

# PENDRAGON

50p

MAYBE YOU THOUGHT OF  
ARTHUR AS A KNIGHT  
IN FULL ARMOUR--



OR MAYBE YOU'VE  
READ ENOUGH TO  
KNOW HE LIVED IN  
THE DARK AGES!



WHAT'S  
WRONG WITH  
SUB-ROMAN  
OR EVEN EARLY  
CHRISTIAN?  
mutter-mutter

BUT! PERHAPS HE WAS  
REALLY A ROMAN-

AVE!



OR EVEN A 1ST CENT  
BRITON!

OR GASPE A CONSTELLATION



DID HE EVEN  
LIVE AT ALL?

DOUBT -- THE  
FINAL FRONTIER

**"TIMESLIP! or  
Quests for Arthur"**

# PENDRAGON

## JOURNAL OF THE PENDRAGON SOCIETY

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Please note: ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION NOW £3.00/£9.00, the first UK rise since before 1977. A cross indicates subs due:

Editor Chris Lovegrove Production Roger Davie Webster, Kate Pollard Correspondence The Secretary, 27 Roslyn Rd, Redland, Bristol BS6 6NJ Pendragon investigates Arthurian history and archaeology and the mystery and mythology of the Matter of Britain. Opinions stated are those of the writers concerned. © 1981 Pendragon Society / authors.

**EDITORIAL** The Great Arthurian Timeslip (see Reviews) has this telling phrase: "Who Arthur was is dependent on when he was. William Blake was convinced Arthur was a Prince of the fifth century; others are not so sure: Richard Barber's The Figure of Arthur (1972) even had TWO candidates for Arthur--an Arthur of Dyfed and an Arthur of Argyllshire--and both lived in the generations AFTER the traditional Arthur. This issue explores the various times from (or into) which the legend of Arthur has slipped. Take your pick(s) from the various contenders--are any or indeed all of them right?

We welcome many new members with this issue, including several readers of Still Trowelling, an information sheet for members of the Ancient History Book Club. The Editor, Mark Child, very kindly gave generous space to the Society, its dig, and its "lively and enthusiastically written little mag"--and the number of enquiries indicates that interest in matters Arthurian continues unabated throughout the country, from Cornwall up to Angus, from N Wales across to Kent.

William of Occam (ie Ockham in Surrey) was a medieval philosopher who instigated modern sceptical approach. Despite an Occamite attack on unorthodox Cathar-Templar histories last issue, a couple of ripostes are found in this issue--including a suggestion that Galahad was a Cathar (also discussed in the French journal Archéologie). In this connection readers may be interested in Robert York's The Swords of December (Constable 1978). This novel claims to be based on a MS by a William of Colchester found in the private library of the Degency family at the Château de Varende (30m from Poitiers). The MS, vetted by Matthew Fairleaze, a "medieval Latin expert," suggests that Thomas Becket was secretly a Cathar parfait who took the place of his pagan Plantagenet king Henry II in a ritual murder to promote the fertility of the land. Is this as preposterous as it sounds? We might also bear in mind the pun on Percival-Perlesvaus in the High History of the Holy Grail (ca 1200): Percival is also called Parluifet, "made of himself" or Par-lui fet, "perfect, parfait, through his own effort". See Mary Williams' "Perlesvaus" in Glastonbury, a Study in Patterns (RILKO 1969) p21: was Percival as well as Galahad a Cathar? (Do I hear the thunder of Occamites?)

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## NOTICEBOARD

### CINEMA

John Boorman's film Excalibur (not Knights as expected) is the director's view of a "timeless" myth of Arthur. There is much to be critical about, much that is unintentionally risible, but there are some nice touches, much gore, and beautiful (Irish) scenery in which knights move like spacemen in an alien planet and peasants keep in the background. I preferred Monty Python & the Holy Grail--at least you knew it was laughing at itself, and had no less affection for its subject-matter.

### JUNIOR FICTION

Rosemary Sutcliff has brought out The Sword and the Circle, the story of Arthur and his knights which stops where her recent Grail novel, The Light Beyond the Forest, commences. And like her Tristan and Iseult this too has a very Celtic feel to it--simple but poetic in the manner of medieval Welsh--that must surely prove to be the definitive version of the legends retold for the young (Bodley Head 1981 £4.95). I have not yet read The Stolen Lake by another children's author, Joan Aiken, but apparently Arthur appears in this, what promises to be another of her beautifully imagined whimsies--as you can guess from the title!

### CARBON-DATING NOW FOUR!

Two donations have made it possible to apply to have the carbonised grain from the Llanelen dig carbon-dated. Results (and implications!) when we get them.

### COMPETITION



DESIGN AN ORIGINAL initial letter and win a YEAR'S free subscription! Entries must be in black-and-white and may be used in future Pendragons. Joint copyright is held by the Society and artist. Remember to make your entry clear (as it could be reduced by 50% in reproduction), and no larger than 3" x 3". Submissions by December 31st 1981. The editorial committee's decision is final!

NB We hope to include a competition in every future issue: this is the first...

# OLD News TIMES FORGOTTEN

\* A couple of items that show we must treat "ancient tradition" critically, even if the story is a good one.

## THE HOLY THORN

In the grounds of Washington Cathedral in the USA is a descendant of the Glastonbury Thorn. The Glastonbury tradition (invented in the 18th century by an innkeeper) is that the Thorn grew from a staff Joseph of Arimathea planted on Wearyall Hill ca 63 AD. The Washington Thorn has its own tradition it appears: it blossoms whenever someone from the British Royal Family visits there. It flowered when Prince Charles visited the Cathedral in May this year, and when the Queen visited there on July 8th 1976.

This may not be particularly miraculous. The Thorn is a freak hawthorn that blossoms occasionally in January (Christmastide in the Old Style calendar). However, like all hawthorns it also blossoms May-June (hence its other name, the may) and so the Royal Family need only to tour the States at the right time of year to confirm the tradition...

## THE HOLY GRAIL (NANT-EOS)

Last issue, Chris Turner mentioned the Nant-Eos cup ("The Grail Cycle" pl9). Research by Fred Stedman-Jones and published in No 19 of the latest (and last) Ancient Mysteries

journal (summer 1981) fills in the historical background to this healing object and casts doubt on its links with the Grail.

The "tradition" is that the Holy Grail was taken from the Benedictine Abbey of Glastonbury at the 1539 Dissolution to the Cistercian Abbey of Strata Florida, thence to the Powell family at Nant Eos (where a replica is now displayed).

What is documented is that after the Dissolution the Devereux family leased Strata Florida from the King; in 1572 the bailiff John Stedman then purchased the Abbey lands.

In 1690 the Powell family came to Nant Eos (near Aberystwyth) and in 1747 they inherited Strata Florida, 15 miles away; this is their earliest link with the Abbey lands.

In 1878 the Nant Eos cup, now well-known for its healing properties (like the literary Grail), was stated by the Bishop of St David's to have come originally from Strata Florida where it was a medieval relic--though there was no reference to it at the Dissolution. In 1895 the Powells believed it was made from wood of the True Cross, and only as late as about 1903 was the Holy-Grail/Glastonbury link made.

Even though the "ancient" tradition may not be that old, the cup is attested to have cured many illnesses in the past 200 years. "Of dark wood, (it) is about 5" diameter, 3" in depth ... but only half remains: it has been nibbled away by believers." In 1951 the Mirylees family inherited it, and moved away from Nanteos in 1967. Nevertheless, should the whereabouts of the Cup be discovered requests for healing draughts of water may not be denied.

# Over the sea to Skye...

CHRIS TURNER

Bronze head of monastic Brother?  
7th century? 5"

IONA

Orkney

Skye

PICTI

Iona

Lothian

The Wall

Antrim

Camlann?

Bronze head (iron core)

with domed helmet. 6th century?

Bucket escutcheon

or staff end? 1 1/2"

GLASTONBURY

TOR

# ARTHUR'S ISLAND

IN 563 AD, ST COLUMBA established his monastery on the holy island of Iona to minister to his fellow Dalriadic Scoti who had come from Antrim in the 5th century and had settled in the un(d)populated Argyllshire seaboard and offshore islands. On an undated visit to Skye, Columba once baptised an aged person named Artbranan... Three points are of particular note:

1 This Artbranan could not speak Goidelic--Columba had to converse with him through an interpreter.

2 The name Artbranan is British, not Irish.

3 Artbranan was the leader of a cohort (sic) known as Geona.

Let us look first at the name of this aged person. Artbranan may be just a name; on the other hand, as he was a person of some consequence, being the commander of his own war-band, his name may include a title as well, in the Celtic fashion. Ready examples are

VotepoRIX, VercingetoRIX (rix cognate with rex = king), VorTIGERN, KentIGERN (tigern = great roof ie Chief of the Great Hall).

