

Dragon

3

Newsletter of the DRAGON Society for people interested in the life and times of ARTHUR and the cultures of 'DARK AGE' Britain.



Welcome to the third DRAGON Newsletter,
Many thanks for all your letters and my apologies to those
of you whom I haven't been able to reply to - blame it on
over-work.

I would also like to welcome new members....

First of all - the DRAGONMOOT.

Now the Rail strike is over there is still a chance of a
'MOOT this Summer. Suggestions seem, so far, to consist of
two types:- an Arthurian site...e.g. Glastonbury or
Cadbury Castle, and London. May I therefore propose that
we split the 'MOOT...First a mini-moot in London and
secondly another in Glastonbury.

I will be in London on the 7th August to visit the West-
minster Comic Mart. So if any of you would like to have
a small gathering, say from 2.00 til 6.00 on the Saturday
mentioned above please let me know straightaway.

I will also be quite happy to meet people at Glastonbury
on the 28th August for the whole day, or even Sunday. I
intend to visit Glastonbury for a long weekend and if
members wish have a 'MOOT there. Once again please let me
know what you wish to do as soon as possible.

Next year the DRAGONMMOT can be better organised and not
at such short notice.

You will have seen from the cover that I have received
a few ideas for a logo, but I would be glad of some more
and then we can decide on a permanent symbol. I would
advise members to look at the porches of old churches if
there are any in their area. Kilpeck, near Hereford, is a
good example for strange beasts, they are an interesting
union of Viking, Norman, Saxon and Celtic designs.

DRAGON*3 begins with a new section called REVIEW which
obviously reviews various Arthurian/"Dark Age" orientated
material, including books, mags, films and so on. The first
REVIEW concerns Geoffrey Ashe's new book and the theory
about Arthur contained in it.

There is also a possibility for another new section in
the future - QUESTIONS & ANSWERS. Questions can be asked
and I hope certain people will answer them. For instance,
Rosemary Sutcliffe says you would be glad to answer any
questions members would like to put to her.

Finally, once again, I hope to increase the number of pages
in the next issue.

Many thanks, and best wishes,

Charles

Review

KINGS AND QUEENS OF EARLY BRITAIN GEOFFREY ASHE METHUEN
LONDON LTD. 1982.

This new book contains Geoffrey Ashe's latest theory
about Arthur plus material on the work of Geoffrey of Mon-
mouth - "The History of the Kings of Britain". (This theory
first appeared in SPECULUM 56,2, April 1981 and was later
reviewed in PENDRAGON XIV No 3, Summer 1981 by Chris Love-
grove.

There is of course quite a bit more than the theory about
Arthur but for the moment I would like to concentrate on this
most interesting argument found in Chapter 7, "The Once and
Future King".

Mr Ashe puts forward the discussion that the "History
of the Kings of Britain" by Geoffrey of Monmouth contains
factual evidence that will throw a new light on certain
Arthurian problems.

He begins by introducing a Breton manuscript called the
"Legenda Sancti Goeznovii" - "The Legend of St. Goeznovius".
In the preamble of this little 'book' Mr Ashe points out
that Arthur is called King of the Britons and that "after
many victories which he won gloriously in Britain and Gaul,
was summoned at last from human activity". This then left
the way open for the Saxons to dominate Britain.

The "Goeznovius" seems to have similarities to the
Geoffrey of Monmouth book but we are told that it was
written in the year 1019, some one hundred and sixteen
years before the "History". Mr Ashe says that this small
manuscript holds vital clues to the dating of Arthur,
thus leading us on to the next point of argument.

The campaigns of Arthur, in Gaul, are directed at the
Roman Emperor Leo and his representatives, Frodo and
Lucius Hebricus. The latter two would seem to be fiction-
al but Leo can be identified. He was the Emperor of the
East ruling in Constantinople from 457 to 474. If then
the Gaulish campaign has any basis in fact and it is
connected with this Emperor this would push Arthur back
some thirty years or so.

Mr Ashe now brings to notice that in the time of
the Emperor Leo a British king is mentioned in European

chronicles. This king was Riothamus and he fought a abortive campaign in mid-France against the Visigoths. We are told that the historian Jordanes records the call of Anthemius (Emperor of the West) to defend Gaul against the ambitious Euric, King of the Visigoths. Riothamus moved up the Loire and was defeated at a place called Bourg-de-Déols. Jordanes says: "...king Riotimus came with twelve thousand men into the state of the Bituriges by way of the Ocean, and was received as he disembarked from his ships." This we are told probably means that they were from Britain.

