no thing – to be interacted and engaged with. They mentally rebuild the castle, taking the ruins as template for a historical imagined world:

> Yes the castle is a ruin and there's not that much information about what was there, but <u>you do get a feeling of what it must have been like</u>. ('Worth the steps', UK)

> Although a ruin, […] <u>you can just imagine what it would have been like</u> all those years ago. ('Special, and worth a visit', US)

> There is not much left of the castle but <u>with a little imagination you can picture how impressive the castle must have been</u>... ('Amazing', Denmark)

Chronis describes how 'imaginative engagement reconstructs parts of life in the past by producing narrative vignettes that are vivid and life-like […] anchored at some point in the past' (Chronis 2015: 187). The affective and aesthetic vocabulary ('get a feeling', 'picture'), second-person pronouns creating intimacy with the implied reader ('you can just imagine'), and assumed connection with the past ('must have been like') reflect this deep imaginative engagement. Indeed, acknowledging the castle is a ruin sets these reviewers' experiences explicitly against those who reject the presence of the castle. This dialectic within the broad discourse of TripAdvisor highlights the contrasting experiences based on precisely the same stimulus. Indeed, those who saw no stimulus to inspire imaginative effort were disappointed, explicitly rejecting imagination as a factor, condemning '…a pile of rubble that <u>needs a lot of imagination to interpret</u> ('Pile of rubble?' UK)' and not recommending a visit because it '<u>needs lots of imagination to envision</u> what the building looked like and what the rooms were for' ('Average', UK).

These starkly contrast with 'imaginative' reviewers who experience narrative transportation (Green and Brock 2000), as in Chronis' vivid vignettes:

> The kids <u>liked to imagine how it was</u> and <u>wonder how could families live there</u> ('Impressive place, kids loved it', np)

> …<u>totally steeped</u> in history <u>if you close your eyes you can imagine how it was</u> ('Kellock's view', UK)

> …it is worth [the climb] to <u>see</u> and appreciate the story of the <u>how folk lived</u> from the dark ages to medieval times. Take your time and<u> use your imagination as to how people coped with the weather - gales/rain etc. and still stayed and eked a living.</u> ('Gird up the loins, climb up the steps and enjoy!!', UK)

Evocation of people ('families', 'folk') and daily life ('how people coped') suggests these reviewers have imagined the past to life; a place 'steeped' in history and a story one can 'see' indicate transportative absorption into a story. Thus gaps can potentially stimulate imagination more than an intact edifice replete with jousters and turrets could. As Auerbach argues, contrasting the Homeric 'foregrounding' of information to the Biblical style of leaving things unexplained, in the latter 'since so much in the story is dark and incomplete, [the reader's] effort to interpret it constantly finds something new to feed upon' (Auerbach 1953: 15). We see this phenomenon functioning here no less than in literature. Chronis observes visitors 'actively engaged by using their prior background, negotiating, filling gaps, and imagining' (Chronis 2005: 400), and it is precisely these gaps that provide the space for the imagination to work, as Derbaix and Gombault also argue in relation to Cezanne's (sparse) studio (Derbaix and Gombault 2016: 1473). These reviewers' engagement with

history results in them imaginatively constructing their own narrative of 'what life must have been like', making the castle to some extent 'real' via their own imaginative effort. In none of the 'legend' reviews is this level of narrative immersion evident.

Imagination is also manifest in history reviews in another aspect of discourse: a poetic style and vocabulary:

> The ruins […] <u>seem to set the stage for nature's power and beauty</u> ('Spiritual and majestic even in decay', np)

> …a hike <u>of a lifetime</u> to a place of a <u>distant misty past</u> ('What a great day out to Tintagle', UK)

> … <u>foreboding rainy skies</u> providing a perfect <u>backdrop to the ruins</u> ('Impressive and steeped in history', np)

Hyperbole ('power and beauty', 'hike of a lifetime'), metaphor ('set the stage', 'misty past'), and dramatic vocabulary ('foreboding', 'majestic') mark these reviews as imaginative in a sense that is cognitive rather than transportative but is arguably no less immersive. Strikingly, eight out of 10 reviews coded as poetic discourse were 'history' reviews. Even though the legend is 'imaginary', exists in collective memory rather than tangible historical remains, and it is through narrative that legend exists at all, it tends to be *history* associations that stimulate the poetic and transportative imagination more than legendary ones.

