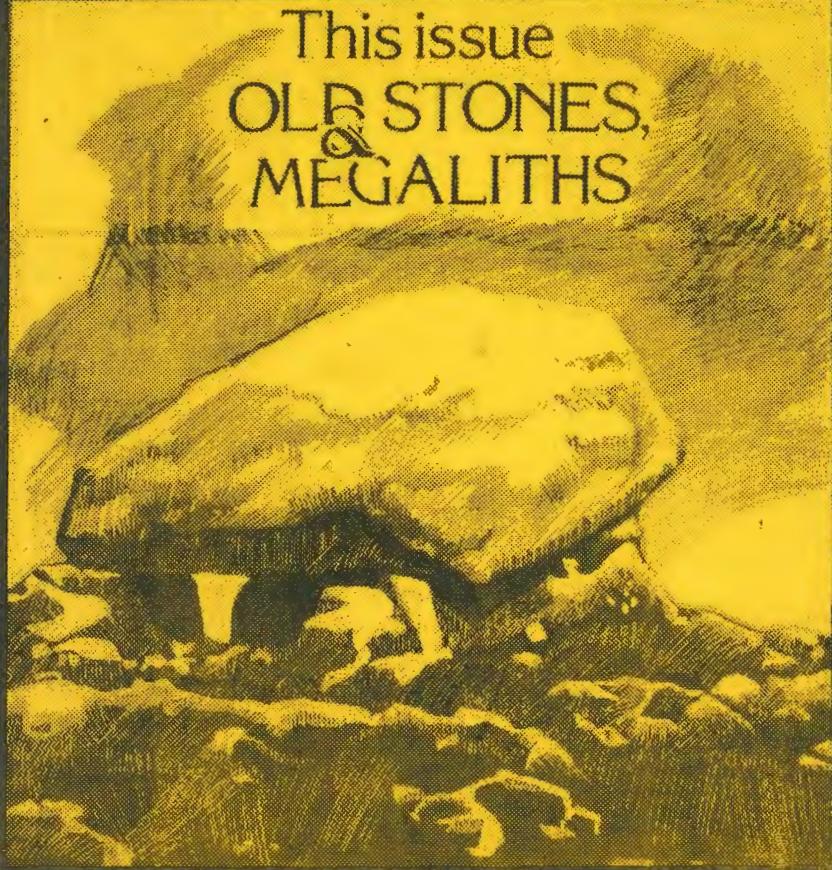


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OLD STONES,
MEGALITHS



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Editor Chris Lovegrove Production Roger Davie Webster, Kate
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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.

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EDITORIAL In Greek legend Theseus had to lift a megalith to recover his father's sword and sandals and come into his inheritance. In like manner, Arthur had to remove a sword from a stone to prove his right to the throne of Britain. Megaliths feature in many traditions and indicate a deep-seated reverence as well as their significance for the human psyche.

Patricia M Wharton's article is based on a chapter in her forthcoming book The Utopian Tradition in British Political Thought and Practice (background work for her PhD at Southampton University). Paul Screeton, author of Quicksilver Heritage (Abacus) and former editor of "The Ley Hunter", now produces his own "Ancient Skills and Wisdom Review" (£2 pa from 5 Egton Drive, Seaton Carew, Hartlepool, Cleveland TS25 2AT). Roger Webster, who despite unreasonable demands by the editorial staff still prints this magazine, is a long-standing contributor to "Pendragon"; the back cover is from his excellent collection of poems Where the river runs (£1 from 26 King Cote Mill Farm, Flax Bourton, Bristol BS19 1LX). Rick Plewes currently provides 15th century farmhouse accommodation and meals of good repute at Higher Wick Farm near Glastonbury Tor, as well as presenting a coherent personal viewpoint of the Arthurian legends in the latest of a series of articles. Chris Turner, ever prolific, shows how he is often prepared to put theories to the test; his Henge leaflet on how to build a ritual enclosure is available separately for 25p. Steven Banks has recently retired from the museums service after a varied and full career, and brings his knowledge and experience to bear on an aspect of the sword in the stone. André de Mandach, a professor and authority on medieval culture at the University of Neuchâtel, Switzerland and a founder of the Tristan Studies Association in 1977, here examines a link between a Dark Age saint and a legendary hero.

