

I. BRENDAN; REVIEWS; ARTHUR MACHEN; MAGIC SQUARES



PENDRAGON

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editorial vol XI, no 4 september 1978



READ ANY GOOD BOOKS LATELY? Some of you have, and have written in to let us know. Some of you weren't so sure, but still gave us in a review. Some of you, glancing at reviews in the pipeline, disagreed, and promised an alternative review for the next issue. (This is perhaps a suitable point to mention that all opinions expressed are those of the writer and not necessarily those of the Society.) All of which makes this a rather bumper issue, and has meant that several other reviews and articles (including one on Irish Folk Music) have unfortunately had to be held over.

TRANSATLANTIC TRIPS

St Brendan and theories about Ancient Celtic America are one feature of this issue. The cover shows Cabot Tower on Bristol's Brandon Hill, a spiritual link perhaps between an Irish venturer and the Italian-born John Cabot who, setting sail from Bristol, "discovered" Newfoundland. Historically, all we know is that it had a chapel dedicated to the saint on its summit. But what are we to make of the suggestion of a link with Brennus who was the legendary founder of Bristol in the Dark Ages? (Or maybe in pre-Roman times. Or was it pre-Celtic?) And what is the significance of a line drawn between Brandon Hill and Glastonbury Tor passing through all four Priddy Circles on Mendip? Time will undoubtedly provide more questions - and fewer answers!



On a less flippant note, St Brendan's Voyage by Rosemary Syfret is told on an Anvil cassette, ANV 625, at £3.15 including postage in the UK (available from Anvil Music c/o Discourses Ltd, 36 Crescent Road, Tunbridge Wells, Kent, England). The tape also includes The Legend of the Cross by the same author.

MAGIC SQUARES

Also featured are two alternative views on the SATOR-AREPO magic word-square. Supporters of the agrarian link might note that the magic number-square based on the same 5x5 grid is named after Mars, originally a Latin agricultural god. To tax your cryptic minds even more, a mazeword is included for your amusement. Derek Brown of Newcastle had the closest solution for last issue's prize crossword, and wins a year's free subscription.

CAERLEON

Information is coming in about a possible archaeological dig near Caerleon (which, as all Pendragons know, has its own Arthurian associations) and we will keep members informed of developments. Do please let the Hon Sec know if you are in any way interested in participating. Also in this issue, Roger Webster writes

11	24	7	20	3
4	12	25	8	16
17	5	13	21	9
10	18	1	14	22
23	6	19	2	15

about Arthur Machen who has connections with the town itself and whose writings are permeated by its atmosphere.

OUTINGS

Gef Dearn of Sangreal magazine has written to suggest joint Sangreal-Pendragon outings to sites such as Avebury and Glastonbury (and perhaps Winchester) which would give readers a chance to meet and discuss in an informal way. Again, if you are interested, and have any suggestions, drop a line to the Hon Sec.

Next issue is due at midwinter, and our suggested theme is Gawain, the Green Knight et al. Final deadline for articles is November 30th, but you don't need to wait until then! From now on we will try to keep to the solstices and equinoxes as our publication dates.

Editor for this issue: Chris Lovegrove. Design & layout: Kate Pollard & Chris Lovegrove. Cover Photo: Roger Webster. Production: Nick Brister, Roger Webster & Kate Pollard.

1978 & ALL THAT

This will surely be remembered as the year of the festivals.

First there was the Festival for Mind & Body at Olympia in May. This was a repeat of 1977 and, in some ways, a better organised affair.

Leys, Zodiacs, Dowsings, Henges, Mazes, Pendragons et al, including John Michell's anti-metrication display, were joined in one Dome under the heading of Ancient British Mysteries.

Eastern mystics, exotic foods and many methods of handicraft were eye-catching and drew the crowds. For my money the Kirlian photography and the shedful of plants all twittering like birds in an aviary were much the most momentous. This year it was Bernard Levin who wrote favourably of the Festival in The Times.

On July 22nd it was Bristol's turn for fun and games. This actually began as an International Wine Fair which drew sellers and buyers from all over the world: it was such a commercial success that bookings are already arranged for next year.

This offered an opportunity to have a Fair on College Green in which, of course, Pendragons participated inasmuch as we had a stall from which we sold magazines and posters etc. Tim Porter and The Green Branch produced their musical presentation of

jess foster
Robin Hood & the Turkish Knight inside the Cathedral. On the Friday evening Pendragons also showed Keith Critchlow's film Reflection at The Folk House. (A review of this appears on another page of this issue.) Youth clubs and others gave displays of dancing and gymnastics. Though the sun did not actually shine, at least the rain held off for this part of the holiday.

Alas, on the Sunday, when the Regatta was to take place in the docks, and the Sealed Knot enthusiasts were intending a momentous battle in Ashton Park, the rain deluged and our 1978 summer ran true to form again.



bristol regatta rained off

however, THINK '78, a festival staged in Cheltenham, had much better luck. The town was looking beautiful, bathed in golden sunshine, and the gardens were in full bloom everywhere. The Town Hall proved to be just the right size to hold all our Dome friends from Olympia, and a number of local interests. The organisers were enthusiastic and efficient. The crowds poured in and stayed to exchange ideas and information. We actually cleared all our expenses and made a small profit. All in all, the September Cheltenham festival proved more enjoyable and rewarding than Olympia and we hope there will be another such next year.

For all three occasions our London members came to help and support; we couldn't do without them. For Olympia, this year,

Trevor and Shelley McGrath provided us with a splendid picture of Merlin for our display panel at the Dome. Last year they did some splendid graphics and enlargements of photographs (Cadbury, Llanelen, Montsegur) and these were used at the Cheltenham do and made a very striking display.

Nick Wright and Mike Pollard worked hard on our various stands and stalls and they deserve many thanks. Kate Pollard, Chris Lovegrove and Roger Webster were responsible for our various magazines and were many times congratulated. We met many old friends and made a lot of new ones which is really what the festivals are all about. We hope that some of the new friends and members will be writing articles in next year's issues of Pendragon.



THE MAGPIE'S COMPANION, STEVEN BANKS. illustrations by nicholas griffiths (john murray £4.95)

This is the nicest reference book anyone could have, and it is written by our own Steven Banks who has written more than one article in Pendragon that has aroused interest and discussion.

Every page carries delightful line drawings of such articles as salt-cellars, figurines, coins, spoons, spurs, rings, razors, tokens and badges: all the little items that catch the eye of the curious when they are seen in a museum, antique shop, junk yard or grandmother's glass case.

Explanations and short histories accompany the illustrations. "Amulets and talismans came into Christianity from the pagan world and persisted in use despite the disapproval of the Church... According to Marco Polo, the broad arrow was used for short range in warfare by the soldiers of Kubla Khan in the thirteenth century..."

Carts had to be robust and easily repaired, hence the use of bolts and no glue so that parts could be replaced when damaged or worn... Bone skates were used in Northern Europe, including Britain, probably from very early times until the fourteenth century... Tweezers appear to have been used by men as well as women, and have been found in the graves of Saxon warriors and the drains of medieval monasteries..."

On page 31 appears a familiar gilt bronze letter A for which, apparently, special permission to reproduce was given by Leslie Alcock!

Fascinating reading. Should be kept handy and dipped into at frequent intervals. Has a delightful cover wrap too.

JESS FOSTER

FILM REVIEWS

monty python and the holy grail.

A FILM, surely, is an expression, not only of the author's narrative genius, but of the director's interpretative sensitivity and, when appropriate, his forcefulness. The camera's intimate perspective lends at once conceptual reality and dimensional perceptivity to the infinitely engaging sub-levels and super-strata of observational intensity. (Are you bored yet?) However superlative the actor's technique, however finely drawn the character's intimate persona, however... (now you're bored, aren't you?)...

Fortunately, Monty Python & the Holy Grail is none of these things. It is, however, very funny and thoroughly recommended for all Pendragons to see if they have not already done so, since the film has been around for ages.

The director's approach to many aspects of the Arthurian mythos is refreshingly new, not to say incredible, or even mildly demented. What, for instance, is the significance of the French Guardian of the Grail Castle's declamation: "I wave [Rabelaisian expletives deleted: Ed.] at you, English sons of pigs, haha!" just before he dumps a bucket of vomit over the castle wall upon the noble Arthur & his Knights? Indeed, what is an unpleasant little foreigner doing guarding our grail in the first place?

Why does Lancelot singlehandedly wipe out almost the entire population of a large castle in order to rescue, not a maiden in distress, but a faintly ambiguous and unwholesome young man?! Where is Arthur's horse? Why does Merlin have a broad Scots accent, where does the murderous White Rabbit fit in? And, perhaps most significant of all, would Arthur or any of his companions even have survived to grace the pages of history had the cartoonist not suffered a heart attack?

See Monty Python & the Holy Grail lest we take ourselves too seriously.

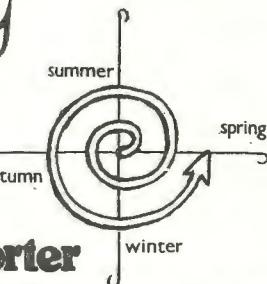
reflection.

Many Pendragon members will remember Keith Critchlow's lectures on Chartres Cathedral as a barrage of images and information (in his Bristol lecture at the University School of Chemistry he used all three projector screens and a couple of acres of blackboard). Perhaps we expected his film to assail us in the same way. Nothing could have been further from the truth.

The film, as its title suggests, is a reflection, both as an image and as a contemplative act upon Time and the relationship of structure in Nature to the sacred structures of Man. Critchlow uses modern film techniques unpretentiously. The computerised animations of molecular structures and mandala-like diagrams are a delight to the eye while his time-lapse photography is revealing and free from gimmickry.

