

XXVI.—*Insula Avallonia*

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The etymology of William of Malmesbury for "*insula Avallonia*," which he based seemingly on the Breton word for "apple," occurs in what is considered to be an interpolated passage in his work on the antiquities of Glastonbury. The foundation-story related by the same writer for this abbey has many points in common with the account of the first settlement in Italy given by Virgil. In the Old-Irish Glossary ascribed to Cormac there is an note on the Irish word for "apple," which the compiler connects with Abella, a town in Campania. For this information Cormac seems to have relied on *Aeneid* 7.740 "*maliferae . . . Abellae*," with the comments on the verse. A twelfth-century life of St. William, who lived near Abella, presents an account of a garden of magic herbs situated in that region. Many variants of this Virgilian legend are found in later literature. The "*insula Avallonia*" of William of Malmesbury, therefore, stems from the Celtic identifications proposed by Cormac in the tenth century or from his sources in the commentaries on the seventh book of the *Aeneid*. The adjective *Avellanus* served in the Middle Ages to identify the hazel-tree and its fruits and is the basis of one folktale connected with King Arthur.

Students of the part played by the *Aeneid* of Virgil in the Middle Ages should not overlook what appear to be indications of its influence, direct or indirect, on one of the most important aspects of mediaeval literature and legend. It is well known that the "Avallon" (Avalon) of the epic tales centering around Arthur is the name given to the "Otherworld" where the British hero finds his final resting-place. The ramifications of this story in connection with the famous abbey of Glastonbury have been treated at length by scholars whose interest for the most part is Romance philology or Celtic philology, or both.

The riddle of the identification of Glastonbury-Avallon with the Otherworld may be safely left to those whose interests lie chiefly in the non-Latin tradition. Suffice it to say that the interpolation¹—if such it be—of the passage on *insula Avallonia* in William of Malmesbury's *De antiquitate Glastoniensis ecclesiae* is of prime importance to the student of Virgilian influence in the Middle Ages.

¹ E. Faral, "L'Abbaye de Glastonbury et la légende du Roi Arthur," *RH* 160 (1929) 20, calls this passage a definite interpolation, but C. H. Slover, "William of Malmesbury and the Irish," *Spec.* 2 (1927) 275f., does not accept this theory. E. K. Chambers, *Arthur of Britain* (London, 1927) 117 would exclude as later additions only the references to Arthur in this passage.

At the same time this passage may serve as a point of departure in an attempt to indicate the place of *insula Avallonia* in medieval legend connected with the Latin poet.

William of Malmesbury introduces us to a story of twelve brothers who traveled southward from the northern regions of Britain. One of these, named Glasteing, was induced to settle in Glastonbury, as the result of an incident which recalls that which led Aeneas to establish his first settlement in Italy. This is the well-known incident of the discovery of the white sow with her litter of thirty lying under an ilex tree. Here are the main facts of William's story:

Glasteing, qui per mediterraneos Anglos, secus villam quae dicitur Escebturæ, scrofam suam usque ad Wellis per inviam et aquosam viam, quae Sugewege, id est Scrofae viae, dicitur, *sequens porcellos suos*, iuxta ecclesiam de qua nobis sermo est, *lactantem sub malo invenit*, unde usque ad nos emanavit, quod mala mali illius Ealdcyrcenes epple, id est veteris ecclesiae poma vocantur. . . . *Haec* itaque *insula* primo Yniswgrtin a Britonibus dicta demum ab Anglis terram sibi subiugantibus, interpretato priore vocabulo, dicta est sua lingua Glastynburg, vel de Glasteing, de quo praemisimus; etiam *insula Avallonis* celebriter nominatur, cuius vocabuli haec fuit origo. Supra dictum est quod Glasteing *scrofam suam sub arbore pomifera* iuxta vetustam ecclesiam invenit, ubi quia primum adveniens *poma* in partibus illis rarissima reperit, *insulam Avalloniae* ² sua lingua, id est *insulam pomorum* nominavit; avalla enim Britonice poma interpretatur.³

All students of Virgil are acquainted with the foundation story by which the prophet Helenus ⁴ made it clear to the Trojan voyagers

² Seemingly a scribal error for *insula Avallonia*; cf. W. W. Newell, "The Antiquity of Glastonbury," *PMLA* 18, 477, who also points out that the use of a single or double 'l' in Avallon and Avallonia is immaterial.