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THE GIANT ALBION

PATRICIA M WHARTON

Geoffrey Ashe is as fascinated as William Blake by the concept of the Giant Albion. He feels, like many others before him, that the Arthurian legend itself is older than Arthur and refers back to the time of the pre-Olympian gods, to "the gods before the gods" --the Titans Cronus, Atlas, Prometheus, Poseidon, Rhea and Albion. The ancient Greeks thought of this as a golden age of peace and harmony and looked back to it with nostalgia even in ancient times. Yet, after Zeus and his Olympian gods defeated the Titans these scattered and were punished. Cronus was pulled to pieces, Prometheus was "bound", Poseidon was banished into the depths of the sea to become also "Neptune", Atlas was turned into the stone mountains of North Africa and Albion was separated from his brethren and either imprisoned or put to sleep in a deep cave at the edge of the known world. There he slumbers still and may one day awake with a mighty roar! It seems that we have here one version of the Arthurian myth in preparation.

This has all been generally taken to be of purely literary interest but I wish to argue that it may also have a geographical significance and would like to know what other readers think. For where is the Giant Albion asleep? Somewhere to the far west of Greece and tradition has identified that hiding place with Britain. Yet is he in Britain at all? Is he not rather meant to personify the main island of Britain itself? After all this land was only physically detached from the Continent of Europe about 6000 BC, during the very spring-time of the "collective unconscious" and well within the mythological memory of early men, perhaps at the same time as "the flood" in other places and the drowning of Atlantis wherever that may have been. Such geographical

changes may have occurred relatively quickly and cannot have failed to impress our ancestors.

If we look now at a physical map of Britain in a modern atlas, with the eyes of our imagination rather than with scientific detachment, we can see at once that this island itself resembles nothing so much as a huge human form facing westwards, and indeed was once so depicted in a famous advertisement for the British School of Motoring. Even modern geographers speak of the Pennines as the backbone of Britain and we can easily conceive of the Scottish Highlands as the giant's head and beard, East Anglia and Kent as his buttocks, Wales as his shrouded arms, Salisbury Plain or the North and South Downs as his pelvic girdle and the South West promontory as his outstretched legs. When we remember that Geography, like other sciences, first developed as a branch of magic knowledge, then we can readily understand how our ancestors became at first intuitively aware of land formation as they roamed and hunted over our island, and early developed an esoteric geography and methods of land measurement and geomancy to match. Geoffrey Ashe does not seem to have considered this possibility, although in one book he comments on C S Lewis' idea that the whole Roman Empire was once conceived as "a colossal symbolic image" with meanings attached to various regions, and that according to this scheme "Logres or idealised Britain is the Empire's head and the true abode of its soul". So here perhaps we have another version of the same idea.

If we accept my thesis for the moment-- that the main island of Britain was conceived as the Giant Albion, asleep or turned to

stone like Atlas--where are the other parts of the giant's body located? In particular, where are the soft internal parts--the heart, lungs, stomach, bowels and sexual organs? The lowlands of the Cheshire Plain, the Midlands triangle and the low soft parts west of the Cotswolds take on a new significance. Could the rivers have represented arteries or veins, or perhaps the Thames estuary, "the sewer of London", the intestines? Then what now becomes the significance of the various stone circles, ley lines, old hill routes and chalk landmarks? Are they pressure points--chakras? Can all these be fitted into some system of gigantic anatomy? It would clearly take a whole book to investigate this question. I would merely suggest that the Mendip range might qualify for consideration as the giant's phallus, with its famous Wookey Hole and other internal limestone caves, and that both Glastonbury Tor and Cadbury Castle lie just to the south and south-east of this feature!

If Britain was thus conceived as this Giant Albion, was he dead and petrified or still alive and sleeping perhaps, if ever so softly? Where could one listen to his great heartbeats or tap perhaps his great strength? Earthquakes are rare in Britain, but earth tremors are quite common, and early men may have been more sensitive to them than ourselves. If we do postulate such an interpretation of early geography much can be explained, although we should not press our deductions too far.