OPERA:

The Entertaining of the Noble Head



"PLAY WITH MUSIC and songs" is how Tim Porter describes this opera. In spectator sports like, say, football, a crowd's emotional outlets are not only subject to fickle chance but are also likely to be severely frustrated. However, this

play, like all true ritual drama, allowed the audience to experience that catharsis where our emotions are directed in a satisfying though not predictable way. Our nightmares and our daydreams were presented to us, not arbitrarily, but in an almost 'natural' sequence of tension and release, though never in a way we expected; and often, in the gloom of despair, laughter would restore a sense of balance.

The experience could have been more harrowing if we didn't, like Theseus in the labyrinth, have our clew of thread. This took the form of a double spiral which led us through two cycles beginning with the evergreen winter carol "The Holly & the Ivy" sung by the heroine Katy and ending with the singing of Wordsworth's "The Solitary Reaper" with its promise of life after apparent death. Does this sound to obscure and esoteric? Not really, for those with eyes to see and ears to hear will instinctively know the story already.

As for the music and songs, I found these delightful, like a dream in that they appeared familiar though difficult to recall precisely afterwards. Though the words, paradoxically, were not always clear in the musical rounds, they were especially distinctive in the singing of Lawrence Wallington, Julia Taylor and Simon Beale. Melodies, even when not in an obviously diatonic mould, were well suited not only for in-

struments but also for the compasses of individual voices. Being a play, there were also spoken parts, and here Keith Lawley, as the Cole Hawlings-Alfred Watkins character, gave an outstandingly sympathetic performance. All concerned, whether playing or on the production side, clearly had the utmost faith in a venture that was "amateur", in the original and best sense of that word.

CHRIS LOVEGROVE

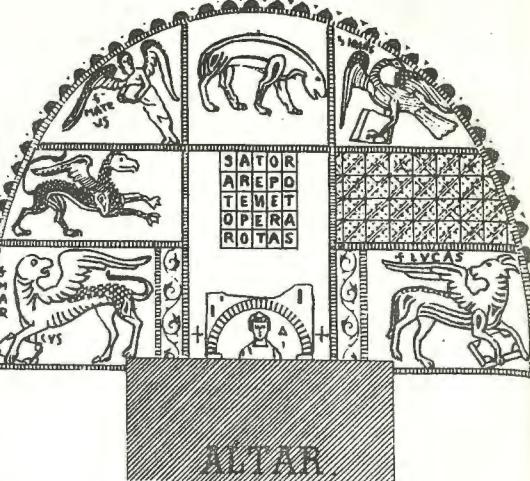
An account by the composer of the writing of this work, *The Birth of an Arthurian Opera*, appeared in *Pendragon* Vol 11, No 2.

WESTWARD TO ARTHUR pendragon house ltd.lizard town,helston,cornwall.

This is a guide-book unlike all other guide-books, written by one of our founder members and printed in Canada by another member, John Badger.

The format is coffee table; the cover glossy and coloured. It is not written in chapters but comprises a series of holiday quests: To Castle Killibury and the Three Hole Cross; To Trebar-with Strand, Tintagel Castle, Dozmary Pool, Castle Dore and many other sites between Tristian's Stone and the Winchester Round Table, taking in Cadbury and Glastonbury on the way.

Its sub-title is 'Dark Age Truth, not Mediaeval Fantasy'. The text is clear, interesting, authentic and authoritative; the author has separated fact from fancy and gives all the information the quester wants to know without overloading the references and unnecessary erudition. Two splendid maps ensure that the Quester knows exactly where to go



ALTAR

richard
hoskins
£1-95

and has no excuse for getting lost.

The book is copiously illustrated, some of the drawings being by our own Christine Bristow whose illustrations have added distinction to many issues of *Pendragon*.

If you are a visitor to Britain and the West Country this guide-book will solve all your problems. Even if you live thousands of miles away and think it unlikely that you will ever be able to visit this island, read "Westward to Arthur" and you will feel that you've seen the land of Arthur and now have an inkling of the strange hold that Arthur has on his countrymen.

You can quote from it with confidence; no one will be able to tell you that you're talking a lot of nonsense. In fact, just the book to set a newcomer off on a Quest for Arthur's Britain.

JESS FOSTER

THE MAN WHO LED COLUMBUS TO AMERICA, paul h.chapman, judson press

This is a book chiefly about the voyages of St Brendan as recorded in his *Navigatio Sancti Brendani Abbatis*. He lived in the 6th century, a contemporary of King Arthur so his doings are of some interest to Pendragons.

The author makes a good case for the *Navigatio* being an account of early trans-Atlantic passages; outward by sailing south to the Canaries, and west before the North East Trade Winds; then homeward by sailing north, and finally east on the Westerlies. This route is the easiest for sailing ships, and therefore has always been the usual one. I myself have sailed the two outward legs in a barquentine, taking seventeen days from Teneriffe to Barbados compared to St Brendan's recorded forty. By the way, the number 40 occurs too often in ancient writings to be taken literally; it was used as an 'indeterminate high number' and still is sometimes, as in the expression 'forty winks'.

Mr Chapman argues that Columbus was acquainted with the *Navigatio*, and used the same route out and back as St Brendan. That in effect is the substance of *The Man Who...* and it leaves deeper considerations almost untouched. What navigational equipment did these two voyagers have? On page 7 is a slight reference to the nocturnal, an instrument Columbus only would have had, to correct the sightings of the Pole Star made with his astrolabe, also something unknown to Brendan. The Little Bear was not primarily a 'Clock in the Sky' as the author romantically claims: Columbus would have kept time with an hour glass. More important, he makes no reference to the mariner's compass, which came into use around 1100 AD. Without it, Brendan's helmsman would have held his course by watching the heavenly bodies or, if they were obscured, by keeping to the wind and hoping it remained constant. However on page 75 there is a mention of sea birds talking to Brendan, with the interesting suggestion that this means he gathered information from their flight. The Polynesians were

starting their exploration of the Pacific also in the first millennium, and we know that they eventually brought together a body of knowledge on the flight of sea birds (daily and seasonal), the appearance of the sea (see page 97 of *The Man Who...* for a 'coagulated' sea), and the sorts of sea weeds and creatures encountered. It was by these means, acutely developed, that the Tahitian priestly navigator Tupua, who took passage with Captain Cook, was able to indicate the direction of his homeland at any time and distance. The ability of migrating birds, and even domestic animals, to find their way home from afar, here comes to mind. I suggest that St Brendan, also a priestly navigator in an age of faith, used such 'super-natural' methods of navigation, and furthermore that although his ocean voyages may be the only ones of the time for which we have a surviving account, he probably was not the only Atlantic navigator on the same route before Columbus. There is a field of research here for Mr Chapman, described in the blurb as a 'history student-navigator', whatever that may mean.

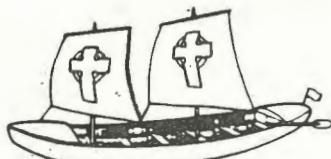
Mr Chapman is certainly not a seaman. It is simply not true that a square-rigged ship can only sail before the wind (page 9). Also the 'rudder' shown in the illustration on page 36 is of a kind never seen on land or sea, and it would never steer a ship. And the diagram on page 32 takes no account of leeway, an important consideration in establishing the 'course made good'.

Finally, I do wish more attention had been given to spelling. It is Cape Agulhas (not Angulhas - page 29), and Guanches (not Gaunches - page 82). Last of all I hope that royalties have paid for a new camera to replace the old box Brownie apparently used for 'photos by author'.

29.7.78.

STEVEN BANKS





The Brendan Voyage by Tim Severin hutchinson 1978

Paul Chapman's main argument in The Man who led Columbus to America is that Columbus' first voyage (which followed a clockwise route around the Atlantic) was not the obvious direction to travel to reach land to the west. He suggests instead that Columbus used the clues in the medieval Voyage of St Brendan or Navigatio as to directions and landfalls, but that he disguised the source. The reason? The implications of a prior Irish discovery of land to the west would have been detrimental to the prevailing "finders-keepers" principle.

This "easy" route is easy only with hindsight and Brendan, if we accept Chapman's argument, learnt it the hard way. Briefly, he suggests that the Navigatio is acceptable as a log of a real voyage and that Brendan's main (perhaps only) voyage can be dated to 564-5. It takes in the Faeroes, Flores and then San Miguel in the Azores, the Sargasso Sea, Barbados (corrupted from Brendan's name?), Barbuda in the Lesser Antilles, Great Inagua in the Bahamas, the Great Bahama Bank, an iceberg in the Gulf Stream, a volcano on the Reykjanes Ridge, Iceland, Rockall and thence home to Clonfert in Galway.

Not everybody is happy about this suggested route and Chapman's interpretations. Geoffrey Ashe for example in Land to the West (1962) and The Quest for America (1971) preferred a series of voyages at an earlier period (539-41, 548-9), culminating in a final voyage (551) to the Land Promised to the Saints (a voyage which Chapman glosses over). Some authorities even doubted it could be

done at all in a skin-covered boat.

But in 1976 and 1977 attention was drawn to an exciting and courageous project. Replicas of European wooden sailing ships had already crossed the Atlantic, but here were a handful of men crossing the open sea, buffeted by storms, nearly sunk by trawlers and holed by ice packs, trusting in a boat covered in leather. It seemed nearly as foolhardy as Heyerdahl's reed boats. But it was accomplished and completely vindicated the theory that Irishmen could have sailed to North America before Columbus, even before Norsemen in wooden ships.

The project was masterminded by Tim Severin who conceived the bold plan to copy medieval techniques and build an ocean-going curragh. He then carried it out through to the day he landed safely with three companions on the Newfoundland coast. The book, The Brendan Voyage, is fascinating reading describing not only the theories he set out to prove, but also the splendid efforts building the boat and the two voyages with a stopover in Iceland. With wit and humour Severin gives a human touch and scale to the hitherto hypothetical battleground of scholars.