Two other interesting facts to add to this story are that Riothamus was betrayed by the Praetorian Prefect of Gaul, one Arvandus by name. The prefect wrote a letter to Euric warning him of the Britons on the Loire and that he should attack them. This he did and the Britons were defeated and had to escape into the land of the Burgundians. Mr Ashe shows that not far from the battle site beyond the Loire is a town called Avallon.

So here we have a British king fighting in France, being betrayed, fighting a disastrous battle and disappearing from history somewhere near a place called Avallon. It certainly reminds you of the story of the last days of Arthur. He fought in France, was betrayed by Modred, returned to fight his final battle killing Modred and being mortally wounded. He was then taken to the Isle of Avallon. How similar these stories are must be left to the reader.

However, we are left with a question of dates. Geoffrey says that Arthur's battle at Camlann was fought in 542. Mr Ashe puts it down to the date in Geoffrey's "certain very ancient book" being 442 and thinking it too early added one hundred years. Why then 442 when Riothamus fought in 470. Geoffrey Ashe here notes that there had been a number of changes in the dating of happenings. It is possible that this date, 442, is from the Passion of Christ rather than the later accepted dating system from the Incarnation. The difference is 28 years, thus giving the date 470.

Mr Ashe also remarks about the meaning of the name Riothamus and how it means "Supreme King" or something like "Generalissimo". This is similar to people like Vortigern and Vortimer. He also shows that if you write RIOTAMUS R, for rex Britonum, in a circle placing the R near the top

you can produce the name ARTORIUS M, for "miles" maybe? There are three possibilities, we are told, : first Arthur of the "History" is two men roled into one - Riothamus and a real Arthur; secondly, it is possible they are both the same person - Riothamus being Arthur's other name or finally, that Riothamus is the title of Arthur, thus the High King Arthur or Artorius.

I think we should be grateful to Mr Ashe for coming up with such interesting food for thought and advise readers to have a look at a copy of this book.

France in the Late fifth century

by Charles W. Evans-Gunther

France in the year 470 AD was in a rather precarious state depending on foreign tribes to keep it part of the Roman Empire. The country was divided into two diocese:- Galliae, north of Loire, and Septem Provincia in the south. The northern diocese was divided between the Franks under Childeric, Bretons ruled by Riothamus and the district of Soissons controlled by the magister militum Syagrius. The diocese of the Seven Provinces consisted of three areas:- to the west and south were the Visigoths ruled by Euric, to the east and south east the Burgundians under King Gundioc and in the centre was Aquitania Prima under the control of Magnus Felix, the present Praetorian Prefect.

Only Aquitaine and Soissons were Roman, the rest were either foederati or allied tribes mainly from the east except for the Bretons who were a mixture of original Armorican and immigrants from the British Isles. These foreign tribes were most of the time friends with the Gallo-Romans but by 470 the Visigoths were on the rampage.

Most of the information about this period comes from the writings of Jordanes, Gregory of Tours and Sidonius. The first two lived in the second half of the sixth century but Gaius Sollius Apollonaris Sidonius lived from 431 to 479. He was of noble birth, had connections with the government, was famous for his letters and poetry and was soon to be made bishop of Autun (Austunemetum, Clermont-Ferrand). Sidonius knew most of the well-

known characters of Gaul and Italy including:- the Emperor Anthemius, Arvandus, Magnus Felix, Ecdicius, Riothamus and possibly Syagrius, as well as a number of non-Gallo-Romans such as the late Theodoric, King of the Visigoths.