The ancient Britons may thus have had a fatherland rather than a motherland and fed (perhaps rather guiltily) upon their father's body. For one day he might wake up as one day, before his petrification, he had been a free agent, unbound and mighty. Indeed (accor-

ding to Spencer) "Albion, father of the Britons, once fought with Hercules in Old Gaul", according to local legend on the Plain de la Cran in Provence. He had been alive and heroic! His people might now be sunk with him in sleep and apathy (they still are!) but they retained that vital living force within them. Hence the Giant Albion remained for the poets a powerful figure, an archetype in the collective unconscious of the people.

Ireland, the lesser island of the British Isles, was perhaps considered as the giant's child or, more probably, his estranged consort, the female Titan Rhea, for Ireland had broken away from Britain geographically, in the same way as Britain from the Continent. Traditionally too, Ireland has often been thought of as alternatively a very young and beautiful, and an incredibly old and ugly woman--for example in the W B Yeats play Cathleen ni Houlihan. Once again, also, some features of her geographical anatomy are distinguished to this day, such as her breasts, the famous "Paps of Anu" hills in County Kerry. P MacCana writes of "the Irish goddess as divine mother and personification of the land" (called locally Danu or Anu) from whom the divine people, the Tuatha De, were reputed to be descended. He adds, "The significant point is that the ruler of the supernatural realm is a goddess rather than a god, precisely as in those early Irish tales which represent the other world as The Land of Women." All this reminds one not a little of Rider Haggard's She and King Solomon's Mines which also seem to have been founded on his dreams of an archetypal young/old goddess figure, his journey to the Breasts

of Sheba mountains and his search for the hidden treasure.

Thus perhaps, at the deepest level of all, a reconciliation of these islands and their peoples from their primordial estrangement must involve a better balance and relationship of the sexes--a correct psychological equilibrium between Yin and Yang. Somehow this ancient separation must be bridged, as also between both these islands and the land mass of Euro-Asia. For once, long ago in the Golden Age, the continents formed one land mass before they drifted apart, as presumably once homo sapiens spread from a single centre. Meanwhile, within the British Isles themselves, Avalon or Glastonbury has first claim to be considered the most sacred place, as the location of this consummation. To quote Geoffrey Ashe again, "At Glastonbury, for the first time, the English adopted a major Celtic institution and made it their own in a spirit of collaboration. Here, in a sense, the United Kingdom was born." So too with the Normans. In the 10th century Welsh poem The Spoils of Annwn Arthur is permitted to visit the underworld of Gwyn ap Nudd (through an entrance into the Tor) and to see the goddess Ceridwen's magic cauldron guarded by nine maidens. The 12th century Taliesin poem mentions an island of apples and nine sister enchantresses (in the Land of Women?). The quest for the Grail has begun; and it may lead the hero under the sea or beneath the sea bed where the roots of the land masses are united.



Full fathom five thy father lies
Of his bones are coral made;
Those are pearls that were his
eyes:

Nothing of him that doth fade
But doth suffer a sea-change
Into something rich and strange.
Sea-nymphs hourly ring his
knell:
Hark! Now I hear them--Ding,
dong, bell

(Ariel's Song, The Tempest)

Geoffrey Ashe

Camelot and the Vision of

Albion 1971

The Quest for Arthur's Britain

1968

King Arthur's Avalon 1957

Proinsias MacCana

Celtic Mythology 1970

Rider Haggard

King Solomon's Mines 1885

She 1886-7



Arthur, Merlin & old stones

PAUL SCREETON

INTRODUCTION

The legends of King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table have an everlasting quality, and this can be proportioned between the exoteric factors of stirring the imagination, the noble interest in chivalry, infectious excitement, and originally and specifically for the beautiful prose; and the esoteric nuances which have reblossomed this century in Katherine Maltwood's vision of the Glastonbury terrestrial zodiac and also psychotherapy techniques utilising the legend as a motif from the archetypes of the human mind.

King Arthur appears in a multitude of topographical, archaeological and folkloric contexts throughout Britain, but we would be wise to remember that most modern historians accept Arthur's existence--not as a king--but as a Celtic cavalry leader with a swift-moving force whose mobility outmanoeuvred the Saxons and held the coming chaotic Dark Ages at bay a little while. Hence the appellation of his name to sites hoary with age before he was a twinkle in his parents' eyes must be regarded as later ages honouring his memory by associating him with worthy structures of veneration.