In a letter, Tim Severin writes: Paul Chapman "has discussed with me his ideas for Brendan's transatlantic routes, and I agree with your [reviewer] that the easiest route for sailing ships is to go westward on the trades and return to Europe by a more northerly route that picks up the Gulf Stream and the westerlies. This is the "easy" route followed by Columbus. Paul Chapman's arguments I think fall down on the fact that they require some quite incredible performances by skin boats. These boats are required to cover sea distances in a straight line which are simply impractical... A medieval boat with its simpler rig was just not capable of these remarkable passages."

Severin favours the Stepping

Stones route to America (rather than Chapman's Grand Tour) as it would be "very difficult to sail to the West Indies against the prevailing westerlies if one had started out from the Island of Sheep" in the Faeroes (see map).

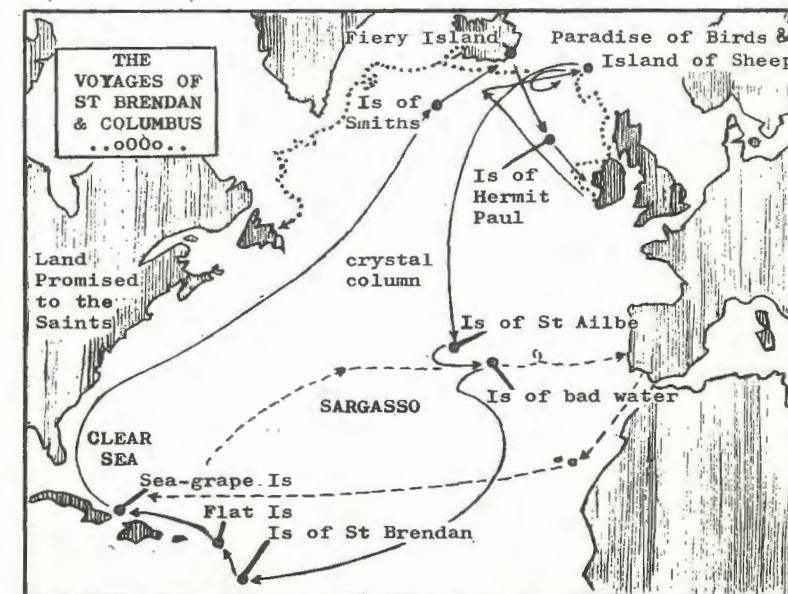
Surveying the books, some conclusions I think can be reached. Severin has proved that skin boats could have traversed the north Atlantic at the time the Navigatio was written (9th century). Chapman's arguments show that Columbus could have based his route plan on his interpretation of the Navigatio. The rest is true speculation. St Brendan might have accomplished some of the voyages attributed to him or his name might have attracted other voyages to him. The important point is that it was believed that he had had predecessors for most of the islands he visited, but that he was not the first. (Perhaps a book, The Men who led Brendan to America, is now called for?)

sangreal

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A Journal of the Mysteries, Crafts and Folk Traditions of Britain

But it would be nice to think that, after the centuries-old fuss, he did actually make it to the Land Promised to the Saints.



→ Voyage of St Brendan (564-5): after Chapman.

→ Voyage of Columbus (1492): after Chapman.

..... Voyage of curragh Brendan (1976, 1977): Severin.

AMERICA B.C.: ancient settlers in the new world. quadrangle n.y. 1976.

"I do not like thee Dr Fell..." or, more correctly, I do not like your theories, and, unlike the speaker in the nursery rhyme, I have good reason. This book is a splendid work, profusely illustrated, meticulously researched and carefully documented, but utterly wrong in its conclusions and thus doomed to join the 300-year-old queue of extravagant works by ill-informed enthusiasts all determined to usurp the Amerindian and to foist pre-Columbian culture upon Egyptians, Phoenicians, Jews, Atlanteans or who you will. In Dr Fell's case it is primarily foisted upon Iberian Celts who, in company with other Mediterranean rovers, visited N. America regularly in the last millennium BC, settling in New England and the Midwest and leaving a literally enormous weight of evidence in the form of megalithic circles, dolmens, standing stones and temples, all with a profusion of petroglyphs in Ogham and other old-world alphabets.

If such theories were true, even partially, they would upset all our accepted notions of the development of pre-Columbian culture, but they are generally built upon a misinterpretation of, and unwarranted extrapolations from, the evidence presented. Dr Fell's theory is no exception to this rule but his case is not so weak that it can be dismissed out of hand. The Ogham markings may well be more wishful thinking than ancient carvings and even if they are ancient their significance probably lies in other directions than that of the Celts, as in the instance of Le Plongeon whose work on Maya ruins was important even though he was wildly inaccurate in identifying Maya hieroglyphs with the Egyptians' hieroglyphs. Petroglyphs do exist in N. America and in the interests of intellectual honesty the alleged inscriptions, in Ogham, Punic or whatever, should be analysed by competent professional linguistic scholars to determine their true nature. Dr FELL,

BARRY FELL review by r.a. gilbert

it should be noted, is a professional biologist and an amateur linguist; even so, it is just possible that he will turn out to have been right after all.

Not that this is a very great risk for American archaeologists. The other evidence for Celtic occupation is even more equivocal. Dr Fell is quite sure that Mystery Hill in New Hampshire and all the other megalithic sites in New England are Celtic, covered with Ogham inscriptions and solid proof of ancient visitors from the old world. He rejects completely the received notion that they are the handiwork of either early colonists, late Indian cultures or a combination of both, but his radio-carbon dates for tree roots and charcoal deposits are not strictly relevant to the structures themselves and do not provide positive dating. Nor does he make any mention of the fact that the early abandonment of farms by early colonists unable to work the poor soil resulted in large numbers of derelict stone buildings, usually with cellars, left to be reclaimed by the forest and to be rediscovered in our own day. Some of the stone circles are ancient but there is no reason not to ascribe their building to Amerindians some 2000 years after the time of Dr Fell's putative Celts.

With artifacts Dr Fell is on even shakier ground. His wonderful literary analysis of the Davenport Stone, found in Iowa in 1874, fails to impress for he makes no attempt to justify his dismissal of orthodox claims that the stone is a forgery. Similarly he gives no sound reason for rejecting the accepted version of the Pima creation chant, and thus its native origin, and, although one can admire the elegance of his new translation one is reluctant to accept an Iberian-Punic origin for the Pima tribe in the face of such cavalier treatment of existing scholarship. To return to the artefacts: if a well-established trade-pattern with the old world

existed, where are the trade goods? Iron and copper may decompose in the acid soil of New England, but where are the Celtic gold ornaments and Mediterranean glass that one would expect to find? Bronze weapons have been found, but too few and in circumstances that support the argument that they are recent imports, "lost" accidentally or deliberately so that they could be dramatically "found" at a later date. The evidence from potsherds is nullified by a lack of specific detail in the ornamentation that prevents both a positive attribution to the Celts and the necessary denial of manufacture by Amerindians.

The last and weakest part of the evidence is that of the voyages themselves. It is not inherently impossible that Mediterranean sailors could have crossed the Atlantic, but there is no literary evidence and no trace of anything unequivocally American brought back from their hypothetical travels. Further, Dr Fell postulates a hiatus in trans-Atlantic trade after the Julian conquest of 55 BC and the destruction of the Celtic fleet; Roman sailors, it seems, were not adventurous (pace Mortimer Wheeler's *Rome beyond the Imperial Frontiers*) and no trace of Christian Celtic voyaging has been found in America (alas, poor Brendan!). And yet to prove the quality of Celtic seamanship Dr Fell cites the Irish raiders who harried Western Europe after the departure of the legions. What were these Irish Celtic sailors doing during the preceding 400 years?

That Dr Fell has not answered these and a multitude of other questions arising from his amazing thesis will not help him in gaining general acceptance for it. Unless he finds proof positive in the shape of intact Celtic graves that have so far eluded him, Dr Fell's transatlantic Celts will prove to be like fairy gold, destined to wither into dust in the cold light of academic reason: cautious, prosaic and plodding, but ultimately correct.

THE NEW CAMELOT john brook

FOR MANY YEARS THERE HAS BEEN a controversy as to which, in fact, of the many European nations first discovered the North American continent. Eric the Red was the first person to be credited with the achievement. This has now been disproved. A further theory ascribed the discovery to some Irish monks and St Brendan. It is now suggested that the Welsh actually achieved it.

Both the Irish and Welsh theories have a certain support. The proof required to sustain either claim has been, hitherto, noticeably missing. Actually, near-proof exists though none, apparently, seems to have recognised it.

Before discussing the "proof" it is necessary to decide the approximate period in which the event took place. As is well known, during the Vortigern period many British families left this country to settle in Armorica (Brittany). This trend was more or less reversed after the advent of Ambrosius Aurelianus (the Great). However, after the death of Arthur (542) and, certainly, the death of Caninus Aurelianus, emigration began again. During this period, not only did families and bodies of fighting men leave the country for Armorica but also they went further afield to Byzantium; some troops enrolling in the armies of Belisarius. There would have been little difficulty in obtaining transport as ships, built to the design of the *Classis Britannica*, Atlantic squadron, would have been available.

It was only after the battle of Dyrham (577) that ships would have been confined to Dumnonia and, possibly, the present Wales. It is admitted that a ship or ships could have left for foreign parts after Dyrham but, as will be shown later, it is more probable that the voyage to the New World took place at the earlier period.

It is felt that few members will have studied the development of the North American continent; certainly not the distribution and development of the various tribes. In view

of what follows they are strongly recommended to do so. The period 500-700 is the most enlightening. Up to about 500 the Mahicans and Abenaki dwelt side by side along the Eastern seaboard to the east of the Appalachian mountains. From that time onward the tribes throughout North America were affected by a most traumatic experience. About 557 the Mahicans suddenly left their hunting grounds and settled for many years in the Ohio valley. It would seem that both the Abenaki and the Mahicans were deadly enemies; the Mahicans usually having the worst of it. It would have taken some major event to induce them to leave their traditional area. The distance they travelled is immense and far removed from everything to which they were accustomed.