In this case, the suggestion is that the name becomes ART-BRANAN (branan cognate with Welsh brenin = king).

We are told that he was the leader of the Geona Cohort. This curiously Roman military division was composed originally of six centuries, in practice about 480 men. Just what is meant in this context is not clear, but must have been a substantial body of men. The Roman inference in this classification of Artbranan's war-band is reinforced by the fact that it was named, another Roman habit. The meaning of Geona has not been established and invites speculation.

Artbranan himself is something of an anomaly. He is called 'aged' yet is the leader of his own cohort; surely a post for an active man no older than his middle years. How did he retain his leadership into old age against younger, more vigorous warriors?

LET'S SPIN A STORY. Arthur's warrior-force is split by dissension. The animosity culminates in civil war and the final showdown comes at Camlann. Arthur, near to death, is carried off by three queens in a boat to a mystical / holy island. So far, so good.

The identity of the three queens is unknown, but they may well be Arthur's three step-sisters, Elaine, Morgan and Margawse, Queen of Orkney and Lothian, and may have taken the insensible Arthur not to the holy Island of Glastonbury (which appears to have been rather close to enemy territory) but to the holy island of the North ie Iona, which already had a history of sanctity, even in the sixth century. A time of partial recuperation on Iona is postulated, followed by a move to nearby Skye which may have been in the gift of Morgawse, or more correctly her husband King Lot, Arthur's viceroy.

There are a number of possible reasons why Arthur did not return to lead a counter-revolution. Perhaps he realised his cause was lost beyond redemption or possibly he was suffering severe after-effects from his wounds. Whatever the reason, the Cycles tell us he left Camlann, alive, albeit only just, and never returned.

WHAT THEN of the professional hard core of his army? Little enough is known of the military / chivalric code of the period and it cannot be argued that a

chief's bodyguard would have felt it obligatory to die on the field if the leader fell, even in a purely futile gesture. The inference is reasonable, however, and examples can be quoted from Scandinavian and Saxon sources, although from a slightly later date. The case of a leader who is badly hurt and whose escape from the scene of battle has been effected poses a different problem for the knights of the body. It would seem the only course open is to disengage from battle and follow their leader to his refuge and attend on him until either he recovers and leads them back into conflict, or he dies and thereby releases them to find other masters.

The Arthur of this hypothesis in fact does neither of these things and his war-band finds itself forty years and more after Camlann still tied to a leader who is physically, and possibly mentally, incapable of leading any attempt to recover a lost and half-forgotten cause. The war-band, probably including the few men who could have continued effective resistance to the Saxons in the event of Arthur's death, such as Cei, Bedwyr and Llud, is trapped on an offshore island with nothing to do but spin brave and empty tales of glory and might-have-been. The Geona cohort is helplessly tied to a leader who will not relinquish his dreams and cannot realise them. The parallel to Chiang-Kai-Shek and his Taiwanese army of over-sixties is inescapable.

This late baptism of a supposedly lifelong Christian is only unusual in the context of a society such as ours where infantile baptism is generally the rule. Examples of lifelong acting Christians postponing baptism, and the total absolution of all previous sins, no

matter how serious, that go with it, to late life or deathbed are plentiful in Roman and Dark Age history

THE DATE OF COLUMBA'S MEETING with Artbranan is not given, but must have been after 563 when Columba first left Ireland at the late age of 43. Can we postulate an Arthur still alive, if not in the best of health, that late in the sixth century? We are told that Arthur came to prominence at an early age, let us suggest 16. He then campaigns to consolidate his power-base and launches out on an aggressive policy against the encroaching Saxons against whom he fights twelve major battles. If this period takes 14 years, and it could well have occupied only half this, Arthur would still be only 30 at Badon. The most reliable date we have for this elusive battle is 518, and if this is accepted, Arthur would have been 75 when Columba first came to the Scottish islands and still would not have been impossibly aged ten years later.

This leads finally to the perennial mystery: the grave of Arthur. When at last Artbranan--Arthur the self-deluded King--dies, what action more fitting than to carry the sad remains of the sad old soldier from his haven of Skye across to Columba's own holy island of Iona, long-time resting place of the bones of warriors and princes?

This is a weighty hypothesis to hang from a passing reference\* but it is hoped that further references will come to light in due course to strengthen or refute the argument. Whatever the final outcome, the Skye Boat Song will never sound the same again.

© Chris Turner 1981.  
\* Charles Thomas Britain & Ireland in Early Christian Times pp 52-4. Highly recommended.

# Quests for Arthur

## Reviews

CHRIS LOVEGROVE

Geoffrey Ashe "A Certain Very Ancient Book": Traces of an Arthurian Source in Geoffrey of Monmouth's History (Speculum 56, 2: 1981)

Eric Ratcliffe The Great Arthurian Timeslip (ORE of Stevenage and Bungay 1978) 90p

Chris Ashton "Was King Arthur buried in Mow?" Quicksilver Messenger 13: 1981)

Michael Wood In Search of the Dark Ages (BBC Publications 1981) £8.95

\*  
ARTHUR continues to inspire further, sometimes original research. Far from being anchored firmly to the battle of Badon (around 500 AD) he keeps drifting out of our grasp further back in time, a sort of "Dr Who on horseback" as the television reporter said. Geoffrey Ashe's paper for the Journal of the Medieval Academy of America involves a radical rethink of some conventional ideas of the historical Arthur, and we are grateful for a complimentary copy provided by Speculum which forms the basis for this summary.

Geoffrey of Monmouth's History (c 1136) gives the first full-blown account of King Arthur we possess, and appears to form the basis of most of the later medieval romances. Determined efforts have been made to discover his ultimate sources, and Ashe suggests where we might search to find the missing links. We start with some contemporary or near-contemporary Continental writers --Cassiodorus (c 531), Jordanes' Gothic History (c 551), Gregory of Tours' History of the Franks (c 591) and especially Sidonius Apollinaris' Letters (c 470-80)--who collectively provide the following account as interpreted by Ashe:

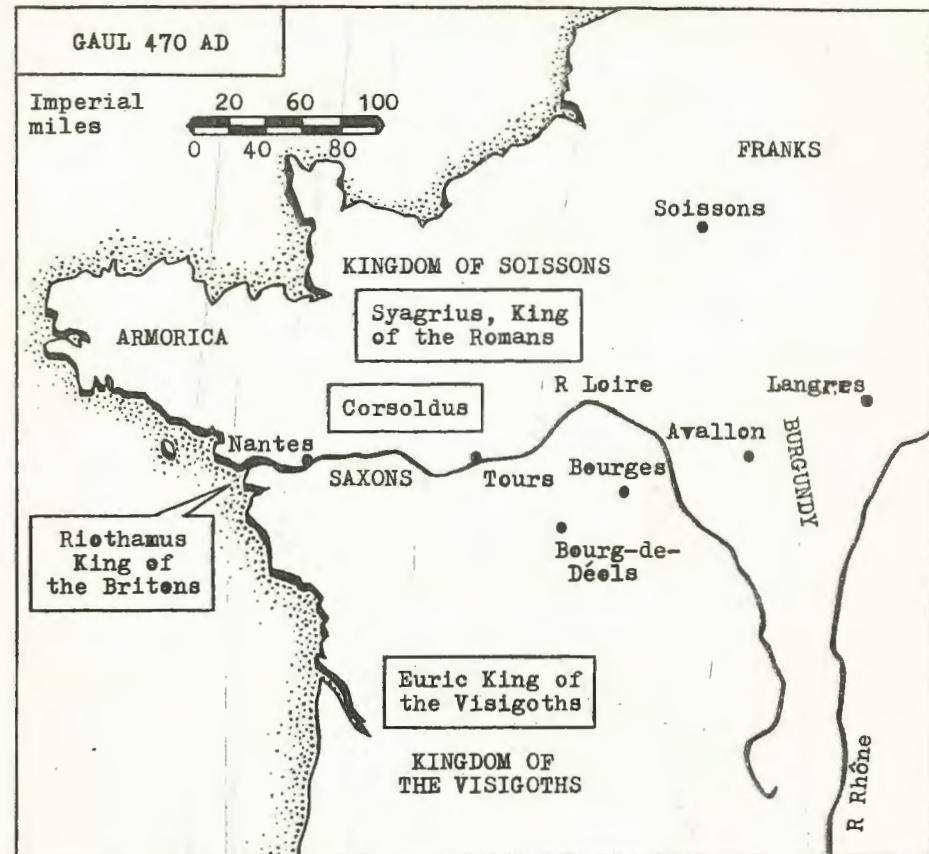
467. Leo I, Emperor of the East (457-74), appoints a Byzantine noble, Anthemius, as Emperor of the West. Anthemius then seeks British aid against Euric (King of the Visigoths from 466) who has greedy eyes on northern Gaul--Armorica (Brittany) and the Kingdom of Soissons under the general Syagrius, 'King of the Romans' (See map).