The belief in an expected deliverer is common throughout Europe with King Arthur being the most prominent British candidate. Arthur is "rex quondam rexque futurus"--the Once and Future King. Such a tale appeals to the oppressed and most strongly in times of strife or perseverance. Other candidates have been or are King Harold, who supposedly escaped from the Battle of Senlac; Earl Gerald, who lies below the Rath of Lullaghast, from which he will emerge to drive

out the British and unite Ireland; Roderick, last of the Goths; Don Sebastian of Spain; Welsh heroes Owen of the Red Hand and Owen Glendower; Frederick Barbarossa and other Teutonic heroes.

Twentieth century cults regarding the certification as dead of a variety of screen idols or popular music figures as untrue and the victims actually being secretly alive yet tragically disfigured suggests there are alternatives to the hypothesis that it is oppression which nourishes belief of "heroes" in suspended animation.

The multiplicity of sites where national heroes sleep awaiting the call to lead may alternatively be interpreted as identifying locations of specific sanctity. That they have remained a keynote in our history, especially in the case of King Arthur, suggests that the national psyche has never renounced such a belief.

ARTHUR

In one small area of Wales are Coetan Arthur, a boulder supposedly thrown by him from Dyffryn Farm, near to Gors Fawr stone circle; Bedd Arthur, his grave; Carn Arthur; and Cerrig Meibion Arthur or the Stones of the Sons of Arthur.

As with many giant stories King Arthur too had the ill-luck to find a "pebble" in his shoe as he rode to the Battle of Camlan. He flung it seven miles and it fell on Cefn-y-Bryn, in Gower, and is known as Arthur's Stone. This stone was used by Swansea district maidens to test the fidelity of their lovers. At midnight on a full moon the girls would deposit on the

stone a cake of honey and barley-meal, then crawl on hands and knees three times around it. The faithful would appear to the girls, but if they did not come the sweethearts regarded it as a token of their fickleness or intention never to marry them. It is also suggested that below Arthur's Stone is a spring flowing with the tide's ebb and flow. Another version avers that from this stone he extracted the sword Excalibur.

King Arthur is said to be buried under another Arthur's Stone, at Dorstone (Herefs) while another version says it marks the grave of another king who challenged Arthur (also that on it were made marks as King Arthur knelt praying in gratitude), and also that it marks the grave of a giant slain by Arthur (and that the marks were made by the giant's elbows as he collapsed mortally wounded).

The dolmen behind houses in the village of Darite (Cornwall) is alternatively known as King Arthur's Quoit and Trethevy Quoit.

His connection with a standing stone north of Sewingshields (Northumbd) is interesting. He was seated on a rock and an expression on Queen Guinevere's face so annoyed him that he seized a nearby 20-ton rock and threw it at her. She was seated about a quarter of a mile away and cleverly stopped it with the comb she was using. The stone was warded off and fell between the outcrops of sandstone, now known as King Crag and Queen Crag, where they sat, and remains there to this day with its striations being the marks of the teeth of the comb. A tale very much in the giant-hurling vein. He is said to be awaiting the call both here, under ruined Sewingshields Castle, and also in the same vicinity between

Allansford and Muggleswick at a location called The Sneep, and also in the Eildon Hills. Additionally, his personal Land of Nod is located under Alderley Edge hill (Cheshire), Richmond Castle (North Riding); and Craig-y-Dinas, The Fortress Rock (Caer).

Other ancient sites have been associated with various of the twelve major battles Arthur is said to have fought against the Saxons. The last of these was around 515 at Mount Badon, variously identified as Bath; Badbury Rings in Dorset; during the last century the conical eminence Freeborough Hill in the North Riding was Sir John Steven Hall's choice, and the Rev M R Graves conjectured it was nearby Eston Nab; while Badbury Hill, near Faringdon (Hants) is a further contender.