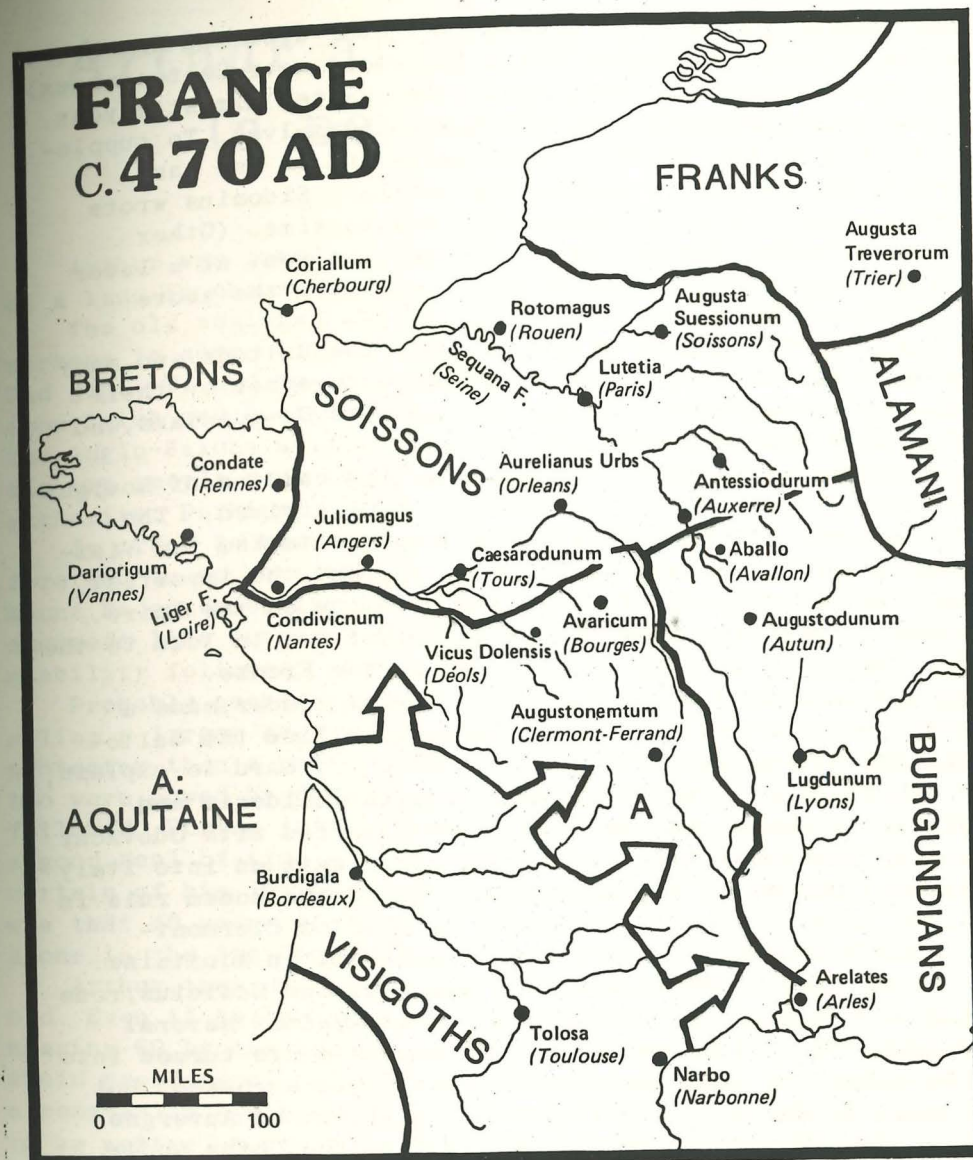
Following the death of Severus in 465 the people of the Western Empire sent a deputation to the Emperor of the East, Leo I, to ask for a new Emperor of the West. Leo appointed a Byzantine noble called Anthemius and in August 467 he was elected Augustus in Rome. Sidonius was sent by the Council of the Seven Provinces to inform the new emperor of the state of Gaul. While in Rome Sidonius wrote a long poem about the Emperor. Anthemius seemingly enjoyed the eulogy and appointed Sidonius to the office of Prefect of the City on the first of January 468. While he was still in Rome a friend of his, the Praetorian Prefect Arvandus, committed the crime of treason.

Arvandus had been elected Prefect of Gaul in 464 and after a very successful year was re-appointed for another five years by the Council. However, his second term of office proved detrimental to Gaul. He became corrupt, falling into debt and began to oppress the people. The nobles of Gaul decided to remove him from office and during 468 he was put up under house arrest. Now he seemingly threw his hand in with the Visigoths.

Euric, King of the Visigoths, had seen that Gaul was beginning to decay and that the people thought more about hunting and feasting than defence. This coupled with the constant change of emperors increased his ambition to rule all of Gaul.

The Praetorian Prefect was arrested and sent to Rome to stand trial. Prosecutors were sent from Gaul bringing with them very damaging evidence - an intercepted letter from Arvandus to Euric. The trial took place at the Senate Council room under the auspices of the new Prefect of the City, Sidonius's office having finished. He was not present at the trial because he was on his way back to Gaul, however, he had spoken with Arvandus and seemingly given him some support.