468 As Simplicius succeeds to the papal throne, a certain Riothamus or Riothamus, King of the Britons, comes over to Gaul with a reported 12,000 men in response to Anthemius' appeal. Around this time marauding Saxons under a chieftain Corsoldus are routed by 'Romans' (Syagrius and the Britons?) with some Frankish allies, and are expelled from the area around the lower Loire.

The Britons, however, are about to be betrayed by Arvandus, imperial prefect of Gaul and Anthemius' deputy. He advises Euric, King of the Visigoths, to attack the Britons north of the Loire and then partition Gaul with the Burgundians.

469. Arvandus is rumpled, and subsequently impeached by the Roman Senate. But Euric has already acted...

470. After Riothamus enters the state of the Bituriges (modern Berry) he is himself routed after a lengthy battle by the Visigoths, before the Romans of Soissons can aid him, at Bourg-de-Déols near Châteauroux. Euric then expels the Britons from



Bourges and Riothamus flees to the Burgundians, allies of the Romans. Riothamus disappears from history in the area around Avallon (Gaulish: 'Place of the Apples').

Does this story sound familiar? A King of the Britons, defeating the Saxons, betrayed by a deputy while fighting in Gaul and disappearing mysteriously near Avallon is suspiciously like the continental campaigns of Arthur described by Geoffrey of Monmouth, taking up half of the story of Arthur's reign in the History. Geoffrey's earlier Prophecies have it thus:

"The Boar of Cornwall shall lord it over the forests of Gaul. The House of Romulus shall dread his savagery and his end will be shrouded in mystery."

There are several obvious objections to the equation Arthur = Riothamus:

1. "The name is different." Riothamus it is suggested is Celtic Rigotamus, meaning 'king' with a superlative suffix (ie Great King). This could be a title like Vortigern 'high chief' or Augustus 'the august', and Riothamus could be short for Artorius Rigothamus, 'the Great King Arthur'.

2. "The dates are different." Riothamus disappears in 470, Geoffrey's Arthur in 542. Where did Geoffrey get 542? Ashe argues, persuasively, that Geoffrey saw a date 442 and could not square it with a post-500 date for Badon, which was not originally associated with "Artorius Riothamus". Not realizing that this date 442 was calculated from the Passion (not the Incarnation as accepted now - though the computations are incorrectly devised) he adjusted it to 542. (A later Arthurian writer, Wace, even adjusted this further to 642!)

3. "Arthur's enemies are different." Having adjusted dates, Geoffrey is not averse to reworking details to suit his purpose of glorifying Arthur above all others, Romans included. He forgets however to omit other details which confirm an earlier dating: he mentions the Emperor Leo (d 474) and Pope Sulpicius (= Simplicius? d 483), and sends Arthur to a place southwest of Langres, not far away from the Burgundian Avallon.

4. "Arthur is nowhere mentioned in earlier references as being in Gaul." One of Ashe's star witnesses is a Latin Legend of St Goeznovius, dated 1019 and given third-hand in a 15th century MS (formerly at Nantes Cathedral). This places "the great Arthur King of the Britons" in the period immediately after Vortigern, in the mid-5th century. The Saxons are subdued in Britain AND IN GAUL before the King is "summoned at last from human activity", whereupon the Saxons return to the Island (as we know they did, invading Sussex in 477 and Hampshire in 495). The Legend is independent of Geoffrey of Monmouth, placing Arthur's heyday more than half a century before.

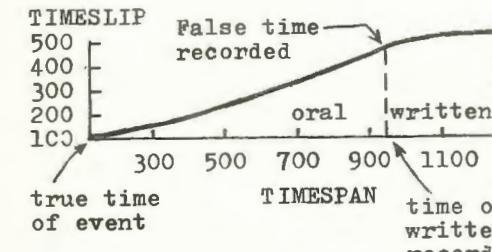
There are other objections of course, like Arthur's connection with the battle of Badon (c 499) and the list of Arthurian battle given in Nennius (did they take place in Brittany?). But enough has been presented of Ashe's case to show it merits consideration. Not only will adherents of an "historical" Arthur have to do some rethinking, but more credence will have to be given to Geoffrey's claim that he translated into Latin "certain very ancient book written in the British (ie Breton) language" and which in particular gave him details of the final dim battle of Camlann. Did this ancient treatise also supply details for the Legend of St Goeznovius, and are these the traces of a "missing link" in a chain of Arthurian sources leading to Geoffrey of Monmouth?

\*

**P**O SOONER might we accept that Arthur's heyday could be half a century earlier than generally accepted when we are forced to consider Eric Ratcliffe's thesis that Arthur flourished not in the 5th century but in the first. He regards the evidence for a sub-Roman Arthur as very flimsy and circumstantial, and argues his case from his own "Timeslip" theory.

Oral tradition is subject to distortion or exaggeration when facts are transmitted over a span of time, until the tradition is "fixed" by being committed to writing. These distortions or exaggerations, so well known to each of us, are defined as "slip phenomena". When this "slip" involves the transmission of a datable event, we get Timeslip. Timeslip is therefore the period between the false time recorded for an event and the true time of the event. (Timespan is the period between the record of the event and the true time of the event.)

Ratcliffe suggests that as time goes on the oral tradition always underestimates how long ago a particular historical event took place. For example, Gildas (who committed the received tradition to writing c 545) estimated Hadrian's Wall was built in 383 AD, whereas the date is nearer 120. Timespan here is  $545 - 120 = 425$  years, and Timeslip is  $383 - 120 = 263$  years. From this and other examples Ratcliffe estimates Arthur's heyday as the first century AD, a timeslip of 400 years. I translate this into a graph:



Having estimated when Arthur really lived, Ratcliffe begins to look for likely candidates, perhaps recorded by contemporaries and therefore not affected by timeslip.

He discovers that Juvenal in the 1st century mentions a certain British king (?) Arviragus, who also appears

in Geoffrey of Monmouth's History as the son of Cymbeline and in Glastonbury legend as the king who granted land to Joseph of Arimathea. Roman sources also tell us of the celebrated Caratacus or Caractacus, son of Cunobelinus (= Cymbeline) who from the middle of the first century fought against the Romans. For no good reasons Ratcliffe equates these two sons of Cunobelinus (one mythical, one historical) and further identifies the battles Nennius attributes to Arthur with the British resistance against the Claudian invasion under Aulus Plautius. Further, we may regard Caratacus as a "title", king-commander, and Arviragus as perhaps Ar'wyrauc, the Bear-folk chief ie Arth-wyr or Arthur. Thus Arviragus = Caratacus = Arthur.

Ingenious though this argument is, it rests on inadequate foundations. To establish his Timeslip-Timespan theory data, Ratcliffe uses only six examples: the building of Hadrian's Wall recorded by Gildas, the battle of Llongborth (which he dates, incredibly, at 50 AD), the foundations of the monasteries of Croyland and Repton, the birth of Adam according to Moses (4004 BC) and the origins of homo sapiens (c 10<sup>6</sup>BC). On the basis of these too few examples Ratcliffe not only builds the elaborate edifice outlined earlier but also establishes 900-1000 AD as the best period for assuming the final transition from oral to written records, when the "greatest and final Slip date" (the false date recorded for an event) "was being established in the records." He then proceeds to rely on his "intuitive" sense to associate Arthur-Arviragus-Caratacus with the introduction of Christianity to these islands.

I am not really convinced by any of this. Even if his Arthurian Timeslip theory were to be supported by adequate data (which it is not), to sidestep the truly complex nature of the "Arthurian" evidence by resorting to intuition is, I think, intellectually dishonest. If there is a case to prove (and there may just possibly be one) then The Great Arthurian Timeslip promises much but fails to deliver the goods.

in SE England and related subjects. Its editor, Chris Ashton, was a Pendragon member in the early 70s, and asks "Was King Arthur buried in Hove?" in an article in issue No 3.