³ *De antiquitate Glastoniensis ecclesiae* in Migne *PL* 179, 1687. The italics are mine. I have omitted the conclusion in which another explanation is offered for the name of the island. This is the story of a certain Avalloc and his daughters; cf. W. W. Newell, *loc. cit.* (see note 2). In an interesting paper A. H. Krappe, *CPh* 37 (1942) 365, indicates a connection between Avallon and *insula vitrea*, the ancient isle of amber situated in northern Europe; cf. Glastonbury, interpreted as "town of glass," by the twelfth-century author of the life of Gildas (*MGH* auct. ant. 13, chron. min. 3, 109).

⁴ The similarity between the Virgilian story and that of William of Malmesbury has been noticed by Newell, *loc. cit.* 476. This type of story occurs frequently in the lives of British and Irish saints according to Slover, 279 (see note 1). The association of Alba Longa in Italy with Alba, one of the names found in Welsh and Irish documents for Scotland and for Britain in general, would be likely to account for the similarity in the foundation stories for Glastonbury Abbey and for the Italian town. Strachan in his *Introduction to Early Welsh* (Manchester, 1909) 141.7 translates "Alban" in his

where they were to settle in Italy. The discovery of a sow and her thirty little ones under an ilex tree was declared by him to be a sign that there at last Aeneas and his followers could find cessation from their toils:⁵

Cum tibi sollicito secreti ad fluminis undam
litoreis ingens inventa sub ilicibus sus
triginta capitum fetus enixa iacebit,
alba, solo recubans, albi circum ubera nati,
is locus urbis erit, requies ea certa laborum.⁶

The fulfilment of the prophecy is related in similar words in the eighth book (42ff.). The *scrofa* in William of Malmesbury also had her *porcelli*, but their number is not indicated. The features then which are common to the two stories are obvious. The animals (*scrofa*—*sus*) in both cases are represented as nursing their young under a tree, presaging, it would appear, a successful foundation. Proximity of water is indicated in both legends (*per aquosam viam*—*ad fluminis undam*). There is furthermore a tenuous, but significant thread that runs through both stories: they portray the concluding phases of a voyage or search.

Did not the Roman poet declare that the followers of Aeneas would at last find an end to their toils? Here was a chance for allegory to assert itself.⁷ It would be easy enough for the imagination of any chronicler to look upon the Campanian town of Abella,

glossary by "Scotland." On the other hand, J. Morris Jones in his *Welsh Grammar* (Oxford, 1913) 6 writes "Britain like Albion must have been a name given to the island by its Keltic invaders." Cf. the Welsh version of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae*, ed. J. Griscom (London, 1929) 249, where the Latin text (*erat tunc nomen insulae Albion*) is explained as "The White Island" in "Kymraec."

⁵ *Aen.* 3.389.

⁶ Only one of the oldest manuscripts of Virgil in capital script—the *Romanus*—has the verse "is locus urbis erit, requies ea certa laborum" repeated in Book 8.46 from 3.393, where the prophecy of Helenus is stated in identical terms, including the verse just mentioned. Some of the later minuscule manuscripts have this verse repeated in the eighth book; cf. F. A. Hirtzel, *P. Vergili Maronis opera* (Oxford, n.d.).