It is necessary to examine the area in which, for nearly 200 years, they settled. The type of land was different, being mainly plain as opposed to forest. It was well-watered and capable of supporting massive herds of buffalo. Indeed, for those who were accustomed to living under such conditions, it was ideal. Had, therefore, there not been some powerful influence at work it is inconceivable that a forest tribe would have moved to such a place. Almost in the centre of the area above described is a plateau that, to the south-east, has a promontory of considerable size bounded on one side by the little Miami River. A full description of this site can be read in the American history of the period referred to above. The summit of the promontory is completely encircled by dry stone walls; all re-entrants being carefully covered. At all the angles the walls have been carefully rounded after the Roman fashion (see details of the "Castles" of Hamsterley, Co. Durham). The main entrance is from the plateau. It is, or rather was, most impressive. The causeway was paved and passed between two (ceremonial?) pillars before entering the massive tow-

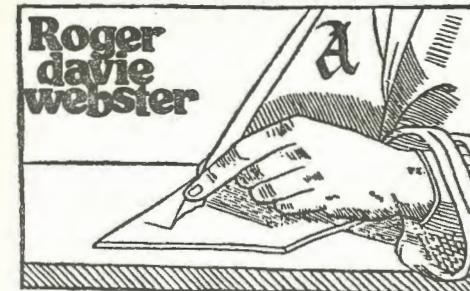
ers (?) between which hung the gates. Both towers are so designed as to accommodate guard-rooms. The huge fortress town had been constructed in two parts, the earlier being at the far end of the promontory and divided from the nearer by a narrow neck of land equally well fortified. As the settlement grew so the second part of the promontory was incorporated and fortified; the ceremonial entrance being constructed even later. It would seem that modern American excavation has been on a very limited scale and a major "Wheeler"-type effort would be needed to expose the secrets of the place.

After the main fortress was completed additional, though smaller, fortresses were constructed further south down the Mississippi River; all are of a similar design. It is of peculiar interest to note the construction of all these fortresses bears no resemblance to any other work undertaken throughout the whole of the American continent. Indeed, to those who know South Cadbury and the "Castle" it would seem that they were seeing a projection of them.

It is suggested that some ships of the Atlantic Squadron achieved the passage of the North Atlantic making a landfall somewhere near Rhode Island. They joined forces with the Mahicans and decided to move inland. It is possible, like the Spaniards after them, they managed to bring horses with them. Having discovered the present site of "Fort Ancient" they recognised it as a potential New Camelot and took appropriate action. Then, some generations later, for some reason unknown, the whole design crumbled. The Mahicans returned to their homeland where they remained thereafter. Who knows but what it was their contact with the Romano-British that encouraged them to throw in their lot with the British during the Franco-British wars of the eighteenth century.

*Reprinted from *Pendragon*, Vol 8 No 4 (July 1975). Any comments?

ARTHUR MACHEN: MAN OF LETTERS



S FOR ME, I MAKE NO DEDUCTIONS, I infer nothing, I refrain from saying 'Therefore'. Like Sancho Panza: 'I come from my own vineyard, I know nothing.'

On the face of it a strange statement from an author whose long study of the occult made him one of the most important writers of supernatural fiction at the turn of the century. But upon reflection it seems to me that Arthur Machen learned very early in his career that which

many of us may never learn in a lifetime spent raiding the ideologies of numberless obscure sects in search of "Enlightenment", "Cosmic Truth" or whatever. Simply that, like Abraham Lincoln's electorate, they cannot all be right all of the time. And that, while most of them raise some interesting questions, none of them provide any real answers.

Arthur Machen was born on March 3rd 1863 in Caerleon nr Newport, Monmouthshire. His father, a poor man, was the rector of Llanddewi Fach. Machen grew up in the rich, varied countryside that surrounds the Roman fortress town and, despite spending most of his later life away from Gwent, the images of his childhood remained to haunt him and to shape his literary talent.

He arrived in London in 1880 and, in the true tradition of all great men of letters, starved for the sake of his art. He lived, so he tells us, upon a diet of "dry bread, green tea ... with plenty of tobacco by way of dessert", while he scraped a poor wage cataloguing and compiling in the garrett storeroom of the publisher Vizetelly in Catherine St.

In the evenings he would "write", agonising over each and every phrase. Writing prologues, introductions and epilogues to works which he could never dare to begin lest they be less than perfect! He laboured terribly over items in the pompous, overblown style of his Victorian contemporaries for many a long hour before discovering the style to be quite unsuited to him. One work of fiction which stems from this period is the excellent *Chronicles of Clemency* (a collection of tales after Rabelais) which he later describes as "The great Romance" which was neither great nor a romance".

The garrett in Catherine St was, perhaps, the finest nursery to be found for the infant talent of a writer of supernatural fiction for Mr Vizetelly both published and sold books and had in store a magnificently jumbled collection of occult literature.

Machen says of it: "There were the principal and most obscure treatises on Alchemy, on Astrology, on Magic... Here were books about Witchcraft, Diabolical Possession, 'Fascination' or the 'Evil Eye'; here were commentaries on the Kaballa. Ghosts and Apparitions were a large family. Secret Societies of all sorts hung on the skirts of the Rosicrucians and Freemasons. We dealt with Gnostics and Mithraists, we harboured Neo-Platonists... Quietists and the Swedenborgians... Diviners and Stargazers and Psychometrists and Animal Magnetists and Spiritualists and Mesmerists and Psychic Researchers."

Machen's task was to read all of these and write a brief precis of each for inclusion in a booklet to be called *The Literature of Occultism and Archaeology*. This he did and the catalogue was eventually published by Redway of York Street.

Around or about 1889 Machen came into a small inheritance. Various relations died at more or less the same time and he found himself quite reasonably well off. With the leisure afforded by this new found independence he began to write in earnest. Between 1889 and 1899 he wrote The Great God Pan, The Inmost Light, The Three Imposters, The White People and Hieroglyphics, together with sundry other stories and a few translations of French authors. He also wrote what is, in my opinion, his greatest work, The Hill of Dreams.

There are two books by Arthur Machen of which I am particularly fond: one is his autobiography in two volumes, Things near and far and Far off Things, the other is The Hill of Dreams.

The former is a fascinating story, full of enchanting diversions into philosophy and literary comment. It is the story of a man whose long study of things occult and peculiar has left him miraculously sane and free from attitudes or postures. It is full of Machen's wonderfully dry and subtle humour which finds as unwilling a target in today's Cosmic Truth sellers and Universal Harmony merchants as ever it did in the oddities of Machen's own time. His descriptive passages are a delight, for instance his evocation of the whole-hearted pleasures of Victorian Tavern life make even such as I, who have never experienced such a thing, shed a tear or two for nostalgia.

The Hill of Dreams is a companion to his autobiography, for, if the latter is the story of his life, then The Hill of Dreams is the story of his soul.

The book is a difficult one to describe. The writing is experimental in nature and there is a curious but attractive formlessness in the technique. Comparisons, as always, are invidious but perhaps it is not unlike the work of Hesse or Kafka in some ways. It is certainly extraordinary and timeless in its appeal and would more than repay the effort of tracking down a copy. It was not well received when eventually published in 1907 (ten years after its completion). Many critics could make nothing of it at all, others seized upon certain aspects as thoroughly unwholesome, but those few who did praise it did so unreservedly. It was last reprinted by the Richards Press in the early sixties and should still be available in some libraries.

Towards the end of this fruitful period Machen, who through all his studies and involvements remained a lifelong High Anglican, joined the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn. This famous (or infamous) Magical Order first appeared in London in 1877 and contained such famous names as Aleister Crowley, W.B. Yeats and Machen's long time friend A.E. Waite. Upon joining the Order, Machen took the name of 'Frater Avallaunius', a reference to the vision of The Hill of Dreams. But it seems that he was not greatly impressed for he did not remain a member for long and in Things near and far where he calls it 'The Order of the Twilight Star' he says: "The Society as a society was pure foolishness concerned with impotent and imbecile Abracadabras. It knew nothing whatever about anything and concealed the fact under an impressive ritual and a sonorous phraseology."

Machen had his own theories about the Holy Grail and references to them appear in some of his stories. He believed the Grail to be a portable altar (the altar of St Carranog of Welsh tradition). It was not possible to make out the colour of this altar and it would permit no object to remain upon it.

It appears in the Dream of Olwen from Machen's The Great Return. The vision goes thus: "The Bell that is like y glwys yr angel ym mharadwys - the joy of angels in Paradise - is returned; the altar that is of a colour that no man may discern is returned, the cup that came from Syon is returned, the ancient offering is restored, the Three Saints

have come back to the church of the tri sant, the Three Holy Fishermen are among us, and their net is full. Gogoniant, Gogoniant; Glory, Glory."

In the latter half of his life Arthur Machen became much more popular as a writer of horror stories and was often likened to Edgar Allan Poe. As recently as 1960 a paperback was published with the unfortunate title Tales of Horror & the Supernatural. This contained some of his most famous stories including The Bowmen, probably the origin of the spurious 'Angels of Mons' affair.

Machen returned to Caerleon on March 3rd 1937 to attend a celebratory dinner in honour of his 74th birthday. Among the lesser known friends and local dignitaries were his old friends A.E.Waite and W.H.Davies. He died in Beaconsfield near London on December 15th, 1947.

ROGER DAVIE WEBSTER 1978: with thanks to Bob Gilbert for his help and advice.