Hove's Great Mound or Bury was destroyed 1856-7. 15-20ft high and 150 paces around, it contained an east-west oriented oak coffin 6-7ft long filled with "charred" bones, a red amber cup, a double-headed axe, a dagger blade and a so-called whetstone. This Bronze Age mound, dated to 1600 BC, was the scene of an Easter round dance called Kiss-in-the-Ring until its destruction.

Chris argues that Arthur is a British sungod like Apollo, and also a British hero like Theseus; the Apollonian amber cup and the labyrinthine associations of the double-headed axe support his belief that the Hove man was playing a mythic role as "Arthur", British sungod and hero.

He is wrong however to claim as he does that this Bronze Age chieftain is a Celtic solar king (nearly a millenium separates the raising of the mound from the Iron Age Celts) and misguided to suggest that "if we allow ourselves to be conned into believing that Arthur was one man who lived at one particular time and who championed the (Roman) culture which had subjugated his own people, then we are playing into the hands of pop historians and commercialism." Somehow I don't see the 9th century Nennius fitting this description. Chris' heart is in the right place when he pangs commercialism and when he recognises "Arthur" as a mythic figure, but his arguments are a little muddled.

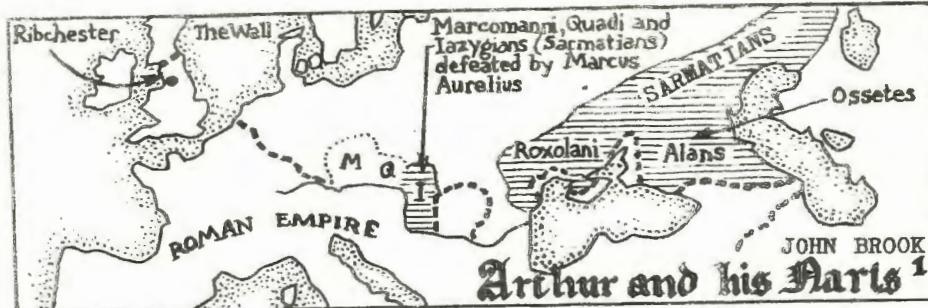
(QM is available at £3.20 for 4 issues from 26A Wilbury Ave, Hove, Sussex.)

\*

**A**NY READERS will remember the two TV series Michael Wood presented and the great enthusiasm he engendered in subjects as diverse as Boudicca and Eric Bloodaxe. Having read Modern History at Oxford, and done postgraduate work on 10th century Anglo-Saxon history, it is not surprising that he is continuously drawing vivid parallels from contemporary events so as to throw light on the Dark Ages (incidentally, you will know the genuine Dark Age sites in this book by their misty, grainy photographs, probably taken in the Celtic twilight). The text reads like the script of the films with its infectious interest in rattling yarns, documents and archaeological remains, and there are clear maps, booklists and an index.

As regards Arthur, Wood definitely belongs to the Doubting Thomas School (named after Prof Charles Thomas) which includes Dr Robert Dunning, Richard Barber et al. "A mass of Arthurian books is available, from reputable academic works to theories from the lunatic fringe... Arthur emerges as everything from cult hero to guerilla generalissimo, Dark Age Superman to Dark Age Che Guevara... Every age makes of Arthur what it will... yet reluctantly we must conclude that there is no definite evidence that Arthur ever existed..."

His arguments generally are not new, but he does a service by drawing attention to continuing research (eg Carlisle and Wroxeter in the Arthurian chapter) with interesting sidelights like the manner of Harold's death at Hastings, and William of Normandy's "portrait". Highly recommended.



"The legendary King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table may not have been the early Celtic and/or Welsh figures so commonly assumed by scholars, but the early descendants of a displaced military band of proto-Russians known to history as Sarmatians... Dr C Scott Littleton, a cultural anthropologist of Occidental College... found that (the great French authority in his field) George Dumézil long ago struck up a friendship with a band of Soviet-Turkish peoples called the Ossetes in the northern Caucasus. These people, surviving in only a handful, are descendants of an ancient warrior people called the Sarmatians... first cousins of the violent Scythians of what is now Russia.

The modern Ossetes, Dumézil found, have preserved not only a Sarmatian dialect but also a rich oral tradition that reaches back to the pre-Christian era. Dumézil collected the entire cycle of oral epics, which deals with a band of heroes called the Narts, led by Batradz...

The death of Batradz was remarkably similar to that of... Arthur. Mortally wounded, Batradz is taken to the shore... by his two faithful companions... where he commands them to throw his sword into the water. Twice a companion deceives Batradz, but he knows the deception, and the third time the

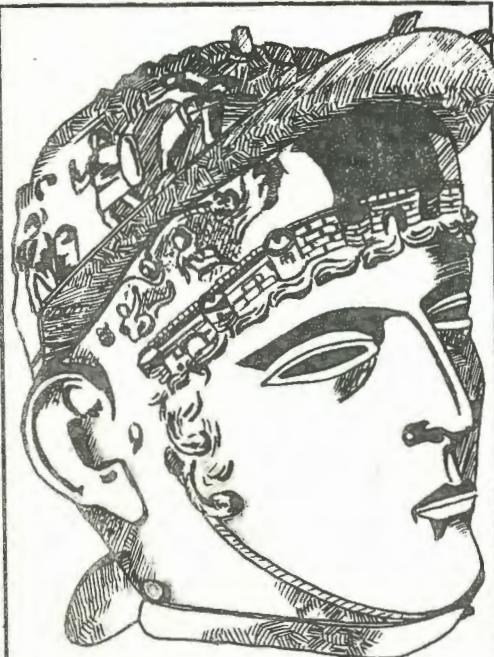
sword is thrown in, whereupon the water turns blood red and becomes turbulent. Batradz then dies..."<sup>2</sup>

We learn from Dr Scott Littleton (whom God preserve) of the Occidental College that, circa 150 AD, a Roman commander, one Lucius Artorius Castus by name, applied to Marcus Aurelius (who became Emperor in 161 AD) for some 5,500 Sarmatians (who had been captured in Hungary) to accompany him to Britain, "mindful of the Sarmatians' ability on the battlefield".

It seems that the gallant Castus had been appointed to some command in N Britain, as part of the garrison of the Wall. Presumably these horsemen or cataphracti were the forerunners of the famous Hungarian Hussars; in other words, light cavalry: "The Sarmatians themselves, essentially paid mercenaries... easily switched their affections to the Roman conquerors... settling in the area around modern Ribchester..."<sup>3</sup> Presumably these Sarmatians had become foederati and were officered by their own officers under a Roman commander.

Dr Littleton goes on to inform us that these men were so impressed by their commander that subsequent commanders were known as "The Artorius". This rank, similar to that adopted for the early Emperors

(The Caesar) continued until the late 5th century. Then the commander of the British forces was known as The Artorius; hence the Arthur of legend, "a mixture of Celtic sagas and the Sarmatians' own Nart heroes."



Late 1st century parade helmet with face-mask from Ribchester, worn by auxiliary cavalrymen for tournaments.

LET US EXAMINE the above statements in some detail. First, did Castus receive his foederati? There is no trace in the D0 of such a body of troops operating on, or near, the Wall. (D0 stands for Dignitate Occidentalis and was the Army list of the periods mentioned.)<sup>4</sup>

Secondly, such a large number of specialist troops (almost Legion strength) would never have been permitted to operate together in the same location. It would have been contrary to Roman policy--for obvious reasons.

Thirdly, such a large body of cavalry would not have been required in the district mentioned. It is possible that a number of units, in squadron strength, would have been posted at the major forts on the Wall as part of the regular Legions. A similar state of affairs existed on the frontier of India. On the Baluchistan-Indian sector only one brigade was stationed, numbering three regiments. As in the case of Hadrian's Wall, the main garrison consisted of infantry and artillery. In the case of the Wall garrison, cavalry would have been required only to pursue such Picts as had been repelled by the infantry. It can, therefore, be safely assumed that no large body of these foederati were attached to the Wall.

Regarding the use of the name AUTHUR-ARTORIUS to indicate their chief leader, this, surely, is absurd? Castus' Own perhaps, Cataphracti Casti, but certainly not Artorii. Assuming that these troops were cataphracti (though it is thought that they were scutarii) there is no trace of such a unit or formation in Britain at the time of Theodosius' expedition.\* The only cavalry regiment specifically mentioned is the Scutarii Aureliaci. This regiment never appeared on the rolls of the Roman Army before then and is shewn as joining Theodosius on his arrival. It is thought that this unit was the household bucellarii of the Aurelianus family at the time of Ambrosius the first (father of Ambrosius the Great) and, as in the state of the Eastern Empire, was incorporated into Theodosius' force for the duration of hostilities. It then reverted to its normal duties, subsequently being employed in the

overthrow of Vortigern. It is interesting to note that this same unit remained on the strength of the Roman Army until the final evacuation of Britain in 420 AD.

