

*James Randall Leader Essay Prize*: Selection committee chair, Marco Nievergelt, presented this year's Leader Prize to Robert Rouse. The citation read:

“We are delighted to announce the winner of the 2013 James Randall Leader Prize for the ‘outstanding Arthurian article’. The Prize goes to the article ‘Reading Ruins: Arthurian Caerleon and the Untimely Architecture of History’ by Robert Rouse.

“The central focus of Rouse’s analysis is Gerald of Wales’s complex treatment of Caerleon in the *Itinerarium Cambriae*, as a polysemantic memorial site for both Roman and Arthurian power. More specifically the article is ‘in essence, about Gerald reading Geoffrey [of Monmouth] reading Caerleon’ (42), and this discussion is placed within a nuanced theoretical framework inspired by the work of Jonathan Gil Harris. Particularly Harris’s notion of ‘untimeliness’ is used to illustrate how a single material historical object or site — in this case the ruins of Caerleon — is comprised of multiple, simultaneously available temporalities, and how these are often in a state of tension or conflict with each other. According to Rouse’s analysis, Caerleon’s Roman/Arthurian ruins become for Gerald much more than ‘a marker of not-quite vanished yet unreachable past’ (41); instead Rouse identifies ‘five operative temporalities that combine to produce a series of layered meanings within his text: [1] Gerald’s moment; [2] Geoffrey’s moment; [3] Arthur’s past *postcolonial* moment; [4] Rome’s past *colonial* moment; and [5] the future Welsh *postcolonial* moment.’ (45).

“This has the effect of complicating and destabilizing Geoffrey of Monmouth’s treatment of the ruins of Caerleon as a site of Arthurian memorialisation, but also enables Gerald to ‘open[...] up Arthurian Caerleon as a stage upon which other histories might be explored’ (45), particularly future prophetic histories. More specifically Gerald here plays on the double, imperial and ecclesiastical valencies of Roman past/present/future, and gestures towards the possibility of a transference of Episcopal power from Caerleon to St Davids — a prophecy he rescues from his otherwise dismissive attitude towards Geoffrey’s *Historia*. This transference is closely associated with the prophesied decline of colonial rule in Wales, the regained independence of the Welsh people, and finally holds out the possibility of Gerald’s own access to the bishopric — which he had been previously awarded, only to have the election invalidated by Henry II. Punctuated by the rise and fall of Roman, Arthurian, and, it is implied, the future decline of Angevin power in Wales, such a multivalent cyclical history provides an ideal framework for Gerald to reflect on his personal ambition as well as his divided allegiance to Welsh culture, ecclesiastical authority, and the rule of the Angevins themselves. ‘Untimeliness’ here becomes an effective theoretical tool to coax out the complexities of Gerald’s own psychological investment in his layered presentation of the historical site of Caerleon.

“The article is particularly successful because it allies such theoretical sophistication with a rare sensitivity to the individual voice of Gerald himself. Economically written, it is also masterfully structured by telescoping its attention from wider, theoretical and historical issues in the first half, to more personal psychological considerations towards the end.”