Arvandus's letter was read out and it contained a suggestion to Euric not to make peace with Anthemius, to attack the Britons on the Loire and to divide Gaul with the Burgundians. Before the letter could be finished Arvandus shouted that he had dictated that letter - thus condemning himself. (Why he did this is a mystery, but one writer suggests he was in league with Ricimer, the real power in the West, and that he



would get his support. He didn't!) Arvandus was found guilty and sentenced to death. However, while he awaited execution his sentence was commuted to banished and he was exiled from the Empire.

Meanwhile a large force, 12,000 according to Jordanes, of Britons travelled up the Loire to Avaricum (Bourges) where they waited for Count Paul and his Romano-Frankish army.

Before the army could arrive the Visigoths attacked and a battle was fought at Vicus Dolensis (Déols, near Chateauxroux). It has been suggested that the Britons waited almost a year at Bourges and made quite a menace of themselves. To supplement their pay they raided local farms and in one case enticed some slaves to leave their master. Sidonius wrote a complaining letter to Riothamus at this time. (Other writers have remarked that this letter was sent at a later date when Sidonius was bishop and thus after the above mentioned battle.)

The battle was a great failure for the Britons and many were killed. The remnants were gathered together by their leader and escaped east to the land of the Burgundians, who were allies of the Romans.

Euric's defeat of the Britons and the capture of Bourges was a short lived victory when Count Paul arrived. The Count, who was probably Syagrius's deputy, attacked the Visigoths and deprived them of their booty. But the important point was that he halted the Gothic advance on the Loire. This was probably one of the factors that was to lead to the domination of France, in later years, by the Franks.

Following this Childeric, the Frankish leader, made a treaty with a Saxon called Odovacar and killed the Gallo-Roman Count. The confusion that followed is hard to explain, however, it seems Syagrius joined up with Childeric and subdued the Saxons, and then Childeric united with Odovacar and attacked the Alamani. Later Odovacar went on into Italy where he took over from Ricimer and ended the Roman rule in the West. Meanwhile, the Visigoths marched on Clermont-Ferrand, which was the last city to hold out in Aquitaine.

In 471 the brother-in-law of Sidonius, one Ecdicius, rode out with a cavalry unit of eighteen men against several thousand Goths. What could have been a massacre turned into triumph for the small band and the Goths were routed. But the writing was on the wall for the district of Auvergne and in 475 Clermont-Ferrand was ceded to the Goths under Euric. The following year the Roman Empire of the West was finished and the only independent states of Roman origin left were Soissons, Brittany and Britain.

In 481 Childeric was succeeded by Clovis and then five years later he defeated and killed the last of the Romans, Syagrius. The Franks then attacked the Visigoths followed by the Burgundians and soon a Frankish dynasty ruled France.

Arthur and his Enemies (a personal view)

by Roger Wilcox

Arthur was faced with a monumental task. To impose unity on a land in chaos.

The old administration had by and large collapsed, except perhaps in some of the towns. The arm of authority, the army, had gone. To add to this, areas in the West and North suffered from Irish and Pictish raiders. The East too had problems as the Anglo-Saxons settled, more or less violently. Even among his own people many probably would not accept Arthur's authority. Perhaps Medraut was one of these?

In order to cement his position as leader Arthur therefore had to do something pretty spectacular. This he did at Mount Badon, defeating the enemies of his people; "nothing succeeds like success" and it would appear that a period of stability followed.

Probably people realised that a successful battle leader ruling a larger area was more likely to prove a better protector than a petty warlord. It would seem that the invaders too were cowed by defeat and a period of 40 years of peace followed. During this time one can imagine that Arthur spent a good deal of time consolidating his gains, perhaps allocating certain of his followers as "governors" of areas. The problem was that 40 years was a long time in any man's life let alone in the 5th Century.

Arthur, towards the end of this time must have been getting old. Even, if he had been, say, 18 at Badon, he would have been nearing 60 by the end of the peace. Even if he managed to avoid problems of senility he was probably not as physically strong as in his prime. His age was one which required Kings to be active. A new generation of followers too perhaps were impatient for a change of government. Without external foes his followers probably spent more time turning on each other. Along with all this, in Germany, Ireland and the North, new generations of raiders increased raiding, once again people demanded protection. The followers of Arthur may have been too busy arguing amongst themselves to provide it. Arthur probably did what he could, but he could not be everywhere at once.