⁷ The significance of Virgil's *requies ea certa laborum* was eagerly seized upon by those who favored the allegorical interpretation of the poet such as Fulgentius (†532) in his *De Virgiliana continentia* (ed. R. Helm, Leipzig, 1898) 107.8f. Here Lavinia is explained as *via Laborum*. Latinus, too, by a forced etymology (*quod omnis labor diversis in locis latitet*) is set in the same framework. I am inclined to believe that to this type of interpretation we owe the name *Terra Laboris*, given in Virgilian legends to the region in Campania with which the poet was associated. The connection between Virgil and the "Land of Labor" is noted by Comparetti, *Vergil in the Middle Ages*, Engl. tr. by E. F. M. Benecke (New York, 1929) 294, in a passage from the *Parzival* of Wolfram von Eschenbach.

presently to be discussed, and the site, vaguely described by Virgil, of the future Trojan city—Alba Longa or Lavinium—as one and the same. The problem of the name and location of this new foundation is faced by Servius, the fourth-century commentator on the poet.⁸ The so-called “Servius plenior,”⁹ with which we are learning to associate in part the great name of Aelius Donatus,¹⁰ is aware of the difficulty. His comment on “is locus est” is worth noting: *id est in ipsa regione: nam et Lavinium et Alba longe a litore sunt.*

The Celtic scholar, R. Thurneysen, pointed out some time ago¹¹ the connection between some notes in the Old-Irish Glossary of Cormac¹² (†908) and the references to the story of Glass the swineherd in the literature connected with Arthur and Glastonbury. This Glossary is written entirely in Irish with the exception of a few Latin explanations scattered throughout the book. One of these mixed Latin and Irish glosses, which to the best of my knowledge has not been cited in this connection, refers to a town in Campania for the etymology of “aball” or “apple”:

Aball <ab> Abellano oppido Campaniae. Nō Ēba-eill .i. eillned Ēba .i. in cēiben. Nō aob-oll ar mēt a toraid. Uball eodem modo.¹¹ “Aball from the town of Abella in Campania. Or Ēba-eill, i.e. corruption of Eve, i.e. the first woman. Or aob-oll [fair-great] because of the greatness of its fruit. Uball in the same manner.”

Another gloss is presented further on in the same work:

Uball quasi aball. Aball immorro ō burg Etāile dianit ainm Abellanium [*sic* Book of Lecan, *Abellum*, Book of Leinster], is as tucad sil n-aball leo [*prius*, Book of Leinster]. Nō uball .i. ēo-ball .i. ēo crand 7 ball de. Nō uball .i. Ēba-eill .i. iarsindī roellustar Ēba fair isind imarbus.

“Aball, moreover, from a town in Italy, which has the name Abellanum; it is hence were brought the race (seeds) of apples with them.

⁸ G. Thilo and H. Hagen, *Servii grammatici qui feruntur in Vergilii carmina commentarii* (Leipzig, 1878–1888) 1.411 (on *Aen.* 3.390).

⁹ On *Aen.* 3.393.

¹⁰ Cf. E. K. Rand, “Is Donatus’s Commentary on Virgil Lost?” *CQ* 10 (1916) 162f. and the articles cited in *HSPH* 43 (1932) 77.

¹¹ *ZRPh* 20 (1896) 317; cf. C. H. Slover, *loc. cit.* 278f. (see note 1).

¹² K. Meyer, *Sanas Cormaic, an Old-Irish Glossary compiled by Cormac Ūa Cuilen-náin* (Anecdota from Irish Manuscripts IV, Halle and Dublin, 1912) section 94. Meyer has corrected the manuscript reading “opido campaine.” The *Origines* of Isidore, according to the editor, pref. xviii, is the source of many of these glosses.

Or uball, i.e. ēo-ball, i.e. ēo, tree, and ball [a member] of it. Or uball, i.e. Ēba-eill, i.e. because Eve was corrupted by it in the transgression."¹³

In these two glosses we find "uball" in one note and "aball" in the other associated with a town in Italy "<ab> oppido Abellano" or with a town called "Abellanum." Both "uball" and "aball" are directly (in the second note) and indirectly (in the first) given the meaning of "apple."¹⁴ In the first gloss we are told merely that the Italian town was celebrated for its fruit, and incidentally we learn that this "fruit" is that which corrupted Eve. There is a repetition of this last concept in the second gloss.