Books by Arthur Machen:

Autobiography

Things Near and Far } - Martin Secker
Far off Things } - Martin Secker

The Hill of Dreams - Grant Richards

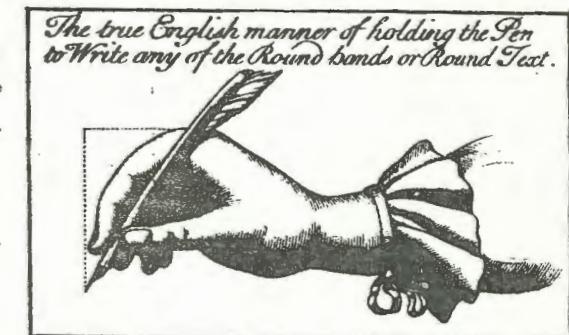
Hieroglyphics - The Unicorn Press (Richards)

Tales of Horror & the Supernatural (including The Great God Pan and The Bowmen) - The Unicorn Press (Richards)

Tales of Horror & the Supernatural (including The Great Return and The Shining Pyramid) Panther paperbacks

Biography

Arthur Machen (Reynolds & Charlton) - Richards Press



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LEY HUNTER

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NEEDLES OF STONE

turnstone press

Needles of Stone, as the title might suggest, is a book which goes to some lengths to try to establish an analogy between the placement of standing stones in Britain and acupuncture. The presentation of an idea such as a system of "Earth Acupuncture" as part-explanation for the existence of standing stones would seem to demand a weighty volume of evidence as back-up, since it is somewhat outside the realms of conventional theory. Such evidence is not freely given but as justification an author's note explains that the book is a study in ideas, not a thesis.

The book has eleven chapters, each with its own underlying theme, and 196 pages of text which attempt to relate and criticise the ideas of writers such as Underwood and Watkins, and introduce impressions gleaned from the writer's dowsing experiments and from the results of dowsing experiments recounted by others. Numbered references are given in most chapters but have the distressing habit of not appearing in the text in places where they are really needed. This has been explained in the author's note by a statement to the effect that "certain information would not have been forthcoming were the source to be published".

The opening chapter suggests that modern civilisation neglects the Pagan idea that the Earth is alive, and the book as a whole, with some substantial digression, goes on to suggest that Man's tampering with the living Earth without thought to the repercussions on a more esoteric level, is responsible for a number of ills in return. Scientific arguments are applied rather loosely to experimental results, mainly from dowsing, and a depressing lack of experimental control is noticeable where experimental methods are actually given. The author far too easily reverts to the statement "From my own researches it appears/seems...", which is inadmissible from a

TOM GRAVES
£4.95

scientific point of view.

The book goes on to suggest in its penultimate chapter that the system of Earth Acupuncture may be used and is used in modern times to heal the ravages brought upon the Earth by mankind. The technique involves the placement of stakes in the earth above "water lines" in a specified manner, which is clearly explained. Whether the technique works or not could be a matter for some conjecture. Although the author assures us that earth acupuncture is a valid practice, for myself I could not help feeling that the only persons likely to perceive the results would be those involved in the practice in the first place.

The book is not solely filled with material on the subject of Dowsing but discusses a number of other subjects, notably the role of religion in ancient and modern society. The writer has some fairly strong views as to the part Christianity has played in the development of mankind.

DAVE KNIGHT

RILKO NEWSLETTER Published by the Research into Lost Knowledge Organisation Trust, this newsletter is available from the editor, Mrs. Janette Jackson, 36 College Court, Hammersmith, London W6, price 40p incl p&p (free to RILKO members). Though essentially directed to members, it is of general interest, containing the usual articles, letters, reviews and news items, related mostly to RILKO's current projects. No 12 has correspondence in defense of English and against metrication, mentions meetings on dowsing, art exhibitions and pilgrimages to Chartres, has news on the Winchester MS of the Morte d'Arthur, discusses megaliths, macrobiotics and Jung & UFOs, encourages links with similar associations abroad and reviews Keith Critchlow's film.

MEGALITHS, MYTHS AND MEN: AN INTRODUCTION TO ASTRO-ARCHAEOLOGY.

blandford 1976

peter lancaster brown



The major concern the author explores in this book is the function of Stonehenge as a celestial observatory. Significant supporting roles are played by Carnac, Avebury and the Pyramids and tidy little bit parts are given to Mayan and Aztec observatories, the Ziggurat of Nabu and the rest. Somewhere, well into the book, the polymaths appear, striding between the stones; Stukeley, Lockyer, Flinders Petrie, Atkinson, Newham, Hawkins, Hoyle and Alex Thom. Why polymaths? Well, the author defines astro-archeology as "an inter-disciplinary approach which utilizes geology, anthropology, mythology, folklore, philology, paleography, ethnology, prehistoric, and neoprimitive, art, prehistoric and classical scholarship, biology, botany, geo-chemistry, nuclear physics..." Pausing for breath after this presentation of academic credentials, Lancaster Brown cites the last of his -ologies... "even pseudology". With the citing of this final category I felt distinctly more inclined to plough through the book. The recognition that pseudology, kidology, call it what you will, is an essential ingredient in this kind of research cheered me enormously.

For example it leavened the discussion of the mid-60s controversy concerning the function of Stonehenge considerably. The minds of Hawkins, Atkinson et al seemed to sparkle the more knowing that the purity of high-minded research has a good solid foundation of bluff. At least half of the thirteen chapters are laden with astronomical data but the description

of the academics going for the jugular in fine style proved to be entertaining reading. For once the monumental intellectual shoot-out towered trilithon-like over the tables of azimuths. It surprised me to note that in the 1960s R.J. Atkinson was almost the only archaeologist numerate enough to grapple with the astronomer-surveyors. Thus, fighting a rearguard action for the honour of his discipline, Atkinson turns in a fine line in invective, entitling his refutation of Hawkins' claim for Stonehenge as a lunar observatory, "Moonshine on Stonehenge".

Except for the deadly serious business of presenting star-charts, eclipse-predictors and the moon's declination limits, the writing is chatty and discursive. Did you for instance know that Alfred Watkins was a sales rep for a firm of Midlands Brewers? Brown manages to condense a lot of this kind of information into a mere 320 pages. He evaluates the contributions of Velikovsky, von Daniken and the Pyramidologists as well as that of Watkins and his responses range from utter disdain to wistful abandonment of old heresies. I was left with the impression that the book had been written by a romantically nurtured person who had experienced the pangs of having to gainsay his heroes as soon as he matriculated in Physics.



THE SWORD AND THE FLAME: CAMELOT REVISITED. CATHERINE CHRISTIAN

The big grouse we have all had against orthodox archaeology is that though it can show you how past generations built their houses, and what tools they used, it has no means of telling you anything at all about what they were thinking -- which is what one really wants to know.

This book about the historical Arthur sets out to rectify that. We see Arthur and his contemporaries (including Lancelot, Palomides and others usually assumed to be fictional characters) grappling with the problems of their times. It is a comprehensive, convincing and thoroughly well-researched picture; moreover, the author sites them on Cadbury/Camelot and the story ranges chiefly round the West Country.

Pendragons of long standing will be relieved to hear that there is no jingling of controversial stirrups, no clanking of medieval armour, no battles being fought with bows and arrows, praise be!* One can enjoy the tale without shuddering.

Written thus the parallels between those times and our own are more than ever evident. The Emperor has gone, and with him the Empire. Defences and military strength are woefully depleted. The real unease springs from the internal tribal feuding rather than from the enemy without. It is Arthur's task to restore unity and integrity to the island, loyally supported by his faithful friend Bedevere who is telling the tale in his latter days.

In sixth-century Britain there lingered, of course, a few remnants of Mithraic beliefs, but the main influences, still potent, are the isolated pockets of the old Pagan religion. The vision of the Grail rises from the mysteries and Avalonian mists of a past culture rather like the departing soul from a frail old body; a will-o-the-wisp lantern appealing to those who are not enamoured with the blood, sweat, toil and tears of material living.

This Vision of the Grail, when it comes, and the departure of many of the Old Comrades behind the starry-eyed Peredur, recalls at once the days of 1971 and the famous Pilton Pop Festival when so many starry-eyed fans were wafted away, like autumn leaves, in the wake of the Guru Maharaji. As in the book, many have returned somewhat the worse for wear. As in the book, some watched them go, heavy-hearted.

In The Sword and the Flame Arthur's forces are left depleted; the way lies open for Medraut -- the 'deprived' young man with a grievance aggravated by a mischievous maker, as grievances often are -- to take over the administration of the kingdom, and to fill vacancies with his own slick friends. One sees them in sixth-century terms becoming the Ad. men, the technicians, the Public Relations men. They belong to a generation that never knew the Emperor, nor the responsibilities of Empire. Medraut's aspirations reach no further than his own immediate future prospects, and we all know that the man with a chip on his shoulder sprays envy, hatred, malice and half-baked politics around him like an aerosol.

In studying the pattern of the past we can at least take note and, when the pattern begins to recur, try not to make the same mistakes as before.

If it's a Christmas present you have in mind you don't need to look further.

JESS FOSTER

*Contrast, for example, Christopher Webb's Eusebius the Phoenician (Puffin 1973) and J.T. Haar's King Arthur (1967, trans. Marian Powell, Lutterworth Press 1973).

LETTER: cōsmoanthropgenics- from: david stringer, 3 daglands rd. fowey, cornwall

Myself here in Kernow and an Irish friend in Bradford for the past two or three years have been engaged in discussion and research on a subject called Cosmo-anthropogenics (the study of the evolution of cosmologies in relation to the nature of human societies). Much of my own work on this has been on the subject of female Serpent Cults in conflict with and often suppressed by Patriarchal male "warrior" religions (and dogmas). I have some notes on the fascinating complexity of relationships in the Arthurian legends between the two essentially warring/rival Triple Mother Goddess of the West and the Sungod of Eastern Britain - as revealed by the struggle between Morganna-le-Fay and Arthur (= Artos) the Bear, emblem of the Sungod (= Lugh? Namer of the realm of Logres?) of the invading Lugonian Celts of Central Europe circa BC 2000.

There seems to have been a stalemate between the West ruled by the White Queens and the East (Logres), and an attempt by the Sungod tribal leader (Artos) to strengthen "his" position by marrying a white queen (Guinevere). The roles of the female figures in the legend are key to what is going on (the Grail Maiden, Lady Nimue, Lady Ragnell, Morganna-le-Fay, the Lady of the Lake). Mordred, Artos' son by Morganna-le-Fay, bears the serpent emblem on his shield when he slays Artos (for attempting to usurp all the power?) in Kernow - a sacred land of the Serpent Goddess of the Carians, Ker/Q're/Caridwen (as is Keredigion or Cardigan, where we find Lake Tal-y-Llyn, whose description fits that of the Lady of the Lake in the legend, near Cader Idris, the Cauldron) of Caridwen)...