It is apparent that narratives of legend and history incite distinct experiences for visitors to Tintagel, rooted around use of imagination (or lack of). Crucially, the vast majority of reviews that imply imagination are based on history, not legend. Passive, superficial engagement with the *Gallos* statue and Merlin face results in a non-immersive, non-transportative experience which at best sets reviewers on a quest for the physical objects (an ironic metaphor for legend visitors' experiences as a whole, perhaps). This may be enjoyable but does not evidence deep engagement with the site. Conversely, history gives rise to different experiences. Some are disappointed by the absence of castle rather than presence of remains; and, not using imagination to fill in the gaps, deny that it is a 'castle' at all. These, like the legend reviewers, are not transported into an imagined past.

Others, however, who *do* see the ruins as tangible deploy imagination and show deeper engagement than those who focus on legend or seek a castle simulacrum. History, for them, has indeed "come to life", as is English Heritage's stated aim. '[C]reative interpreters of heritage encourage visitors to create their own mental space by traveling to the past to complete the heritage reconstruction' (Nuryanti 1996: 253), and when visitors use the *material remains* to create their own narrative they experience a vicarious (Chronis 2012: 450; Kidd 2011), empathetic envisioning of the site that places them back in time ('if you close your eyes you can imagine how it was'); or use poetic discourse to describe a 'distant misty past' as though themselves participating in Tintagel's literary tradition.

Discussion
It could be argued that imagination is more germane to the legendary and absent than to the historical and material (Chronis et al. 2012), since legend naturally inhabits the realm of (collective and individual) imagination. Intuitively, a mythical tradition rooted in magic, hazy but vibrant in popular culture, should provide ample stimulus for visitors to imagine an 'other', poetic world. Similarly, it might be expected that focus on historical fact might result in an interesting but relatively un-transportative and un-immersive experience (indeed, many other history reviews (23) use the words 'interesting' or 'informative'). What, then, are the mechanisms at work?

Derbaix and Gombault discuss imaginative processes at heritage sites, arguing that embodiment, transportation, and immersion are different sides of the same coin, linked to Csikszentmihalyi's flow (Derbaix and Gombault 2016: 1461). Similarly, Chronis suggests that 'a narrative imagining […] should be distinguished from static images […they are] a narrative with protagonists, a plot, and even with a moral valuation' (Chronis 2015: 189), such as the reviewer imagining how 'people…still stayed and eked a living' at the Castle. What stimulates visitors' imaginations can broadly be arranged into two categories that have been in evidence in various ways throughout the analysis above: objects, and narratives.

Chronis has described visitors as 'active story-builders', and considers the role of artifacts as key in co-construction: '[Consumers'] engagement with the narrative is, thus, not so much a reading of it as a writing of it' since 'the role of artifacts is […] material anchoring that refers to the way in which artifacts participate in narrative substantiation' (Chronis 2015: 189). Derbaix and Gombault note that the 'material dimensions of [Cézanne's] studio enable immersion and embodiment' (Derbaix and Gombault 2016: 1472), and that through these processes 'visitors construct their own experiences […]. They have access to an authentic experience because they use tangible aspects of the studio as catalysts for their imagination' (ibid. 1469). Lowenthal, too, considers material anchors as bridges between the past and the present (Lowenthal 1987: 246ff.), which others have considered as semantic process, the material object acting as a signifier requiring interpretation on the part of the visitor (Knudsen & Rickly-Boyd 2012: 1252; Pearce 1994: 23; Voase 2002: 391ff.). Indeed, Pearce draws on reader-response theory to consider the joint role of observer and object:

> …the object only takes on life or significance when the viewer carries out his [sic] realization, and this is dependent partly upon his disposition and experience, and partly upon the content of the object which works upon him. It is this interplay which creates meaning. (Pearce 1994: 26)