As his age advanced his followers found more ground for argument concerning his successor. In doing so they let Arthur's achievement slip through their fingers. Some, in order to strengthen their hands, made alliances with the raiders. Arthur realised that to keep his gains he must really begin again. At Camlann he was slain trying to do this, taking Medraut, perhaps his chief opponent, with him. Without Arthur there was nobody with sufficient vision of authority to resume the task. Without a central leadership Britain fell piecemeal to the invaders.

Of all Arthur's enemies perhaps the greatest then, was time. However, his achievement during his life must have been so great that the time which was to destroy him ultimately made him live forever as Britain's greatest King.

The Arrival of the Saxons

The "Historia Brittonum" account

by Keith Le Flem

The "Historia Brittonum" date for the arrival of the Saxons does not agree with that generally derived from Bede, but it seems to fit the evidence better.

The relevant dates are as follows:-

29 A.D. (Consulship of the Gemini) to Stilicho's British campaign - 368 years. Stilicho's campaign to Vortigern's reign - 28 years.

"In the fourth year of his reign, when Felix and Taurus were consuls, in the 400th year from (the supposed date of the Passion) of Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Saxons came to Britain." The Irish version of the "Historia" states that Britain spent 409 years "under Roman tribute", from the time of Augustus to the revolt of Maximus. The particular battle indicated is placed at 385, Vortigern acceding 40 years later.

Finally, an 857 A.D. edition places the Saxon arrival 429 years before.

Added to this we have the detail of St. Germanus' visit to Britain which is known to have occurred in 429, and is mentioned just after the account of Hengist and Horsa. We thus have a fairly definite agreement on c.429 A.D.

The "Historia's" account of the first invaders runs as

follows: "Three ceols (i.e. keels, or longships) came to Britain, driven into exile from Germany, (From other accounts, we learn that this exile was a custom, to relieve population pressure in the crowded homelands, quite probably.), in which Horsa and Hengest, who also were brothers, were commanders. Vortigern received them kindly, and delivered to them the island which in their tongue is called Thanet, in British Ruoihm".

The "Brut" adds to this account that there were 300 fair-haired warriors in the ships, who impressed the Britons by their great height and strength.

Vortigern sent them north, where they defeated the Picts at Stamford. Calling 10,000 reinforcements, they went on from there to recapture Leeds. The "Historia" claims they were then settled in Lindsey, but Haigh has suggested that this is a mistake for Leeds, and that Vortigern was carrying on the old Roman tradition of settling barbarians in the march-lands as a shield against yet fiercer tribes beyond. This would make sense 'geopolitically'; for in Arthur's time Cornwall - and of course South Cadbury/Camelot, was apparently safe territory, despite the West Saxons, whereas "North Wales" - what is now Northern England - seems to have been the front line, so to speak, the area of major Anglian advance. Arthur seems to have fought a purely defensive war. No battles took place in Eastern England, and the only South England battle we know of, Badbury Hill, was provoked by a Saxon thrust at his heartland. In view of the known English alliances with the Picts, then, it seems that it is in the north of England, among the Celts of Strathclyde and Cumbria, that we must place most of Arthur's exploits as he attempts to remedy the folly of Vortigern.

References for the above article:

"The History of Scotland" Henry Boece.

"Brut": "History of the Kings of Britain" Geoffrey of Monmouth.

"Conquest of Britain by the Saxons" Daniel Haigh

"Arthur: Roman Britain's Last Champion" Beram Saklatvala.

References to "France in the late fifth century":

"Sidonius, Poems and Letters" trans. W. B. Anderson.

"The Lives of the British Saints" S. Baring-Gould and T. Fisher.

"Cambridge Medieval History" Vol. 1.

"Roman Society in the Last Century of the Western Empire" Samuel Dill.

"History of the Franks" Gregory of Tours,

trans. L. Thorpe.

"The Late Roman Empire" A. H. M. Jones.

"Caesar to Charlemagne" Robert Latouche, trans.

Jennifer Nicholson.

"The End of the Roman World" Stewart Perowne.

"The Decline of Rome" Joseph Vogt.