At one time King Arthur visited a mistress in Ruthin (Denbighs) when he held court at Caerwys (Flint). The troublesome Huail Caw, ruler of Edeirnion in North Wales, also deliberately pursued the woman and a fight between the suitors ensued. Arthur, though wounded in the knee, forgave Huail on condition that the injury was never again mentioned. However, when Arthur arrived dressed in disguise as a woman at a dance to see his mistress, Huail commented upon noticing the limp that Arthur dancing would be better without his "clumsy knee". Whereupon Arthur had him removed and beheaded upon Maen Huail, a large block of limestone still standing in Ruthin's market place.

A rock, Carn March Arthur (Mer), is marked by what is said to be a hoofprint of Arthur's horse, as too is the King Arthur Stone near St Columb (Cornwall), and his dog Cavall was held responsible for an impression resemb-

ling that of a dog's paw on a stone atop a cairn near Builth (Brecon). Legend asserted at the turn of the century that if anyone removed the stone it would be spirited back to the identical spot.

MERLIN

Arthur's wizard Merlin is said to have erected Stonehenge. The Britons defeated the defenders of the circle on Mount Killarus, Ireland, but could not move the megaliths. However, according to Geoffrey of Monmouth, "and when they were all weary and spent Merlin burst out laughing and put together his own engines" and laid them down "so lightly as none would believe." And so they were brought to England.

Merlin inevitably appears elsewhere, too. In fact his name supposedly originated Marlborough by way of Merlin's Barrow, a huge chalk pyramid in the grounds of Marlborough College. A "Roman" road is diverted to avoid it. The legend on the earliest arms of Marlborough were "Ubi nunc sapientis ossa Merlin?" and Walter of Coventry as early as 1070 quoted the name of Marlborough as coming from the prehistoric monument, followed by the Domesday Book and Camden's translation of Neckham's couplet in De Laudibus Divinae Sapientiae of 1586:

"Great Merlin's Grave
The name of Marlborough in
Saxon gave."

Near the quay at Mousehole (Cornwall) is Merlin's Rock and the attack in 1595 by a Spanish fleet which burned down the village was believed to be connected with the prophecy:

"There shall land on the Rock
of Merlin
Those who shall burn Paul, Pen-
zance and Newlyn."

A prehistoric monument in the City of London, Penton mound, had an underground passage leading to Merlin's Cave. When Islington Spa was fashionable as a health resort, royalty attended. At the turn of the century the entrance, in the cellars of Merlin's Cave Tavern, was considered unsafe and bricked up.

There is also a tomb of Merlin's in the Forest of Broceliande in Brittany, and yet another on the Isle of Sein.

Merlin is reputedly buried at a point where the River Tweed is joined by a burn called Powsail, near Drumelzier (Peebles). He had been defeated by the Strathclyde Christians and eventually after many years of wandering was chased by jeering shepherds and fell to his death impaled on stakes supporting salmon nets. He is also said to be buried beneath Mynydd Fyrddyn (Merlin's Mount), Longtown (Herefs), and to lie in the bonds of enchantment by Vivien at Bardsey Island (Wales) and Merlin's Hill Cave (Carmarthen).

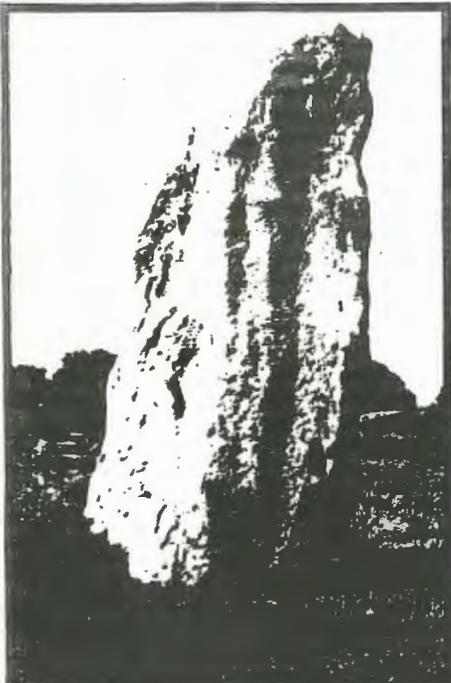
CONCLUSION

A warrior is said to be sleeping until the day when he is required to arise and march to victory under Wayting Hill round barrow, Hexton (Herts); another example of someone being awakened briefly underground relates to one of two round barrows, Tar Barrows near Cirencester (Glos), where 2 workmen digging a gravel pit disturbed the sleeping warrior before they escaped and falling earth blocked the entrance to the mound.