Here then is a juxtaposition of a town in Campania, "oppidum Abellanum," with the Christian Earthly Paradise. This point should not be overlooked for any possible light it may throw on the tradition which connected *insula Avallonia* with the "Happy Other-world." Moreover, because of the known interest which William of Malmesbury evinces for Irish lore—a fact well established by Professor Slover¹⁵—there is room for the hypothesis that he may well have read either Cormac on "uball" and "aball" or have had similar information from the Irish glossator's source.

To understand Cormac's gloss it will be necessary to examine the sources of his etymological lore in Virgil, his commentators, and in the Latin encyclopedists. Among the tribes and peoples in the well-known "gathering of the clans" in the seventh book of the *Aeneid* (740) the poet mentions those on whom "Abella, rich in fruits,"¹⁶ looks down:

Et quos maliferae despectant moenia Abellae.¹⁷

Both Servius and the so-called "Servius plenior"¹⁸ have notes on this verse. Servius comments as follows:

¹³ Meyer, *ibid.* section 1272. I am greatly indebted to Professor F. N. Robinson of Harvard for the translations of the two glosses here presented which he kindly sent me at my request in 1929.

¹⁴ In the citation from William of Malmesbury already discussed the word "avalla" in a Celtic tongue (*Britonice*) is interpreted as equivalent to the Latin *poma*.

¹⁵ *Loc. cit.* 268–283. For a discussion of William's knowledge of the contents of the *Glossary* of Cormac, see 277f.

¹⁶ *Malum* is properly any pulpy fruit in contrast to *nux* (cf. *Harper's Latin Dictionary* s.v.). Therefore it is not altogether correct to translate *maliferae* with Fairclough, *Virgil with an English Translation* (London, 1925) 2.55, "rich in apples."

¹⁷ The better manuscripts read *Bellae*, but Servius in his comment on this verse mentions another reading *Abellae* which editors for the most part accept. The note of "Servius plenior" by inference recognizes the latter spelling.

¹⁸ Thilo and Hagen, *op. cit.*, 2.190 (see note 8).

Multi Nolum volunt intellegi et dicunt iratum Vergilium nomen eius mutasse propter sibi negatum hospitium et id aperte noluisse dicere, sed ostendere per periphrasin; nam illic Punica mala nascuntur: ut nunc "Bella" pro "Nola" posuerit. alii ita volunt accipi, ut sit synalipha et legatur "moenia Abellae."¹⁹

Here the commentator would seem to claim *Punica mala*, that is, pomegranates, as characteristic of Nola and not of Abella or rather "Bella," for he accepts this latter reading in his lemma. Other commentators, according to his report, would read "Abella."

Encyclopedists like Pliny²⁰ and Isidore agree in describing the fruit peculiar to Abella as *nuces Abellanae*. The *Origines* of Isidore indeed furnished many etymologies to Cormac. Isidore seems in fact to be dependent on Servius' comment on *Geor.* 2.65, where he is discussing *durae coryli* or hazels: Sane coryli proprie dicuntur: nam abellanae [avellanae, *codd.*] ab Abellino [avellino, *codd. plerique*] Campaniae oppido, ubi abundant, nominatae sunt.²¹ Isidore heads his chapter (17.7): De Propriis Nominibus Arborum, and states (22): Nuces autem generaliter dicuntur omnia poma tecta corio duriore; ut pineae nuces, Abellanae, glandes, castaneae, amygdalae. Further on (24) he defines Abellanae [nuces] ab Abellano Campaniae oppido, ubi abundant, cognominatae sunt.²²

It is evident that both Isidore and Servius agree in deriving the name of the fruit peculiar to Abella as a species of nut. Servius is more definite and calls them nuts of the *corylus* or hazel-tree.²³ On the other hand the commentator, the so-called "Servius plenior," on *Aeneid* 7.740, instead of deriving *nuces Abellanae* from Abella, inverts the order and would trace the origin of the name of the town from its product: quae ab nucibus Abellanis Abella nomen accepit.