SCROLLS

Our first letter is a reply from Geoffrey Ashe concerning a recently correspondence about his Riothamus - Arthur theory:

"Thanks very much for your letter and the copies of Dragon. Please keep sending them....

"Regarding Riothamus, I suspected long ago that the reputed career of Arthur owed something to the real career of a British king c. 470. See my From Caesar to Arthur (1960), p. 224. However, I didn't follow it up. This might have been worked out before if it hadn't been for Tatlock's crushing dismissal of the Goeznovius preface as mere derivative of G. of Monmouth. Everybody accepted this and didn't really study it, or his article. If people had, they would surely have seen that he had almost no real arguments, and that Goeznovius can't be derived from Geoffrey because the story is quite different - also, much better as history. In the last couple of years Professor Leon Fleuriot has declared that the alleged date of Goeznovius, 1019, is authentic - which would settle the question. But the argument doesn't depend on the date at all.

"What was involved here was a sort of 'lateral' or Copernicus-type thinking. In Geoffrey's account of Arthur, the assumption has always been that only the warfare in Britain could have any historical basis. The Gallic part must be moonshine. I challenged that assumption, and things began to appear immediately, e.g. Geoffrey's triple allusion to Leo. I remembered Riothamus and then had the notion: suppose it's a title? Fleuriot, I learned, had come to the same conclusion, its original British original would have been Rigotamus, 'king' plus a superlative suffix (cp. 'generalissimo'), the Supreme King or High King. This fits in with the other High King styles in 5th-century Britain, and would leave any personal name or sobriquet an open question,.... I found recently that 'Genghis Khan' means much the same - Supreme Ruler - and his real name, by which he was known till the age of 44, was Temujin.

"Over the past year I've presented aspects of the Riothamus case at Keele and at the International Arthurian Congress; also, more fully, in the course of a visiting pro-

fessorship at the University of Southern Mississippi. The last was under the auspices of Charles Moorman, who stands high in the study of the Arthurian literature. I stressed that the case presented thus far is simply a step - identification of a documented person, for the first time, at an Arthurian point of origin. It opens up various lines for further research. At Charles's request I drew up some proposals for this, and he and his wife (also a scholar) are taking steps to form a small team for the purpose."

Yours sincerely,

Geoffrey Ashe

Many thanks Mr Ashe and we wish Charles Moorman, and team, all the best.

You will have already read a article on Mr Ashe's theory. and 5th-century France, in the next issue it is hoped that the reactions of the readers will be printed plus a short article on the alternatives to the Riothamus - Arthur theory - if there are any!

The next two letters concern the article "The Dark Ages" which appeared in D*2. We start with comments from Keith Le Flem:

"I cannot agree with your "Dark Ages" article, I fear. To begin with the term is a modern one, invented by 19th century historians trained in the classics. To them, Greco-Roman society was civilization, and its downfall automatically must have been into barbarism.

"The quote from Maureen Duffy is rubbish. To begin with, the so-called "Christian Church" already dominated the Roman Empire before the 'barbaric hordes' conquered it. Thus all that was 'lost' by the fall of the Western Empire was an extended version of the Byzantine Empire in the style of Justinian et al, a prospect so frightful the mind boggles at the state Europe would have been reduced to. Had no form of Christianity ever arisen, Judaism would have been the most likely substitute, or failing that, Islam a little later. Those who dream of a reborn paganism that might have been, or a transformed Mithraism, are simply speculating on the prospects for life of a corpse that was

already moldering. The simple fact is that monotheism's time had come.

"You say the organized Church showed little respect for the older institutions, and criticize its attitude to women and sex. In fact however many of the old gods were converted into saints, heathen festivals were adopted as Christian ceremonies, and Catholic churches were built on pagan shrines. For those heathens who could not give up goddess worship, the Church introduced the cult of the Virgin. Thus, through a combination of 'flexibility' (or willingness to compromise the truth) and strength (persecution) the R.C. Church was enabled not only to supplant heathenism but also to replace it.

"As for the attitude to women, the Roman Church simply reflected the values of its own society, just as the Celtic Church did for its own society. Celtic women had always been equal, even going into battle with their men, but the Roman Church had acquired its social values from the Greek half of the Empire, where women of good standing were under strict controls, only prostitutes and mistresses enjoying liberty. Its attitude to sex was also Greek; Jewish-Christian views merely enforced strict morality, but Greek soul vs body extremism infiltrated later to envelope celibacy and asceticism. Thus the argument between the Celtic and Roaman Christians was not about doctrine so much as social attitudes derived from the Druids on the one hand and the Greek philosophers on the other. To say that either of these views was better than the other is to use hindsight or even cultural chauvinism.