The killing of Artos is simply his being returned to his proper place in the natural Matriarchal Cycle after he has tried to usurp power over it and failed. There is "Civil War" in Britain (presumably between tribes of the rival cults), the "Knights" representing their warrior leaders according to the names of the Gods of each tribe in the confederation united under Artos (Bel - names Baal; Bel, another

Sungod name), this being followed by another invasion (another war of Celts, not Saxons) and the fall of Logres (the Lugonian power).

Anyway, that is the general theme, along with some psycho-analytical parallels with the web of male-female inter-relationships ie. Lady Nimue (the Healer) and Morganna-le-Fay seem like two aspects of one female being or deity (beneficent & destructive).

The Holy Grail is likewise quite a curious tale in this context, as its consequence - the Marriage of Percival and Grail Maiden "White Flower" (another aspect) of the goddess) - ensures a resurrection of the Kingdom amid peace because the Sungod is no longer trying to usurp power from the Serpent Queens but be in harmony with them.

It is obvious why Artos should become hero of the Druidic Sungod Britons - like Hu Gadarn he is promised resurrection and paves the way for Christianity with the resurrection of Christ.

The birth of Artos is also curious: Uther Pendragon (the end of, the consort of, the Serpent) has the "Duke" of Cornwall killed to gain Igraine (another White Queen) for wife so that his son can gain power (matrilinear succession). Artos similarly marries another White Queen (Guinevere) with a similar idea in mind - but this time this White Queen seeks to get rid of him when he threatens to become too powerful (the affaire with Lancelot is no common-o'garden love-affair!...)

This is made more interesting by the indications of the nature of tribal society in which it takes place - the conflict between a male-dominated warrior society and a pastoral matriarchal one - using "Magic"!

KEREME ha Dyagha. DAVID STRINGER

*This letter is in response to Marilyn Porter's Serpents, Dragons & the Mother Goddess, Vol 10 No 4.

KING ARTHUR'S CONGRESBURY. vince russett


are all accustomed, by now, to thinking that Cadbury = Camelot, and that Arthur used South Cadbury Castle, in South Somerset, for his base during the operations against the Saxons, which culminated in the historic battle of Badon, in or about 512 or 518.

By doing this, we miss a great part of the story, for Arthur, or someone very like him, was fortifying another Cadbury in North Somerset, at the end of the 5th century, and beginning of the 6th.

The area was a marshy wasteland, returned to the sea by its increase in level that occurred in the late third century, leaving Roman settlements and Iron Age settlements and villages under two feet of clay in the Somerset levels. It was almost certainly a pagan region, for the missionaries who were to convert the area only arrived in the generation after Badon, when it was relatively safe to do so. The old Romano-British temples on the hilltops were probably still in use in some cases; for example at Henley Wood, near Yatton, where the sub-Roman use of the Temple was continuous, after which it seems to have been utilised as a Christian cemetery. The one on Brean Down was abandoned long before Arthur's period, yet it too seems to have been utilised by at least one Christian, who built an East/West oriented building on the hilltop, between the old ruinous Roman Temple and the round barrow to the south.

The victory of Badon secured the region, but in the immediate pre-Badon times, there was military activity in this area, too. Quite what was being guarded is unclear: if there was already a flourishing community at Glastonbury, the chain of hillforts across the levels would have formed an ideal 'holding-line' against Irish raiders or Saxon pirates. Whether the Irish were still raiding the coast

is unclear - although Palladius and Patrick had nominally converted Ireland, no doubt there were still organised bands of pirates. Besides possible sea-borne invasion, there was the Roman road which undoubtedly ran along the coast, from Gatcombe to the region of Congresbury, or the second that ran from the lead-mining settlement of Charterhouse-on-Mendip to Uphill, near Weston-super-Mare. These were probably still vital lines of communication.

In the late fifth century, the hillfort of Cadbury/Congresbury, abandoned since the first-century Celts had left it after the Roman Conquest, was reoccupied by the Arthurian leader. A new rampart was built across the centre of the old camp, and the inside of the Iron Age rampart were strengthened with new stone constructions. At least eight timber buildings of this period have been found, one being 25 feet long and 10 feet wide.

During the period of fifth-century and sixth-century occupation, iron and other metal-working was going on, and, slightly surprisingly, flint was again used in the manufacture of tools, an Iron Age Celtic technique which must have been revived at the time, for there is little evidence of it in Roman times. There were large quantities of fragments of imported Mediterranean ware - more than at any other site other than Tintagel - and a number of pieces of Gaulish ware not found anywhere else. The hillfort defences do not seem to have been called upon for use, as they were in decay by the time of Badon, and around then a wooden building with an apsidal end was built over the rampart of about 30 years before. To summarise, this hillfort had equally as much evidence of occupation by an early sixth-century leader as did Cadbury/Camelot.

Nearby Cadbury/Tickenham is renowned in the folklore of North Somerset as the 'real' Camelot,

and King Arthur and his knights are supposed to sleep under it. There is no indication from the extremely scanty archaeological record of this massive earthwork that it was reused in those times, but the fact that St Padarn arrived at Nailsea in the immediate post-Badonic period and set up a church would seem to indicate that there was someone to form a Christian community, and as is seen in several other cases, it is not unlikely that his congregation were the hillfort dwellers at Cadbury/Tickenham.

Near Cadbury/Congresbury itself, St Congar founded an oratory, later to become a monastery, in the spot which is now Congresbury church. It is just possible, however, that his first church was either the building referred to above, across the earthworks, or somewhere nearby, as the old Roman Temple nearby was in use, as mentioned above, for a sub-Roman, and probably Christian, cemetery. This occurred about 530.

Other hillforts show the same pattern. Combeleigh hillfort, some miles away at the mouth of the Parrett, was refortified and reoccupied at the same period around 500 AD. There is a sub-Roman cemetery there, too, which would seem to have been used until the Saxons arrived in the eighth century and founded nearby Cannington church.

There is no archaeological evidence from any other hillfort of Arthurian connections, but Brent Knoll earthwork, which stands in splendid isolation amidst the Levels today, has a legend that Ider, one of King Arthur's bravest knights, killed three giants there. As if in confirmation of this story, a large iron sword, possibly dated to the Dark Ages, was found there in the last century, but has since been lost. The locals, recognising better than many a savant how myth is often truth, named it Ider's Sword, and said that it was three feet long. Mrs Dobson, author of 'Somerset' in the County Archaeology series, thought it quite likely that Brent Knoll was the site of Badon itself.

Banwell hillfort, which has never been archaeologically examined, may have been reoccupied. There was certainly enough of a population in the area in immediate post-Badonic times to form the nucleus of a Christian cemetery at Wint Hill, nearby, around the ruins of a Roman villa. Indeed, it has been considered that St Congar was active here, too, and that he founded a monastery. He is certainly remembered in another nearby village, Badgworth, where the church is dedicated to him.

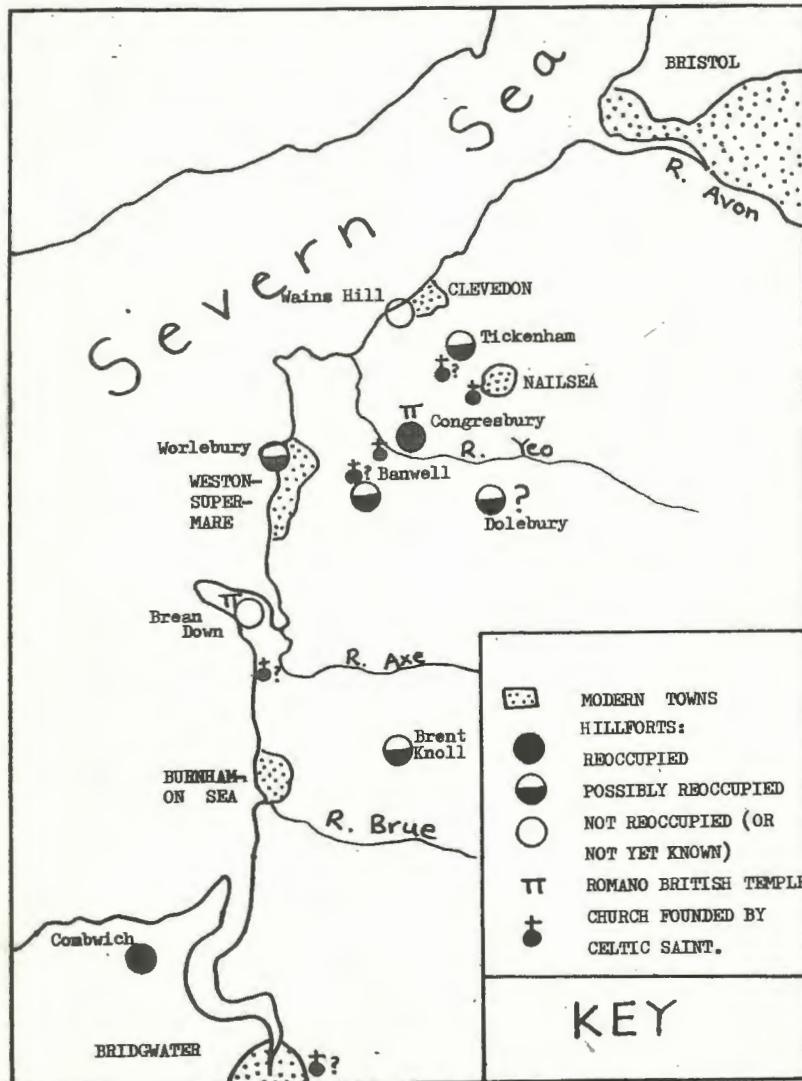
Worlebury hillfort, above Weston-super-Mare, may have been reoccupied at this time. Hoards of Roman coins have been found, showing late Roman interest here, but no recent excavations have been carried out. It is of interest, though, that St Kew is said to have founded the church of nearby Kewstoke. If she did, it would have again been in the immediate post-Badonic time. A flight of steps leading up to the hillfort from Kewstoke church is still called St Kew's Steps, and the legends have it that she used to "climb up to the top to pray".