To sum up then: there is no trace of a foederati cavalry formation being stationed on the Wall. There is no record of any unit, whether cataphracti or scutarii, bearing the title of Castus, Artorius or even Aurelius from 150 AD to 420 AD stationed in Britain or anywhere else. Whilst it is possible that some Sarmatians entered the Roman service and were posted to Britain,\*\* it is surely quite impossible that the name of their commander would have been retained in Britain for over 300 years and regarded with such esteem that it became the nucleus and its final commander the comes Britanniarum of the force engaged in their struggle with the Saxons. I fear that the good Doctor has started a "red herring"!

#### REFERENCES AND NOTES Map p22

1. Parts of this article first appeared in Pendragon Vol 10 No 1 (Nov 1976) and No 2 (Feb 1977).
2. Dave Smith, "The Narts of the Round Table?" Los Angeles Times Weds July 28 1976.
3. "This is in the Ribble Valley, north of the A59 between Preston and Clitheroe. I must add, though, that it is AT LEAST a hundred miles from the nearest point on Hadrian's Wall. It seems to stand on the main road from the Legionary HQ at Chester to Carlisle--Roman equivalent of the M6--and at a point where another road branched eastwards across the Pennines to York, the other Legionary HQ in the North." - Derek Brown in Vol 10 No 2.
4. "According to the 5th cent-

ury list of Imperial Officials, known as the Notitia Dignitatum Ribchester was called Bremetannacum and was occupied by a cuneus, a cavalry regiment, of Sarmatae." Derek Brown, op cit.

5. See Professor A M James' monumental work, The Later Roman Empire.

#### EDITORIAL NOTES

\* Count Theodosius was sent to Britain in 367 to co-ordinate defences against a joint attack by Saxons, Picts and Scots.

\*\* John Brooke's refutations may not necessarily be the last word: various authorities accept some substantial cavalry presence in this frontier zone at the time in question. "Shortly after the middle of the second century, during the period 155-8, there is evidence of a widespread revolt which led not only to material destruction, but also to human casualties heavy enough to make it necessary for reinforcements to be drafted from the German provinces for all three of the Legions in Britain... After only a short break Newstead was reoccupied, this time by a cavalry regiment one thousand strong." (P Hunter Blair Roman Britain and Early England (Sphere 1969 p90f))

Referring to the Newstead ala or regiment Richmond says "These costly and valuable regiments, almost rarer than the legions, were habitually placed on frontiers where attacks in force... might be made on a fairly wide front" (Roman Britain Penguin 1963 p55). Cassius Dio "tells us that in 175 Marcus Aurelius sent to Britain 5,500 auxiliary cavalry... but his wars on the Danube forbade more effective action" (Collingwood and Myres Roman Britain & the English Settlements 1937, p151).

What happened to Marcus' cavalry, not mentioned in the D0? Where did the 5th century Sarmatae of the ND come from?

# LE CARRÉ ROTAS

## Arthur's Cryptogram

DEREK BURTON

S A T O R  
A R E P O  
T E N E T  
O P E R A  
R O T A S

This square is a set of letters which can be arranged in a manner rather like a magic square of numbers, and can be arranged to give the Christian message PATER NOSTER. Such a square was found about three years ago at Roman excavations in Deansgate, Manchester. On the original clay tablet (which can be obtained as a postcard from St Anne's Church, Manchester) the square is arranged as follows:

R O T A S  
O P E R A  
T E N E T  
A R E P O  
S A T O R

In this form the Christian significance was said to be hidden from Romans who were not Christian. To form the Pater Noster it was re-arranged as follows:

a  
P  
A  
T  
E  
R  
a P A T E R N O S T E R o  
o  
s  
t  
e  
r  
o

I have used small case "a" and "o" to represent the Greek Alpha and Omega.

On reading a French book by Chaumeil, I came across another arrangement of the square:

In both versions, the words can be read in columns or lines, or re-arranged to give the message. TENET reads the same either way round. Before going on to explain Chaumeil's interpretation, a translation of the Latin words, as usually interpreted, is given. This can easily be discovered in a book by Pepper and Wilcock.<sup>2</sup> The translation reads: "The sower is at the plough; the labour occupies the wheels." The authors say that a more liberal translation would yield: "Creative power holds the wheels by a thread." Other sites where the square has been found are also listed:

- 1 Knittlingen, S Germany, on parchments in the basement of a museum.
- 2 Pompeii.
- 3 Hadrian's Wall.
- 4 Sixteenth century Austrian coin.

The German parchments are said to date back to the fourth century AD. The square in this book is written the same way as in Chaumeil, who says that the question to ask of the square is "What do you wish to give me?", thus suggesting a concealed meaning.

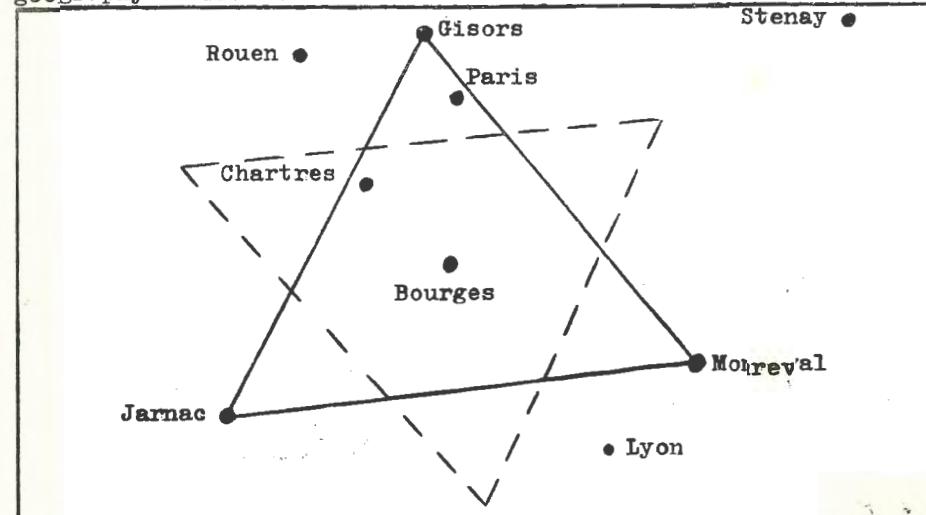
A good place to look for an answer is in the stars, as ARTOS is the name given to the familiar star-group the Great Bear, also known as the Plough, the Big Dipper and Arthur's Wain. In mythology, Ursa Major was Calli-

sto, daughter of King Lycaon of ARCADIA. Juno became jealous of Callisto's beauty, so to protect Callisto from this jealousy, Jupiter turned Callisto into a bear. This bear was nearly killed by ARCAS, Callisto's own son, so to prevent this happening again Jupiter turned Arcas into another bear, the Little Bear (Ursa Minor). So bears are obviously important here.

One of the French versions of the square was found at Bourges Cathedral. To quote a translation of Chaumeil:

"The sepulchre of the Duke of Berry is in the Cathedral of Bourges. Beneath the feet of the lying Duke is a bear and its warning, 'Bear the time will come' ... to the Great Bear whose name is ARTOS, whose anagram SATOR makes an equilateral triangle, Jarnac, Monreval and Gisors."

Chaumeil derives this triangle from the other places near Bourges which have a ROTAS square. Bourges is the centre of France and also appears to be at the centre of the triangle. By placing another triangle of the same size over, but inverted, a six-pointed star can be imagined over the geography of France:



The square at Jarnac is called the Golden Calf and was found on a wine press. At Monreval the square is called "du Cuet" and has been studied in modern times since at least 1812. As for the star, it has often been associated with Solomon, and appears in the geometry of the Cathedrals of Bourges and St Sulpice in Paris.<sup>3</sup> The connection with Gisors is highlighted in two ways at least:

1 Gisors is a town with a huge castle, and the castle is built in such a way as to line up with important star-groups including the Great Bear.<sup>4</sup>

2 De Sède also shows the Zodiac arranged over the star pattern geography shown by Chaumeil. I have been to the Cathedral at Gisors and the main east window is the Zodiac! There is clearly something strange here.<sup>5</sup>

Yet another version of the square was found on the back of a sculpted head that had been taken from the back top of a menhir in the Rennes-le-Château area of S France. This head is now in the back wall of the presbytery of Rennes-les-Bains Church. I have seen the head, said to be

that of Dagobert II, the last Merovingian king, but the inscription would be hidden as it is fixed to the wall. To return to ARCAS, he was named after ARCADIA. The region around Rennes-les-Bains has been identified with the new Arcadia and the Alpha of the Pater Noster has been suggested to be the Alph, sacred river of Arcadia.