"In view of the excesses of the Roman Church once it gained control we should not forget that the system of the old gods included human sacrifice, ritual rape, infanticide, abortion, even child sacrifice, and encouraged superstitious terror of the most trivial events or omens. Thus it was neither humane nor civilized, and hardly surprisingly classed as the work of demons. This system also included slavery and fetish worship, both degrading to human dignity. Thus whatever crimes the Roman Church may be accused of, it was certainly justified in its criticisms of Celtic heathenism, and the Celtic church was not justified in any tolerance of such practises.

"Perhaps the most justified part of your critique refers to the suppression of stories, legends and myths. These, being harmless and adding to the sum of human

values, should not have been suppressed and it was criminal to do so.

"It is interesting that surviving clerical references to Arthur are uniformly critical, and Gildas, according to legend, destroyed all reference in his own works to the great man. Yet Arthur was a good Christian of some sort, for he wore an image of the Virgin on his shield and his army bore Christian banners. It would seem that Arthur's popularity stemmed from the common people, not the clergy, possibly because he extracted clerical wealth to pay for his wars, and thus the clergy obviously did not have the power to frame his reputation as they wished.

"As a final word I would like to point out that the 'barbarian hordes' were Arian Christians by Arthur's time, except the pagan Saxons and Franks who were Catholic Christians. Their so-called barbarism boils down to their being illiterate, long-haired and unwashed hooligans, the sort of people that can be found in all civilizations, including Rome's".

I'm sorry, Keith, I tried to cut it but couldn't, everything you said is of interest. I'll make just one comment and leave the rest to the reader. The Celtic Church consisted of small groups of poor (wealthwise) men and women or folk who travelled on missionary work, therefore, if Arthur tried to extract wealth from them he would find little, or nothing.

Now let us continue on the same theme with a letter from Vienna:

"Relating to your article about 'The Dark Age' we disagree with you. We don't believe that the name was caused by the Church. At the time, when the Romans left Britain, many of the Roman soldiers were Christians. Of course they gave their religion to the natives, but the fact that Britain was a peaceful and faithful province in the last days of the Roman Imperium suggests to us that Christianity was not forced upon them like the Franks under Charles the Great Christianised the Saxons in Europe. We are sure that a mixed religion arose. Arthur used Christianity as his standard, but still had a druid (we think Merlin was a druid) at court. This mixed religion is still alive today and it is quite interesting that mixed religions are very intensive in countries, that are also very Christian, like Scotland, Ireland, but also in districts of

the Alps and in the country north of the Danube in Austria. We think that the term "Dark Age" represents a time when there was no superior power to unite the country, a time of insecurity and troubles like the Thirty Years War in Europe, which could be called a "Dark Age" too."

Many thanks for your comments all at Buchengasse...Wolfgang says he is interested in Richard Norton's 54mm Arthurian horseman model...anybody else interested? Our friends from Austria also write about why they are interested in Arthur, but more about that in the next issue.

The final letter is from Nigel Vye:

"I wonder whether I may make a comment on the article "Saxon Archer" by Anthony Tomlinson. It is interesting to note that archery was never widely used by the Saxons. However, Snorri Sturluson in "King Harold's Saga" states that the Viking shield wall at Stamford Bridge was weakened by volleys of arrows, although chronicles of Hastings attest to the lack of archers in the Saxon army. It has been suggested that as the army of Stamford Bridge included men from the Danelaw who had a great respect for archery this would explain the conflicting reports. Archery is also mentioned in numerous accounts of Hereward the Wake, again a district of the Danelaw.

"I was interested in your comments on the Teulu. In fact it appears that Late Roman Centuries could be of 150 men and sometimes the cavalry Ordines were of 100 men. However, this is possibly just playing with numbers, although I agree with you that Roman civil and military organisation persisted into the Romano-British period in some form or other."

Thanks Nigel for the above and the short article I'll try and get it in the next issue.

I know that many of you are interested in the military side of the "Dark Ages" but wouldn't it be nice to see a bit more about the social and cultural aspects.

I must apologise about the lack of illustrations in this issue but I hope that Dragon*4 will be somewhat more picturesque. Please keep the drawings and articles coming!

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