¹⁹ Hülsen in *RE* s.v. "Abella" seems therefore incorrect in connecting *granatäpfel* with Abella rather than with Nola.

²⁰ Cf. *Nat.* 1.88 (ed. Mayhoff): quidquid est solidum est, ut in abellanis, et ipso nucum genere, quae antea Abellinas patriae nomine appellabant. The *nuces Abellanae* are also mentioned in Cato, *de agr.* 2.2. Celsus 3.27.4 (ed. C. Daremberg) has the following: Primoque cum melle quaedam edenda, ut nuclei, pinei, vel Graecae nuces, vel avellanae.

²¹ Thilo and Hagen 3.224.

²² *Orig.* 17.7.22-24 (ed. Lindsay).

²³ In the "Explanations in Bucolica Vergilii" of Iunius Philargyrius (*Appendix Serviana* ed. H. Hagen [Leipzig, 1902]) on *Ecl.* 1.14 there is a note on *corylus* with the explanation *arbor nucis avellanae*. This commentary has numerous Old-Irish glosses. Servius on *Geor.* 2.65 as well as Pliny (see note 20) confuse the two adjectives, *Abellenum* and *Abellinum*. The latter refers to a town not far from Abella (see *TLL* 1.65).

The compiler of Cormac's Glossary, though he seems to have relied on either Isidore or Servius for the phrase "ab Abellano oppido Campaniae," referring specifically to hazels or hazel-nuts, has chosen to identify the Irish word for "apple" with "Abella." He was led to connect "uball" or "aball" with the name of a Campanian town, not only by the similarity in form between the two words, but especially was confirmed in his proposed etymology by the significant qualifying adjective, *maliferae*, in Virgil's own verse.²⁴

It would be interesting to conjecture what led Cormac—or his source—to select this verse of the Roman poet, with the commentary thereon, out of the many thousand other verses in the *Aeneid*. He was interested in *malifera Abella*. Why? Because, it seems, of the similarity between the Irish word for apple and Virgil's somewhat picturesque association of the apple—more correctly "fruit"—with Abella, a word which looked so much like "uball" or "aball" in his native tongue.

Another contributing factor in arousing an interest in this line of Virgil may well have been the reading of the verse that immediately follows, which links up the weapons of the *Abellani* with those of the people of northern Europe. This Campanian tribe was accustomed, we are told, to hurl their darts or javelins in "Teuton fashion":

Teutonico ritu soliti torquere cateias.

The interest of this verse to the mediaeval student may be gauged not only from the marginal glosses found in several manuscripts of Virgil from the ninth to the eleventh century, but also in the numerous glossaries which were in circulation in the schools of the Middle Ages. We are fortunate in having an intensive study by L. Weisgerber²⁵ on the comments on the meaning of *Teutonicus* and of *cateiae* in texts, especially of the *Aeneid*. These notes, with the addition of certain mediaeval glosses in Latin or German, are derived for the most part from the simple comment of Servius on

²⁴ *Aen.* 7.740.

²⁵ "Vergil *Aen.* 7.741 und die Frühgeschichte des Namens Deutsch," *RhM* N. F. 86 (1937) 97–126. Photographs and transcripts of this verse with the scholia thereon are given from MSS of Virgil: *Bernensis* 165, *saec.* IX (from St. Martin of Tours); *Monacensis Clm* 18059, *saec.* XI (from Tegernsee); *Parisinus lat.* 9344, *saec.* XI (from Echternach?).