These connections of the Celtic missionaries with areas very near to hillforts in the period in question seems very hard to explain, except by assuming that the people in the forts formed their congregations. Missionaries need people to preach to. This may have been the deciding factor in the abandonment of the forts, and in the only case at all well investigated, Cadbury/Congresbury, the inhabitants had drifted away by about 600 AD, three generations after Congar's arrival.

To draw the threads together: the Celtic revival of the 5th/6th centuries appears to have been much more widespread and better organised than was at first thought. Perhaps Arthur himself lived for periods at Cadbury/Congresbury, peering out from the wooden house on the windswept hilltop at the Celtic town around him. No wonder the

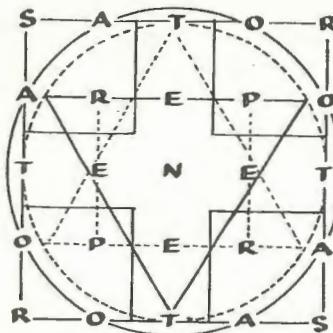
Welsh missionaries were accepted so readily - in the sunny years after Badon, the re-establishment of the old Celtic way of life on the hilltops must have seemed a miracle. It is pleasing to see

that all of Somerset had its part to play - perhaps there is still a lesson to be learnt from Arthur and his realm, about freedom and about life, and, above all, about the sanctity of this Magic Isle.



THE MAGIC SQUARE

peter ratazzi



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FAUST'S CRYPTOGRAM, an occult arrangement of twenty-five letters and known already at the time of the Apostles, is the most remarkable word-square ever conceived. Surviving to this day, it has for long been the subject of interminable debate and controversy. The Latin formula which includes two anagrams, Sator-Rotas and Arepo-Opera, as well as a palindrome, was in all probability a secret sign of encouragement and recognition used by the early Christian companions in adversity.

The axes of the square, intersecting at the pivotal letter N, portray a cruciform palindrome. Flanked by the symbols A(alpha) and O(mega), the four arms of the cross Tenet always end in "t", the Greek letter T(au), like anchor, mast, trident, or the Greek word for fish, a clandestine emblem standing for the Crucified Whose name was never referred to publicly, His teaching being anathema to the Roman Establishment of the day.

Moreover, by regrouping all letters in certain form and sequence around the fixed centre N (an ancient graphic sign signifying the word fish), another cryptic cross appears, the beginning and end of both sections enshrined by A(alpha) and O(mega), and revealing twice the first two Latin words of the Lord's Prayer.

In Pompeii, where the antiquarian world is brought face to face with the modern as in no other city, a Sator-Arepo square was discovered

during excavations in 1925 on a pillar of the ruined Gymnasium. It rendered a, till then, discredited claim made in 1862, that there had been a "House of Christians" before AD 79 in the lava-paved streets, dramatically likely. Another four magic squares (three in Latin and one in Greek) as well as seven early third-century frescoes depicting scenes from the Old and New Testaments were found among the Roman ruins of Doura-Europos, "the Herculaneum of the Desert", on the banks of the Euphrates in Northern Syria.

The puzzling squared sentence also occurs in Coptic scrolls, on fourth-century bronze amulets from Asia minor, in eighth-century Latin manuscripts in German monasteries, and - according to Carcopinds *Etudes d'Histoire Chretienne* - in an Ethiopian ritual of uncertain date in which the five lengths of iron that pierced the body of Jesus are named Sador, Alador, Danet, Adera, and Rodas.

MEDIEVAL CHARMS

Medieval and post-medieval writings mention the use of talismans containing the formula against arson, bites from mad dogs, and demonism. Round, shallow dishes so inscribed were thought to extinguish fire when thrown into the flames. *Egyptian Secrets* and *The Romanus Booklet*, two works of magic still circulating here and there in Central Europe, refer to the square. A collection of thirty-seven charms, written down in Co.

Galway in 1847 by a scholar of sorts, had a curious one: "A charm for changing rats or otherwise to make people dance by putting this spell...but written by a raven's quill and hare's blood." It was the Sator-Arepo square.

Scratched in five lines through the surface colour, it appears in Britain on a fragment of painted wall plaster from a Roman house at Cirencester (Roman Corinium). The stone, dug out in 1868, can be viewed in the local museum. In the Low Countries - and here Rembrandt's etching of Faust looking up from his desk at a cryptogram appearing on the sunlit window of his study comes to mind - it adorned a now demolished section of the courtyard in Kasteel Waardenburg (where the necromancer had his laboratory in one of the castle's towers).

ANAGRAM & CIPHER-WRITING

The cult of anagram and cipher-writing is of great age and was possibly first practised in China. It was fashionable in Sparta and Constantinople centuries before Christ. Examples of letter transposition exist in the Bible. Medieval scientists made use of cryptography to conceal interim results flowing from experiments-in-progress. Dorat, Rabelais, and Voltaire revived the cult in France where the vogue led at one stage to the creation of the office of "Royal Anagrammatist".

Pontius Pilate's classic question "Quid est Veritas?" (What is Truth?) and the reply "Est Vir qui adest" (It is the Man who is here) is an illustration of a notable anagram. The formula "Sator Arepo Tenet Opera Rotas", which is both anagram and palindrome in one, can be altered to "Retro Satana, Toto Opere Asper" or may be read as "Petro Et Reo Patet Rosa Sarona".

There is reference to it in the celebrated work Mathematics for the Million by Prof Lancelot Hogben who gives the translation as "Arepo, the sower, delays the wheels by his works", and C.W. Ceram's inclination to the view, in A Picture History of Archaeo-

logy, that the square should be read boustrophedon (as the ox ploughs) - in other words, alternatively from left to right and from right to left in the mode of writing employed by some ancient scribes - to eliminate the meaningless word "Arepo", the result being "Sator Opera Tenet; Tenet Opera Sator" (The great Sower [God] holds in his hand all works; all works the great Sower holds in his hands).

In contrasting these two latest versions without prejudice to their respective inherent merits, it is seen that, whereas the mathematician apparently knows of some kind of mythological character with a taste for sabotage called "Arepo", the archaeologist (who makes the ox plough the middle row once more, so to speak, to arrive at the result required) assures us that "Arepo" is meaningless; "no such word is known", the author confirms in the context of his argument.

THE ANCIENT DEITY SATOR

It is indeed true that "Arepo" has always given much trouble. An Italian scholar (who opined that the rows of the square should be read in the order 1,3,5,4,2) gave it the meaning of "plough" or "fruits of the earth", but there is no mention of the word in any work of reference - except, probably, only one. An old huge lexicon of the Latin language containing dialectal expressions translates it as a geometrical measure (once used in Transalpine Gaul). The "agrarian link" with Sator (sower, planter, begetter) is obvious here. It is tempting to compare this Mediterranean reverence for the green life in pre-Christian days with that myth unit of the Druids, the Green Man, tree-god of rhythmic renewal, whose foliage head survives as design work in the cathedrals of Canterbury, Norwich and Winchester.

Supposed to have reigned at the time of Janus in ancient Latium, the deity Sator, who introduced orderly, seasonal husbandry, civilisation, and a Golden Age of peace, happiness, and content - represented in pagan centuries

something not unlike the ideal of the Christian Underground, a Heaven on Earth. To elucidate the significance of the combination of Sator-Arepo it is apposite to reflect in all humility on the role of the Supreme Being, that of divine and creative criterion or final and universal arbiter, measurer, judge. In the language of secret Christianity Sator-Arepo means "Gad, who has the measure of all things", if it means anything at all.

Are the five columns, visualised as three geometrical figures, a profound expression of faith (in the Holy Trinity), an exercise in a disciplina arcana designed by a Christian Pythagorean? The line connecting the centre N with the letter A may be regarded as the radius of a circle whose circumference intersects all four sides of the square at A(pha) and O(mega). Bearing in mind that the circle is a symbol of Infinity (the Holy Ghost), one ought to ponder a quotation from the Revelation of St John the Divine, "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, with the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty."

The square's confine is described by the word Sator, symbol of God, the Father. The geometrical trinitas is completed by the centrally placed equilateral triangle based on the connecting line A-O, and with the apex in Tau. This triangle within the inner circle and the inner square PMR are seen as symbols of the Son.

FRANCIS BACON & THE CRYPTOGRAM

It was Francis Bacon who laid down the dictum that a good cryptogram should be easy to write and read; and should bear on the face of it nothing to suggest its being a secret message. By that test the magic square here reviewed once more twenty centuries after is ingenious to a dazzling degree, reflecting, as it does, the mysticism and symbolism of the Ancients and uttering the esoteric truths of triune bi-polarity. The rationale of its enduring fascination in time and space is the quality responding to inward recognition, to

the grasp by intuition, if not by ordinary reason.

It has been said more than once, both privately and publicly, that to ask for an authoritative interpretation of this crossword puzzle in reverse, is to ask for the impossible.

Therefore, let us venture to decipher the enigma! "Opera" (creation, works) and "Rotas" (wheels, rotation, rhythm, a recurring cycle) are Latin nouns that present no difficulty. Aware as we are of the mysterious magic square's religious clues and constructive implications, the third row "Tenet" (from the verb tenere - to hold) should surely not be rendered here as "delays", "holds up", but as "upholds", "maintains"!