For Johnson, specific things that 'represent […] a culture's collective past' become 'fixed spatially in the historical imagination' (Johnson 1997: 188), and despite our reviewers' desires to 'see the legend on King Arthur' and 'see King Arthur's castle ruins', these specific 'things to see' are absent. Little wonder, then, that visitors to Tintagel who, seeing the castle remains, see only the *absence* of a castle find no anchor through which to imaginatively engage with the past, since 'the object only exists' if it is made meaningful 'through somebody reacting with it' (Pearce 1994: 27). Thus those who do see an object make meaning (they 'use your imagination as to how people coped with the weather') and those who see nothing at all (there is 'absolutely NO CASTLE')' make none. Little wonder, too, that those seeking tangible commune with Arthur – an expectation that paraphernalia at Tintagel village does nothing to dispel – find no stimulus for co-creation. Here is no Round Table, suits of armour, or turreted castle, and what there is – the statue and carving – where people have a 'customary photo', a 'quick look around, few snaps' or 'get their photo's done' may be enjoyable but does not result in co-creation of meaning.

Nonetheless, lack of tangible objects does not necessarily mean lack of stimulus for the imagination: studies note the importance of narratives in operating as a similar means for visitors to combine their own stories with those connected with the site. Chronis argues that 'the success of a narrative presentation in a tourism destination […] depends on tourists' involvement, willingness, and ability to actively participate in the storytelling experience.... tourists act as story-builders who construct a narrative based on the selection and integration of the available historical sources' (Chronis 2012: 445). Kidd observes, for her interviewees, 'an ability to empathise with or feel ownership over the narratives […] made that sense of the past more urgent, tangible and […] memorable' (Kidd 2011: 30); and that ownership may come from both individual and collective narratives (Crang 1994: 23; Gao et al. 2012: 208; Rickly-Boyd 2010: 266). Further, as Knudsen et al. point out,

the social construction of tourism sights always, to some degree, involves the mobilisation of myth (see also Barthes, 1972). As such, the success of tourism site mythology 'lies in its ability to link up with a store of perceptions and experiences that are already embedded in common-sense understandings of geography' (Hughes, 1992, p. 34). Myth, in this sense, is 'a mode of signification' (Barthes, 1972, p. 109)' (Knudsen et al. 2014: 55).

And as Rickly-Boyd notes, 'most heritage sites construct narratives of national significance. Regardless of how 'true' or 'false' these narratives might be, it is these narratives with which tourists engage' (Rickly-Boyd 2010: 266). The issue at Tintagel is not so much the truth or otherwise of the legend, but rather what narratives of Arthur actually reside there.

Despite the 'inextricable' attachment of Arthur, it is questionable how much further than this mere connection the narrative actually goes. To say that the presence of Arthur at Tintagel in Geoffrey of Monmouth is slight is an understatement. King Uther Pendragon desires Igerna, wife of Gorlois, duke of Cornwall. When Gorlois becomes defensive, King Uther is enraged and 'got together a great army, and marched into Cornwall, the cities and towns whereof he set on fire' (Chapter XIX). Gorlois leaves Igerna at Tintagel for safety, due to its defensive advantages, but Uther (through Merlin's magic) takes on the likeness of Gorlois to deceive Igerna into sleeping with him – and so Arthur is conceived. Arthur is never physically present, and his only mention arises from a dubious episode essentially amounting to rape. No surprise, perhaps, that this is not a story that is much told or known at Tintagel. It is unclear how reviewers who had wanted to visit since a childhood 'watching movies about King Arthur, and the legends of old' would be able to attach their expectations to this particular narrative. Other aspects to the Tintagel-connection not told in Monmouth include a story that the infant Arthur was washed ashore and protected by Merlin at Merlin's Cove. However, none of our TripAdvisor reviewers allude to that story. The legend is not so much a story as a collection and connection of ideas, perpetuated by Victorian nationalistic links to the mythical past, more tenuous than the 'inextricable' link seems to suggest. It seems that the Arthur story is as ephemeral at Tintagel as any material evidence of an Arthurian-esque world.