Virgil's *cateias*: tela Gallica: unde et Teutonicum ritum dixit.²⁶ Weisgerber shows how the confusion as to the identity of the *Teutonici* and the *Galli*, which prevailed even in antiquity,²⁷ persisted during the early Middle Ages. For the purposes of this paper his important contribution on the origins of the name "Deutsch"²⁸ serves to point out the significance which the reference to *Teutonicus ritus* in the *Aeneid* had for generations of commentators. If Servius identified this mode of warfare with that of the *Galli*, then the etymology of the Irish glossator Cormac which connected "uball" or "aball" with Abella, seems to have been the result of a conviction that this was a Gallic town. The *Abellani* of Campania, in the eyes of Cormac, were Gauls and hence, if he identified the Gauls with the Celts, he would be led to fit his interpretation of *malifera Abella* into this etymological picture.

This discussion in learned circles in the Middle Ages on the meaning and significance of these two verses (740f.) in the seventh book of the *Aeneid* brings us back to the etymology which William of Malmesbury—or his interpolator—gives for *insula Avalloniae* [*leg.* Avallonia]. By the statement: *avalla enim Britonice poma interpretatur*, he seems to claim a Breton origin for his derivation.²⁹ The preference, on the other hand, which Geoffrey of Monmouth shows for *insula Avallonis* over that favored by William of Malmesbury can be explained by the supposition that Geoffrey may have been influenced by the rather frequent occurrence of Avallo as a place-name in western Europe. The name is found in documents as old as the fifth century.³⁰ Geoffrey's *insula Avallonis* is then

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 104f.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 111f.

²⁸ According to Weisgerber, *loc. cit.* 118, the note of the fifth hand in *Bernensis* 165, a manuscript from Tours, which glosses *cateiae*, not as Servius explains it ("tela Gallica") but as a spear *lingua Theotisca*, indicates that in such a centre as Tours there was a tendency to identify the Teutones with the inhabitants of Germania. Cf. my article in *HSPH* 36 (1925) 149, where the note of the "fifth" hand is assigned to the ninth century. The compiler of the article on *cateiae* in *TLL* is incorrect, therefore, in identifying this scholiast with "Servius plenior."

²⁹ The various words for "apple" in the Celtic languages are discussed by C. H. Slover in *Mod. Philol.* 28 (1931) 395–399. The forms in Welsh (*afal*), in Breton and Cornish (*aval*) are close enough to that presented by the British chronicler. The Old-Irish form is *aball*; cf. Holder, *Alt-celtischer Sprachschatz* s.v. See also L. Cons, "Avallo," *Mod. Philol.* 28 (1931) 389, who points out that at the time of Geoffrey of Monmouth *poma* meant apples, though originally the word stood for fruit in general. The word *malum* which persisted in Italy was displaced in France by *poma*; cf. C. H. Slover, *loc. cit.* 396.

³⁰ Cf. L. Cons, *loc. cit.* 391 and C. H. Slover, *loc. cit.* 395 (see note 29).

essentially the same in meaning as the form presented by William. They are both equivalent to *insula pomorum*.³¹

If the nucleus of the story of this legendary island as it is presented to us in the British Isles can be traced to the influence of some verses in Virgil, the question would naturally arise, was there any parallel to this story in the home of the legend itself, Italian Campania?

The popularity of the legend of the magic garden of Virgil in the Middle Ages is attested by the collection of such stories in Professor Spargo's *Virgil the Necromancer*. Ten examples, at least, of such a legend are extant in Latin and in vernacular literatures from the twelfth to the sixteenth century. The most common pattern of these legends is that of a garden or orchard, surrounded by a wall of air, where plants grow without cultivation. The garden contains all manner of herbs. Comparetti, to whom all students of Virgilian legend in the Middle Ages are immensely indebted, cites an interesting passage on this magic garden from the life of St. William of Vercelli, founder of the church of Monte Vergine.³² The author of this life, a twelfth-century disciple of the saint, informs us that the original name of this hill was *Mons Vergilianus*.