The solution of the problem's underlying meaning, involving all five lines logically once only, now becomes plain. The communication "Sator Arepo Tenet Opera Rotas" can be clarified in the following manner:

"God, having the measure of all things, maintains the cyclic rhythm of Creation"; - a maxim as evident as the law of birth, maturity, and death, and as wondrous as any cycle of organic growth and decay, e.g. the perpetual transformation from apple-seed by way of fruit-bearing tree to dead wood, a wheel of life within and beyond which fulfils itself the cosmic rotational force, the oscillation of night and day, ebb and flood, and the interdependent round of seasons.

The language of the classic cryptogram is like natural magic. Once understood, it conveys in essence an obvious message. It is a simple revelation in three words, "Trust in God".

AREPO IN MANCHESTER

THE LATEST DISCOVERY AT Roman Manchester is a piece of imported wine-jar with part of the well-known AREPO word-square scratched on it, only the second Roman example in Britain. The first was found at Cirencester in 1868. The latest one was found in a late C2 rubbish pit.

The site of the Roman fort of Mancunium was wrecked by Victorian canals and railway viaducts, but an extensive civilian precinct outside the walls is now becoming available piecemeal as redevelopment takes place. The excavations are conducted by Prof. Barri Jones on behalf of Manchester University.

Their context in Arthurian studies is that the traditions of Arthur's three victories in Lancashire can best be judged in the light of what is known of the region in his time, supposedly C6. In the case of Manchester, this is precious little, and every new excavation is welcome. If there were such battles, Arthur's logical line of command is along the former military roads from Cadbury or Caerleon, using the ruins of Mancunium as a staging-area.

Two AREPO-squares found at Pompeii are obviously pre-79 AD, when the city was buried in volcanic ash, and these are the earliest "positive" dates for any. One of the two is tentatively dated at ca 69 AD. Later examples as late as post-medieval times have been found from Syria to Sheffield on a variety of materials: wall-plaster, leather, scrolls, a pillar, a tile, a Rembrandt etching, and now a wine-jar. In all, about a score are known.

With such a variety, speculations have run riot. The complete square contains 5 Latin words ROTAS OPERA TENET AREPO SATOR which read the same across as down. This can be translated, after a fashion, and is a rare verbal curiosity. It is usually said to mean "Arepo the sower guides the wheels with care". This, of course, is a nonsense.

What have sowers to do with guiding wheels? Ploughing and sowing take place at different seasons. Moreover, the early ploughs were not wheeled. Pliny, who reported the eruption of Vesuvius, also said that the wheeled plough was a barbarian device recently introduced from E. Switzerland, so that it is only barely possible that someone in Pompeii could have known about it.

Certain later squares occur in a Christian context, and in the 1920s someone observed that the letters can be re-arranged as a cross reading A. PATERNOSTER. O. ("Our Father, Alpha & Omega") both ways, centred on the N of PATERNOSTER. Hence, it was a Christian symbol written in times of persecution. This theory was quoted in reports of the 1978 discovery, but there are objections to it.

1. The Pompeii inscriptions are earlier than the first Biblical mention of Alpha and Omega (Book of Revelation, ca 95 AD).

2. As crossword-puzzlers know, phrases can be turned into anagrams without necessarily relating to them in meaning. The "Paternoster" theory was first put forward when crossword-puzzles were very popular. This may tell against it. Or must one suppose an early Christian anagram addict?

3. All the early Roman squares are graffiti on a previous design scribbled by others than the craftsmen. This presumes a number of crypto-Christians in many countries who were (a) oafish enough to deface things with slogans (b) cultured enough to understand the Paternoster symbolism. Is this credible?

4. Since the accepted translation has nothing to do with Christianity, the real meaning must be non-Christian. Of course, the square is so ingenious in itself that it may not have to make sense; but similar nonsense-word squares can be made, and the fact that the AREPO one has lasted for so many centuries suggests that it does

sid birchby

have a meaning.

A tentative new translation is made possible by the Manchester discovery. Three of the five known early Roman examples are now seen to have a common element of being on pottery:

1. Pompeii I, on a tile.
2. Aquincum, nr Budapest, on a tile.
3. Manchester, on a wine-jar.

Previous translators, baulking at AREPO, have called it a personal name, which is a ploy common to baffled translators. Yet there is a perfectly-good Latin word arrepo, only different by one letter. It means to slip or creep, as a reptile does, or as the potter's fingers do on wet clay, and if one assumes this, the rest of the square is compatible.

SATOR, for instance, is not so much a sower as a shaper, and the Latin for a potter is figulus, a moulder, one who shapes a form rather than creating it. As for ROTAS, the wheels, this may refer to the potter's wheel.

I suggest that the meaning of the AREPO square was something like "The slippery one, the shaper, guides the wheels with care", and that it was a slogan in the pottery craft perpetuated by young apprentices. There is a precedent for craft-slogans in the Cornish tin-mines, where it used to be said, on certain occasions, that "St Joseph was in the tin trade". Others are known in masonry.

Craft-slogans are what American freemasons call 'hailing-signs', and are very important to members of the craft, enabling them to identify outsiders. This was once essential in order to prevent what is now called industrial espionage.

The potter's craft is earlier than most others. Women in nomadic tribes made the first pots by moulding sausages of clay one above the other, and I have seen them doing so in East Africa in 1945. The wheel was unknown in Uganda until the Victorian explorers arrived. In Kampala, my office-boy's grandfather remembered when everything was either dragged or carried by animals or women. The

Baganda are very intelligent, but the wheel is not an obvious invention.

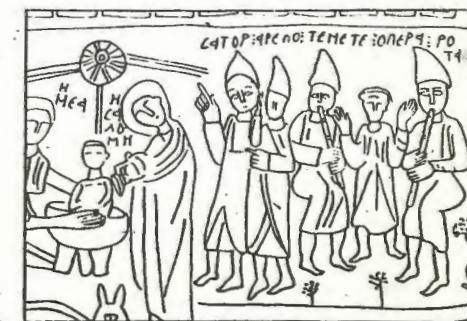
Nobody knows how the wheel was invented. The ancient kings of Ur, ca 3000 BC, were drawn by oxen on sledges. It doesn't sound very regal, and, about the same time, both wheels and potter's wheels are known. So there seems to have been a fairly sudden invention, perhaps in Sumeria, ca 3000 BC.

It's often said that the wheel was invented by a caveman rolling a log into a bog; but this is not how nomads think. They do not invent, but borrow, taking what the land provides. What do gypsies do with clay except bake hedge-hogs in it?

It was only when men ceased to be gypsies (and who persuaded them?) that clay became important. Gypsies don't need bricks, pots, tiles or writing-tablets. Perhaps a Sumerian housewife once complained that she was tired of messing about with clay, and why couldn't he do something! So her husband cut a slice of bamboo, put some clay on it, and said "Now make a round pot!" Then he went off for a quiet pint at the ziggurat, having invented the wheel.

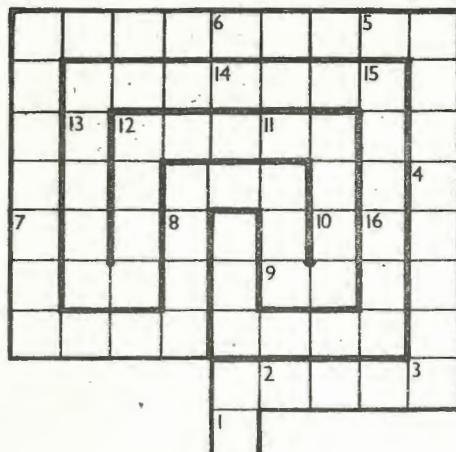
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from church of kokar kilise, turkey

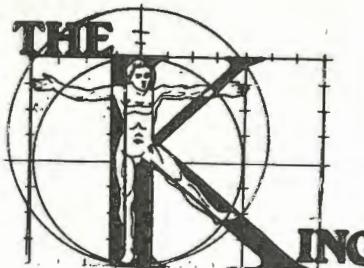


MAZEWORD

-AND SOLUTION



PENTATEUCH BEAD
A OMNIN L C I
GROTESQUES T L A R
E P R U N A O E
ALBI INCALOGIC
S I C R H D U T
TINTAGEL SEVERN
O R B S F R E
NECROS VILLEINS
E H U A R E G S
BRAINTREE YORE
R E L D A S E M A Y
OLDE PREHADRIAN
K E V A I G N Y
ELEN STAMPEDERS



Locked alone with company around
Arthur knew, but thought to ignore,
The deceit beneath chivalry's elite.
Himself guilt-pure through one past sin
Whose rot must start the noble suicide.

The mystic round world table,
Founded by the devil-child Merlin
To combat man's birthright evil,
Had self circled inwards finally.
Pure vows unthought fuelled a hate
And the cleft widened by each sword.

Suddenly the Grail had shewn the company hollow.
And all, once fed, had stared aghast
At private futility where skill stagnated hope.
No outward quests gave grace or meaning,
And those that glimpsed failed or forgot.
So now anger clad their hearts and grief their minds.

Fearing and foreknowing his death's epic,
Yet believing fate to be above mortality,
He acted a part, in armour his heart.
Giving a future to a subject people
Hope that in death belief would live again.

MORDRED

My love is the glove
that throttled the dove.
My boon is the rune
that cursed the moon.
My joy is the toy
of every small boy.
My lord is the sword
that your wounds gored.
My life is the strife
between cuckold and wife.
My might is the right
of all men to fight.
My cry is the lie
of hope when they die.
And beneath is my grief
that I must be a thief.

GWENIVERE

A woman with green eyes
where he sees himself
and dark brown hair
which covers him -
a lady's favour in a helm
when he lies with her
is the only time he can
selfishly lose his fears
and still the force of guilt
which drives him to a shy success
she has gently shattered
his carefully forged armour
throwing past wounds
back to the cold storm

as never before he finds
love he unknowing fled
the numb shield attacks
the hauberk crumpled rusts
with her beauty his
beside each sees the other
peace from ambition
and unsought dignity
secure warmth known
enveloping love shared
an instant of forever
for which she lives in now
and he in anticipation.

robin
balbennie