More connections can be completed as Dagobert's son Sigebert was said to have narrowly missed being assassinated along with his father, and was taken to Rennes-le-Chateau to recover. Certainly evidence of a Merovingian burial was found in the church there. The assassination of Dagobert was near Stenay (Ardennes) and there are still a few ruins of a very early church to St Dagobert at Stenay. They are on private ground but could be seen fairly clearly from the road when I was there. The connection with Stenay is interesting as, like Gisors, it was once a Templar stronghold.

Another possible connection given by Chaumeil is the Hebrew number correspondence with ROTAS, which he claims would be written in Hebrew as

RESCH VAV or TAV or SAMEKH<sup>6</sup>  
WAW TAW

200 6 400 60

He doesn't mention the A, but implies that it would be left out. This

200

then gives,

400

by addi-

60

tion:

6

666

This is the number of the Beast in Revelation 13: 18.

"Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man: and his number is six hundred three and six."

What Chaumeil seems to be hinting is that the Beast is a bear, and that the warning in Bourges is connected with the prophecies of Revelation. Returning to Paris, Chaumeil says that secret rituals involving bear symbolism still take place in the crypt at St Sulpice. This Church is certainly full of interesting material.

(NB The number 400 which Chaumeil gives for T is actually the value of Th. The proper sum would therefore be:

R	Resh	200
O (')	Ayin	70
T	Teth	9
A (')	Aleph	1
S	Samekh	60
		340

The Hebrew sometimes left out vowels (ie miss Aleph) but this would not account for why O is included and A is not. Apparently, however, Kabbalists did stretch things a bit if they wanted to.)

This all takes us far from secret Christian devices and suggests a parallel, rather more hidden tradition for the square which goes back to at least the fourth century AD, and perhaps earlier. I hope this short piece will inspire someone to do translations of some of these important French books. At the moment there is very little in English available on these fascinating problems. The kind of conclusion which suggests itself is that the ROTAS square has a mystery revolving around it in the same sense that the star patterns revolve around the heavens along with the Great and Little Bears. For the present time the search is rather frustrating without a good knowledge of French. This short piece only hints at the kind of work that could be done.

#### LE CARRE ROTAS: SOURCES AND NOTES

Jean-Luc Chaumeil Le Trésor du Triangle d'Or (Treasure of the Golden Triangle, Editions Lefevre 1979, obtainable from 29 Rue Pastorelli, 06000 NICE, France; tel 93 85-04-56) Many hints at origins of Merovingians and Priory of Sion, and pictures of Pierre Plantard.

Gerard de Sède Les Templiers sont parmi Nous (The Templars are among us, Editions J'ai Lu 1962) and Le Trésor Maudit de Rennes-le-Château (The Cursed Treasure of Rennes... J'ai Lu 1967)

Templars book most useful as the Rennes one is inaccurate occasionally, although it gives good background.

Louis Vazart (author and editor) Abrégé de l'Histoire des Francs (Abridged History of the French, Editions Vazart 1978, obtainable from 1 Avenue Jean-Jaurès, 92150 Sauresnes, PARIS) Great detail of Merovingian genealogies and French royalty.

Franck Marie Rennes-le-Château Étude Critique (SRES 1978, obtainable from 142 Rue de Paris, 92220 BAGNEUX) Excellent for Rennes, St Sulpice etc, although some minor inaccuracies.

L'Abbé H Boudet La Vrai Langue Celtique (The True Celtic Language, 1896; reprinted by Phillippe Schrauben Reprints, 33 Rue de Minimes, BRUXELLES 1000, Belgium) Boudet, the priest of Rennes-les-Bains church, knew the secret of the Priory of Sion beyond doubt!

Elizabeth Pepper and John Wilcock Magical and Mystical Sites (Abacus 1978)

Brinsley le Poer Trench Temple of the Stars (Fontana 1973) Astrology of bear signs in history.

Liz Greene The Dreamer of the Vine (Bodley Head 1980) Excellent novel based on Golden Triangle of Gisors, Stenay and S France, plus Nostradamus. Reads as fiction but is mostly fact.

The Unexplained Issues 4-13 contain Rennes and related material.

Collins French-English Dictionary!!!

#### REFERENCES AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

1 Chaumeil p 97. 2 Pepper and Wilcock pp 190, 191. 3 Marie p 125. 4 De Sède 1962 pp 237, 240. 5 Ibid p 279. 6 Chaumeil p 98. Thanks are due to Brian McGarron for help with the French translations.

EDITOR'S NOTE Other articles and letters on the Cryptogram have appeared in Pendragon (\*out of print) including:

Peter Ratazzi "The Magic Square" XII,4\*. Sid Birchby "Arepo in Manchester" ibid\*. Michael Benkert "Magic Squares and the Magi" XIII,1; "The Prophetic Cryptogram" XII,2 and XIII,3.

On the Great Bear see Chris Turner's "Arthur and the Bear of Arcady" XIII,1 and Geoffrey Ashe's The Ancient Wisdom.

On Knittlingen (and Faust) see Peter Ratazzi In Strangest Europe (Mitre Press 1968) 37ff. On the Beast of Revelation as the Emperor Domitian, ibid p 211.

# GALAHAD

## Some odd theories



MARK  
VALENTINE

GALAHAD is not a warrior; he is a mystic. The character rests uneasily in the pageant of courtly romance, the blood feuds, homage and wooing. What he symbolises is purity, austerity, idealism, qualities both rare and scorned in most periods of history. Arthur's own attitude to the Quest which Galahad helps to instigate is ambivalent—he sees its attractions, its haunting nobility, but he resents the fact that it will destroy the Round Table.

What can this be an allegory of? The ways of war, temporal matters, all custom and normal way of life are discarded for an intangible vision, something rejecting wealth, power, self-indulgence, carnal love and violence for the sake of enlightenment.

It seems to say that after conquering all their foes, Arthur's followers grew old and their minds turned to their own mortality, their ultimate fate. They sought salvation. Could this be an image of the essentially tribal Celtic ways and folk-lore giving way to an ethereal Christianity totally alien to them? Could Galahad therefore have been an early saint or monk? Leading Arthur's followers away from war would certainly have been a Christian preoccupation, and the result clearly could have been to divide and end the "Round Table". There is of course the chronicle which says Arthur carried a banner of the Virgin Mary into battle, but this is highly suspect. Even if true, however, it could still be that Galahad is a lingering tradition of a Celtic saint who converted Arthur's warband (or some of them) from

a nominal, still pagan at heart, Christianity to the full implications of what Christ taught.

The problem with all this is that there is a gap. Galahad doesn't appear in any of the earliest Arthurian myths at all—not the Mabinogion, nor the chroniclers, nor the Spoils of Annwn or early poems and triads. He's a later creation, perhaps, of about the 12th-13th century. For the theory just outlined to ring true, some earlier reference is really indispensable, and it doesn't exist.

But clearly Galahad can't have been conjured from nowhere. If the troubadours of the 12th-13th centuries created him, then why? What did he represent to them? Well, central to the theme of Galahad is the Grail which he gains. There are two strands of thought on this curious symbol. One is that it's a remnant of the Celtic cauldron of plenty, rationalised into a Christian symbol. If this is so, it still doesn't explain Galahad, because he doesn't appear in the Celtic myths. The second is that it's a much later addition to the Arthurian cycle, some sort of Christian veneer to placate the Church order of the day.

But this doesn't ring true. "In early versions, such as the Queste composed soon after 1200, it stands for an ascetic ideal opposed to the norms of knighthood and courtly love."<sup>1</sup> Now, an ascetic ideal can hardly be said to be a representation of the Church of the day. Pope Innocent III says this of a fair sample of clergy in the Languedoc area of France at the time: "They are blind creatures, dumb hounds... simoniacs who

sell justice, damning the poor and giving absolution to the rich. They do not even observe the laws of the Church. They acquire endless benefices... one may observe monks who have cast aside their monastic habit, taken wives or mistresses and are living by usury..."<sup>2</sup>

If Galahad was supposed to be an addition to the Arthur stories in order to placate the Church, why would he be such a clear contrast to the usual way of life of the clergy, his purity and renunciation in antipathy to their self-indulgence and worldly ways? It is much more likely that he is meant as a reproach to them, a vision of a better, truer Christianity.