In the brief excerpt of this work offered by Comparetti we find the word *maleficium* used twice and the adjective *maleficus* once. When we recall Virgil's epithet for Abella, *malifera*, and reflect that the mediaeval maker of tales would not be always likely to discriminate between Virgil's *mālifer*—an adjective found only here—and *māleficium*, a noun meaning "evil," then we are prepared for the confusion in the mind of the hagiographer. Abella has acquired a garden but has suffered a metamorphosis: this garden bears noxious herbs. The author of the life does not doubt the connection of the poet Virgil with the mountain in which the garden was situated:

Nuncupatur Mons Vergilianus a quibusdam operibus et maleficiis Vergilii Mantuani poetae inter Latinos principis: construxerat enim hic maleficus daemonum cultor eorum ope hortulum quendam omnium genere herbarum cunctis diebus et temporibus, maxime vero aestatis, pollentem.

³¹ Cf. what has been said above (note 3) on the relationship between the "town of glass" (= Glastonbury, according to a biography of Gildas written in the twelfth century) and the "isle of amber" which is found in many legends connected with northern Europe.

³² Comparetti, *op. cit.* (see note 7) 280, note 57 = *Acta SS.* June 25 (5.114f.).

The rest of the passage relates how some of the brethren from the monastery, while strolling along the defiles, came by chance several times on this garden. They were so affected *intra hortum huiusmodi malefici* that they were unable to touch the herbs or to tell how they made their way out of the magic garden.

How can we in the legends connected with Avella account for the change from harmful to medicinal herbs? This of course depends on the assumption that there exists a definite relationship between Abella (Avella) and *insula Avallonia* (*Avallonis*). Proceeding on this hypothesis let us examine further into Isidore, whose discussion on the origin of hazel-nuts (*nucēs Abellanae*) has been already noted. Two statements from Isidore may be cited here. In one place³³ he states that hazel-nuts are called "Pontic" because they are plentiful in the region of the Black Sea. Elsewhere³⁴ he associates *Pontica gemma* with power over demons. However, though Pontus might easily bring to mind the story of Medea and her witchcraft, it is probably too much to assume such a learned association in the usual purveyor of Virgilian legend.

The transition from an island of apples to a garden of magic herbs can be seen in the work of Étienne de Rouen (c. 1167-8). This writer relates that Arthur, when wounded, sought the island of Britain to obtain *herbas inde sororis*.³⁵ This preference for herbs instead of apples suggests the Italian legend concerning the garden of Virgil. A legend of Arthur is located in Sicily, near Mt. Etna, by Gervasius of Tilbury (c. 1211). Arthur's palace is in a plain filled with all manner of delights.³⁶ The location of this legend near a volcano points to the influence of Virgilian tales which arose in a similar milieu. These two versions of a happy Otherworld in connection with King Arthur may serve, in conclusion, as fitting examples of the many complex elements that went to make up the legends which gathered around the isle of Avallon. However there is still lacking a binding element that will tend to bring these scattered conceptions together. Fortunately Chambers³⁷ has presented us with a Welsh folk-tale which furnishes us with what apparently is

³³ *Orig.* 17.7.24.

³⁴ *Ibid.* 16.15.26: *Pontica gemma . . . dicunt per eam interrogare daemones et fugare.*

³⁵ Chambers, *op. cit.* (Record 21.1162). Étienne de Rouen's poem is called *Draco Normannicus*.

³⁶ *Ibid.* 276.

³⁷ *Ibid.* 222f.

the link we need. It must be recalled that there was a decided tradition in the Middle Ages which associated Abella with the hazel-tree.³⁸ The Welsh story runs as follows: Beneath the tree from which his hazel staff was cut a Welshman discovers a treasure hoard in a cavern, where Arthur is found sleeping with his followers.³⁹ Here is presented one other Celtic admixture in the composition of the *insula Avallonia* of William of Malmesbury. The link with Virgilian legend furnishes the classical element, the life of St. William of Monte Vergine, the Christian part in this curious compound.⁴⁰

³⁸ See notes 21, 22 and 23 above.

³⁹ On this tale see R. S. Loomis, *Mod. Philol.* 38 (1940-41) 297-8.

⁴⁰ St. William of Monte Vergine and his namesake, William of Malmesbury, died within a year of each other, the former in 1142, the latter in 1143.