Not only can object and narrative separately give rise to imaginative transportation: often both connect to solidify meaning of a site. Derbaix and Gombault note of Cézanne's relatively empty studio that the 'material dimensions […] mixed with immaterial dimensions (e.g. Cézanne's aura, stories, and atmosphere) trigger off visitors' imaginations…' (Derbaix and Gombault 2016: 1472). Indeed, Light tells of 'Dracula' tourists arriving in Romania seeking a specific castle mentioned by Stoker: 'Yet the national tourism office guides were initially bewildered when asked for directions to the castle [...] In the absence of any ''real'' castle, Western tourists invented one – at Bran Castle…' (Light 2007: 53). Similarly, Gao et al., discussing Shangri-La, find that 'the myth that introduced the place becomes actual history' (Gao et al. 2012: 208). Indeed, such is the urge to link narrative to place or object that Lowenthal reports a visitor seeing Plymouth Rock and asking 'Where is the sword?' (Lowenthal 1998: 139), a misfiring of the urge to connect narratives to objects before us. In just the same way (albeit more accurately placed), reviewers' assumption that the *Gallos* sculpture *is* Arthur, including identifying the 'well known sword' as Excalibur, demonstrates this urge to connect narrative with object.

Indeed, English Heritage's addition of the sculpture and Merlin carving attempt to achieve just this: to provide the narratives that tourists bring with them something to attach to. But whilst many are enthusiastic about the statue, the extent to which it succeeds in transcending the non-immersive, non-imaginative to stimulate the imagination is, based on these reviews at least, debateable. This is arguably not a fault of the interpretative strategy: rather, it is an inevitable consequence of the lack of substance to *both* the material *and* the narrative presence of Arthur at the site. Moreover, legend is almost by definition intangible: as Lowenthal observes, 'heritage mandates *mis*readings of the past [which] become cherished myths', and it is this very vagueness that allows them to persist, leaving Arthur 'obscured in the mists of the distant past' (Lowenthal 1998: 134). Providing a tangible object with which to interact makes interpretative sense in the

absence of a Round Table, but in doing so the legend, previously inhabiting only a 'non-place realm', is made tangible and so implicitly enters the interpretative space of history, where it becomes as transparent as the *Gallos* sculpture itself.

Conclusion

Remembering Robb's observation about Arthur functioning in a 'non-place realm', despite the relationship between Tintagel and legend being 'inseparable' there is in fact almost no story of Arthur at Tintagel to tell. There are no material artefacts that one might encounter when visiting a literary birthplace, and the well-known stories 'happened' elsewhere. Faced with this lack of solid material for visitors to 'create meaning', English Heritage has understandably created stimuli to spur this imaginative spark and turn the 'non-place realm' into its opposite, a narrative imaginatively embedded in place. But, based on this analysis, even with the added tangible objects there is not *enough* of Arthur here to provide the bare ingredients for visitors to create a mythical narrative of their imagination, beyond a superficial interaction.

Ultimately, the imaginative potential of the site's association with Arthur is limited to a marker of tourism ('took the obligatory selfie') rather than a stimulus to spark immersive co-creation of a vicarious narrative ('…you can just imagine what it would have been like all those years ago'). 'History' reviewers who use their imaginations use narrative stimuli from information about people's lives combined with the tantalising material remains to imagine others' lives or poetic discourse. Conversely, and for other 'history' reviewers the ruins comprise not the *presence* of stimuli but the *absence* of content and they have not, in Chronis' terms, collaborated as 'story-builders'. Likewise, with no object or narrative for 'legend' reviewers, there are no comparable stimuli sufficient to create the gaps that need filling. Despite the apparent potential to the contrary – to incite narrative transportation though mystical associations – Arthur is attached to "Tintagel" as signifier only like leaves on a tree, not reaching the roots of the real, physical space that tourists encounter on their visit.

This article set out to consider aspects of Tintagel that underlie and go beyond tension in site interpretation, encompassing the functioning and manifestation of legend and history in visitors' experiences. It has built upon previous research on the tension between legend and history and the commensurate challenges for English Heritage in site interpretation (Orange & Laviolette 2012; Robb 1998). The analysis is inevitably limited by the small sample size of this pilot study, and future studies would benefit from a larger dataset allowing a richer range of responses, and potentially quantitative analysis linking experiences to star rating. Nevertheless, discourse analysis has revealed insights into the differently nuanced ways that visitors engage with legend and history at Tintagel, uncovering through reviewers' use of language the active or passive, affective or unaffected, immersive or non-immersive, nature of their experiences. Imagination is an important means by which visitors can engage with any heritage site, and at Tintagel it seems that it is sparked more by the history than by the legend, but only where history is seen as a tangible presence, not an intangible absence.

Word count: 7233

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