A model of this kind of life would have well been available to the romancers. The Cathars of the Provencal area taught and led a way of life of complete asceticism. They denied all flesh and matter as a creation of evil, would not eat meat, discouraged procreation and believed that when a child is born it pulls down from heaven a divine spirit to suffer on earth. Their aspiration was to regain the ethereal spirit form by transcending this world.

The parallels with Galahad spring quickly to mind. And all this was a heresy, alien to the orthodox Catholic church.

The last sentence of a review of Montaillou: Cathars and Catholics in a French village 1294-1324— "But any notion of a grail as expounded by troubadours and the like passed these Occitan villagers by"<sup>3</sup>— might seem to imply repudiation of the theory that Galahad was modelled on the Cathars. But in fact most of the Provencal noble families were sympathetic to the heresy; some lost their lands and titles because of it, and others (especially women) were amongst those



Galahad's sponsor in the Queste del Saint Graal: "a man robed in white, of venerable age and bearing..."

burnt by the Church. The Cathar cause came in time equated with Provencal nationalism in opposition to the invading Crusaders and the French king. Nothing could be more natural than that the "jongleurs" and troubadours of the area should reflect both the nobility's admiration for this rarified Christianity, and its disgust for the orthodox clergy. The concepts of Galahad and the Grail may therefore with some justification be thought of as a retort to the hypocrisy and materialism of the Catholic church, and a clear reference to the alternative of the Cathars.

There are some possible other parallels. In the romances, Galahad is presented to the rest of Arthur's knights by an old man who vouches for his qualities; the Cathars had a

similar ceremony. When a follower was thought good enough to become a "perfect" or committed Cathar, he would be presented to the community by a more senior "perfect" who would recommend him to them. At these ceremonies, the electus or aspirant would be symbolically purified by a laying-on of hands from another "perfect" and from then on was held to have the Holy Spirit (or Consolamentum) within him. For a Cathar believer to die without receiving the consolamentum was unthinkable--like a Catholic without a final confession. There may

perhaps be something of this in the concept of the "Host" within the Grail, a deeply significant manifestation of pure spirit in an earthly artefact.

More research will be necessary to correlate the timing and symbolism of Cathars with the emergence of the Galahad figure in Arthurian romances, but I would certainly regard it as a workable hypothesis, and would be grateful for Pendragon readers' comments.

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1 Geoffrey Ashe The Quest for Arthur's Britain (Pall Mall 1968) pl3

2 Massacre at Montségur, an account of the fall of the last Cathar stronghold, p53.

3 Pendragon Vol XIV No 1, pl3.

From Our Correspondence:  
Dear Pendragon Society,  
This is to inform you



From Philip Jones, Preston, Lancs; and Derek Burton, Alkrington, Manchester:

"We are writing to express, in the strongest possible terms, our total disgust with and rejection of several passages in the article 'The Quest for the Unreal' by R A Gilbert (Pendragon XIV No 2). We also object to either the work of Mr Pollard (irrespective of whether his material is valid or not) or the work of any other freelance writer being used as a stick with which to beat the research of Henry Lincoln and his two close colleagues.

Mr Lincoln has not at any stage of his careful release of information indulged in 'wild' speculation and the use of such terms and phrases as 'blight,' 'fantasies' and 'fool's gold' is pure cant. The reverse seems to be true when one looks at the account of the formation and aims of the Templars as put into print by Mr Gilbert; an account which is absolutely wrong. How can one make unequivocal

such as "there was no link whatever between Cathars and Templars" when dealing with this area of historical research?

In addition to all this R A Gilbert has the gall to talk of Sion as being a shifty and ill-founded subject area. How many years has Mr Gilbert been researching the history and influence of the Priory?

What Mr Gilbert has failed utterly to comprehend is that links made by Henry Lincoln, Richard Hardmont and Michael Baigent are not forged solely on the processes of logic however rational but are made through very hard and persistent research with real documents. The very subject demands that in publication it stands up to the most rigorous scholarly scrutiny.

In conclusion may we say that Mr Lincoln and his colleagues are persons of the utmost integrity and conduct all their affairs with commendable sensitivity and we come to the defence of three men who have more guts than most of us."

#### TEMPLE CHURCH ON BODMIN MOOR

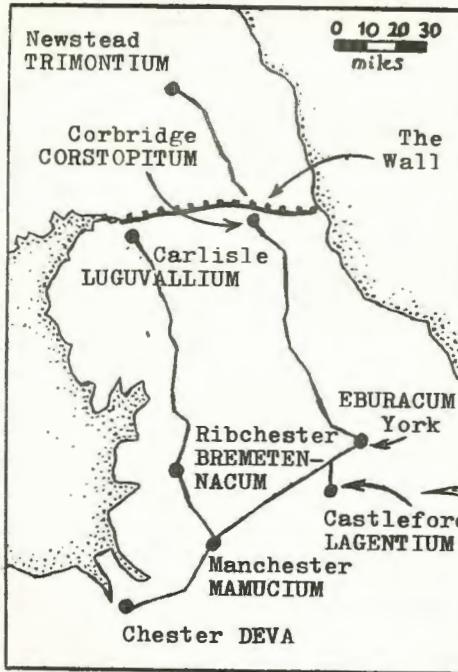
\* In Vol XIII No 4 Kate Pollard asked for information on this church. From F S Deane, Saltash, Cornwall:

"The late Revd Charles Henderson in his book The Cornish Church Guide quotes: 'In the 12th century the Knights Templar were given a small district in the heart of the moors where they could have a small church and commandery free from all interference. They were also given more profitable land at Trebigh in St Ive...' pronounced Eve--St Ive is about 4 miles east of Liskeard on the road to Callington in the south east of the county. 'At the suppression of the order in 1314 the Knights Hospitaller

succeeded to the property. In 1340 the preceptor and one brother with two men servants constituted the establishment. They were under obligation to reside in order to exercise hospitality. There was also a chaplain to serve the church. In 1371, owing to the scarcity of clergy the Bishop licensed a priest to celebrate at Temple. At the Reformation Temple became a donative but in 1774 it fell into ordinary jurisdiction. Before this the place seems to have been a regular Gretna Green where all sorts of irregularities were carried out with impunity.'

Your mention of St Luke in connection with Temple leads me to make a short comment. St Luke's is a few miles to the east of Temple, near the famous hostelry of 'Jamaica Inn'. About a mile south of the inn at Bolventor on the road to St Cleer is a Methodist Chapel and a farm. This is called St Luke's. It is believed that in early days there was a Celtic church here, possibly only a hermitage. Later in the 12th century a Church was built on the site and dedicated to St Luke. In the 16th century this church was suppressed and now there is little to be identified as a church. The house on the site was destroyed by fire earlier in the century, possibly destroying any remains there might have been. The field next to the house is known on the tithe maps as 'Bones field' and no doubt is the site of a graveyard. When the chapel was built a badly weather worn head of a statue was incorporated into the wall. Possible credence to an initially Celtic establishment at the site is a farm on the opposite side of the road called Carn-eglos."





See also pl1-13

#### IS ARTHUR CUNEDDA?

From Paddy Stone, Bassaleg, Gwent:

"In the 'Olde News' item (XIII, 4) comments were invited on Castleford as Camelot or the Second Rome. Castleford near Leeds was a Roman fort called LAGENTIUM.

Keeping an open mind about all things, and moving our thoughts from another so-called Camelot --Caerleon-upon-Usk, called ISCA by the Romans--one does find in the north of Britain Carlisle in Cumberland which is some 7 miles from a river ESK. This was originally a site on the western end of Hadrian's Wall (then named LUGUVALIUM) and a cantonal capital. Even further north the Romans built the Antonine Wall upon which is a place called CAMELON (near Falkirk).

The Roman Empire did not suc-

ceed in totally subjecting the Northern tribes... What about this statement from a Welshman, in a chapter called "A thought for the Dragon" in A Welsh Eye by Gwyn Thomas: the author tells of his childhood teacher who taught about a Pict called Cunedda the Burner who played hell with the Romans in N Britain. Night after night, from their walls and forts, the Romans looked at the sky reddened with flames--Cunedda was burning again! The teacher finished his story by saying that one day it will be proved that King Arthur the Peerless was really Cunedda the Pict!

Now according to William Stukeley, the antiquarian of the 18th century, Kunedha was a king who was buried at Silbury Hill. So comments please, Pendragons, on Cunedda/Kunedha!

I should like to correct a statement in my article "The Questing Hawk of Summer" (XIV No 2): the Wild Boar was the symbol of the XX Valeria Victrix, thought to be the first Roman legion to occupy the fortress at Gloucester..."

\* On some maps Castleford is marked as Legiolium instead of Lagentium. Which is correct?

#### DEAD LANGUAGES?

From Kenneth Thomas, London SE5:

I am looking for correspondence upon British myth matter: and at the moment especially runes, sets, singles, dates etc.

In following the Greek side of Irish, possibly to its conclusion, I have noticed a sideline which is part of the mainstream that does not seem to make sense... It involves the Etruscans of the fifth and sixth centuries BC who either were civilised Celts or had strong Teutonic ties. The Etruscan language was the main

language of the Roman legions, not Latin, yet Etruscan is now a dead language, not understood though we can read it. It is quite possible that the Sibylline and other prophetic books of Rome were written in Etruscan. And The Necronomicon might be the last of those books. The demon Kuthulu [sic] is the key, that is if my reading of the Etruscan Leaden Tablet is correct.

As for Mr Jefferies' Rome Secundas (Camelot or the Second Rome--see previous letter), surely that should be Roma Secundum; in which case I recall reading something about it eleven years ago, though at the moment I can't think where --I think it was on a map! and the only maps of Roman Britain I have looked at are for the areas London and Wessex. That is I recall the word Secundum which could have been common for all second cities..."

\* The Necronomicon is claimed to be "a compilation of magical material" from the Middle East made by al-Kindi (d ca 850 AD). A copy of Alkindi's compilation is said to have been catalogued in Rudolph II's library in Prague where John Dee, the Elizabethan magus and spy copied it as a cipher MS, now extant as the Liber Logaeth or Book of Enoch... Or so the story goes. Others believe The Necronomicon, The Book of Dead Names, is a product of the imagination of horror writer H P Lovecraft (Ed George Hay, published Neville Spearman 1978, Corgi 1980). But there's no mention of Etruscan I'm afraid...

I know of no "second" city in S Britain (shouldn't that be Roma Secunda, by the way?) and only SEGONTIUM (Caer Seint near Caernarfon) springs to mind. This was a happy hunting ground for Cunedda who expelled Irish tribes from here.

#### LLANELEN AND THE IRISH...

From Sid Birchby, Manchester: "The Gower dig... Alex raises the query about who occupied the site first. I don't know much about Gower, apart from one visit, but I know more about two other places where Dark Age Christianity was present: N Somerset and Radnorshire. The particular sites I have in mind have indications of being founded by Irish missionaries in the 6th century, and I wonder whether you have thought about this as regards Gower..."

\* Nemius' British History records that a Munster tribe, the Ui Liathain, "the sons of Liathan prevailed... in Dyfed and in other countries, ie Gower-Kidwelly, until they were expelled by Cunedda", perhaps in the early 5th century. Irish influence then waned for a few centuries... or did it? We have precious few finds on the site, and none definitely from the 6th century.

#### ...AND THE GOLDEN MEAN

From Chris Turner, Llandewi Brefi, Dyfed:

"I noticed a curious error in Alex's article (bottom right, p 11, 'Llanelen & St Iltud' last issue). The Golden Section, or Mean, is not constructed as illustrated: it is based on the diagonal of half the square and gives a completely different can of ratios. Alex's figure is the demonstration of A-series paper sizes, ie a proportion of one to root two. What you might call the EPNS mean..."

Most interested in your additional research on the illustrations to the articles. Pendragon has to be the only magazine you can read your own article in and learn something new! Great stuff!"

\* That A-series figure is mea culpa! Apologies...

## WAS ST ELEN ST HELEN/ENDELIEND?

\* From Kate Pollard, Bristol:

"W G Hoskins, discussing the traversings of Celtic Saints from Wales to Devon in his book *Devon*, notes three church dedications previously supposed to be to St Helen in N Devon.

They are: the chapel on Lundy,\* the Parish Church of Abbotsham, and the ancient (and now ruined) chapel on the high ground just to the west of Croyde.

Abbotsham Church was dedicated to St Elen, whose feast day is August 25th according to the Tavistock Calendar (Tavistock Abbey owned Abbotsham from the 10th century); the Lundy dedication is to St Endeliend.

Hoskins wonders if they are all actually St Elen, being a contraction of Endeliend as on Lundy.



He also points out that S Moltonfair always began on the Wednesday following St Elen's day, although the Parish Church is now dedicated to Mary Magdalene.

We can, of course, add our own Llanelen to the list, situated on N Gower across the estuary.

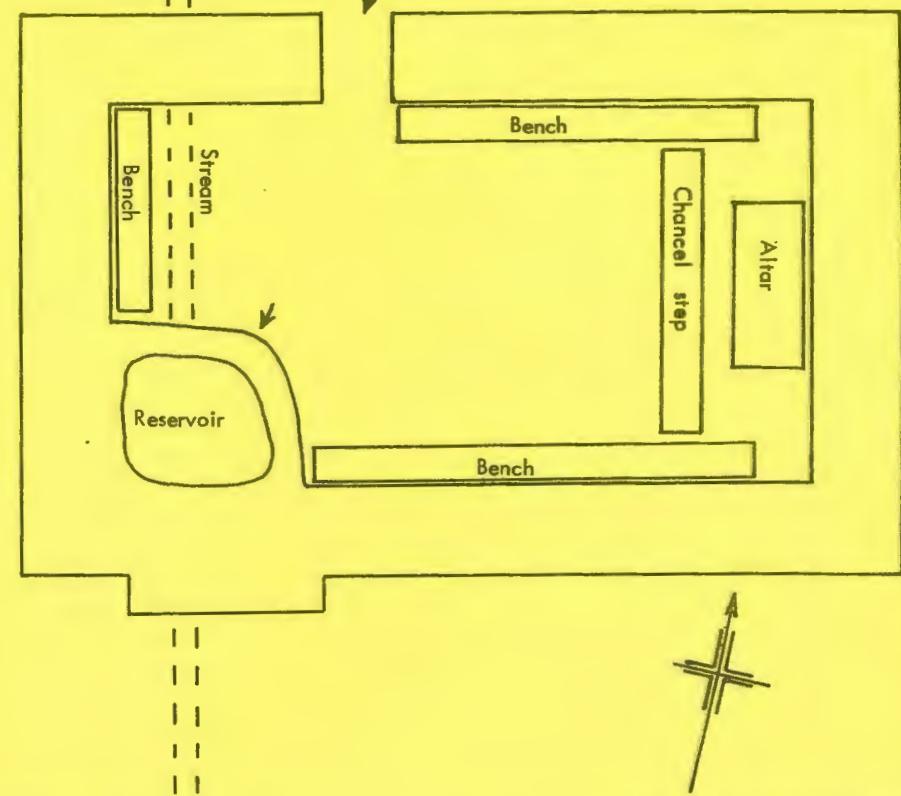
St Endeliend does not feature in my dictionary of saints and I have not checked these churches. Perhaps one of our N Devon members would like to comment?

\* There is also a Knights Templar Rock on the East coast of Lundy."

\* Other Welsh dedications to the wife of Emperor Magnus Maximus (d 388) are Llanelen, Monmouthshire; Bletherston, Pembrokeshire; Capel Elen in Penrhosllugwy, Anglesey. She is also linked with Segontium!



SKETCH MAP OF MADRON CHAPEL, CORNWALL  
G. Stuart Dearn. 1981 OS Ref: NG 447329



## NOTES ON MADRON CHAPEL

\* From Sally & Gef Stuart Dearn, Dorset:

"Often wrongly referred to as a baptistery, the chapel is a tiny roofless building with wall 2½' thick and 6' high. Its internal dimensions are 21' by 11' and the doorway is, unusually, in the north wall. Still remaining inside the building are stone side benches, a rough chancel step and an altar slab with a stone recess to receive a portable altar. A tiny rivulet enters the building through the S wall and collects in a small

rectangular corbelled reservoir before flowing out through the N wall. The chapel was dedicated to the 6th cent St Madern, tentatively identified with Mactromus, disciple of the Welsh St Tudwal, and has been restored following damage by Shrubsall's Roundheads. It has been dated around the 12th cent. but the lower courses are believed pre-Norman... There seems to be a parallel between Madron and Llanellen, which might explain the presence of the stream in the Welsh chapel.

Craig Weatherhill Belerion.  
Ancient Sites of Land's End '81



Madron Chapel: north door and reservoir. (S & G Stuart Dearn. 1907)

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