The attraction of the tale of Arthur is that it fits our tradition of salvation, resurrection and immortality, and is as great today as it was when the stories

coalesced into the Matter of Britain. He may have been a military leader, but we must also see his relevance as an immortal solar hero, his twelve battles being the astrological months and his deeds related to the sun's passage through the ecliptic.

We may believe that nations have souls and that for Britain the archetype of Arthur is in truth an aspect of this. Nations' fortunes ebb and flow and this rise and fall through culture, economics and politics is part of the psychic flow; but should serious danger threaten then the image of Arthur will be activated and allow for a rallying of the people. The rumour of a sleeping Arthur therefore is poetic, but also at a deep level is a sign of out having anthromorphosed the nation's soul.



OLD STONE News TIMES FORGOTTEN

In this instalment of 'Old News' we follow up some stories about STONES mentioned in earlier issues:

STONE AGE ART: FALSE START?

XIV, 1 featured news of Upper Palaeolithic cave engravings discovered in a cave mouth in the Wye Valley, the earliest in Britain. But scorn has been poured on Dr Tom Rogers of the Stone Age Studies Research Association by the Sheffield Morning Telegraph ("...began his working life as a telephonist..."), the Forestry Commission (owners of the land), the DoE, the British Museum, the London Institute of Archaeology and Current Archaeology ("the figures shown seemed hard to distinguish from the natural configuration of the rock face"). Is his terminology suspect? Is the eye of faith needed to see the figures? And is Rogers' "varied, even eccentric career" (newspapers, teacher training, academic forays) a stumbling block to his credibility and integrity?

THE TRISTAN (& ISOLT?) STONE

In the Cornwall issue (XIII, 4) Kate Pollard mentioned a legend of St Samson who, in passing through the area of Trigg in Cornwall, supplanted the idolatrous worship of a stone by the expedient of chiselling a cross on it. Prof André de Mandach of the Swiss University of Neuchatel has identified this as the Trist-

an Stone near Fowey, with its tau (T-shaped) cross, and inscription to Drustanus (ie Tristan).

In the course of years the monolith appears to have lost the last line of an inscription noted by Leland in the 16th century. Mandach restores the full inscription to read:

DRVSTANS HIC IACIT
CVNOWORI FILIVS
(CVM DOMINA CLVSILLA).

Translated this becomes
Tristan here lies,
of Cunomorus the son
(with the Lady Clusilla).

De Mandach ingeniously suggests: Clusilla is an Irish name (perhaps connected with Clonsilla, a village situated near Tara, Isolt's supposed birthplace). Shortened to Silla, with an article before it, I-silla means "the Blonde one", the usual description of Isolt in the romances and the cause of her being chosen by Mark as his wife. Is the Lady Clusilla then the Irish princess Isolt, and was she buried beside her lover Drustanus before the monolith marked with Samson's cross?

Finally, the Tristan Studies Association has discovered the later medieval cross-head (which formerly stood over a shaft on the monolith) lying in a nearby ditch--an inspired piece of detection to add to the documentary work.

(Information kindly supplied by A de Mandach.)

THE BUZZ AT ARTHUR'S STONE

Readers will remember our 1979 report on the "Dorstone Buzz" (in Vol 12 No 2). This was an unidentified sound heard at Arthur's Stone, Herefordshire, in 1975. Sid Birchby, who instituted a wide-ranging enquiry in his worthy Newsletter (News and Views on the Paranormal), has now published a brief preliminary report into such noise phenomena, called "hummadruz", which have been reported for well over a century. This report covers earlier enquiries as well as recent press-reports and acoustic tests. "Explanations" for hummadruz include modern technology, tinnitus, temperament and anoxymia, but none is the whole answer. The Hummadruz is available @ 30p from S Birchby, 40 Parris Wood Ave, Didsbury, Manchester 20.

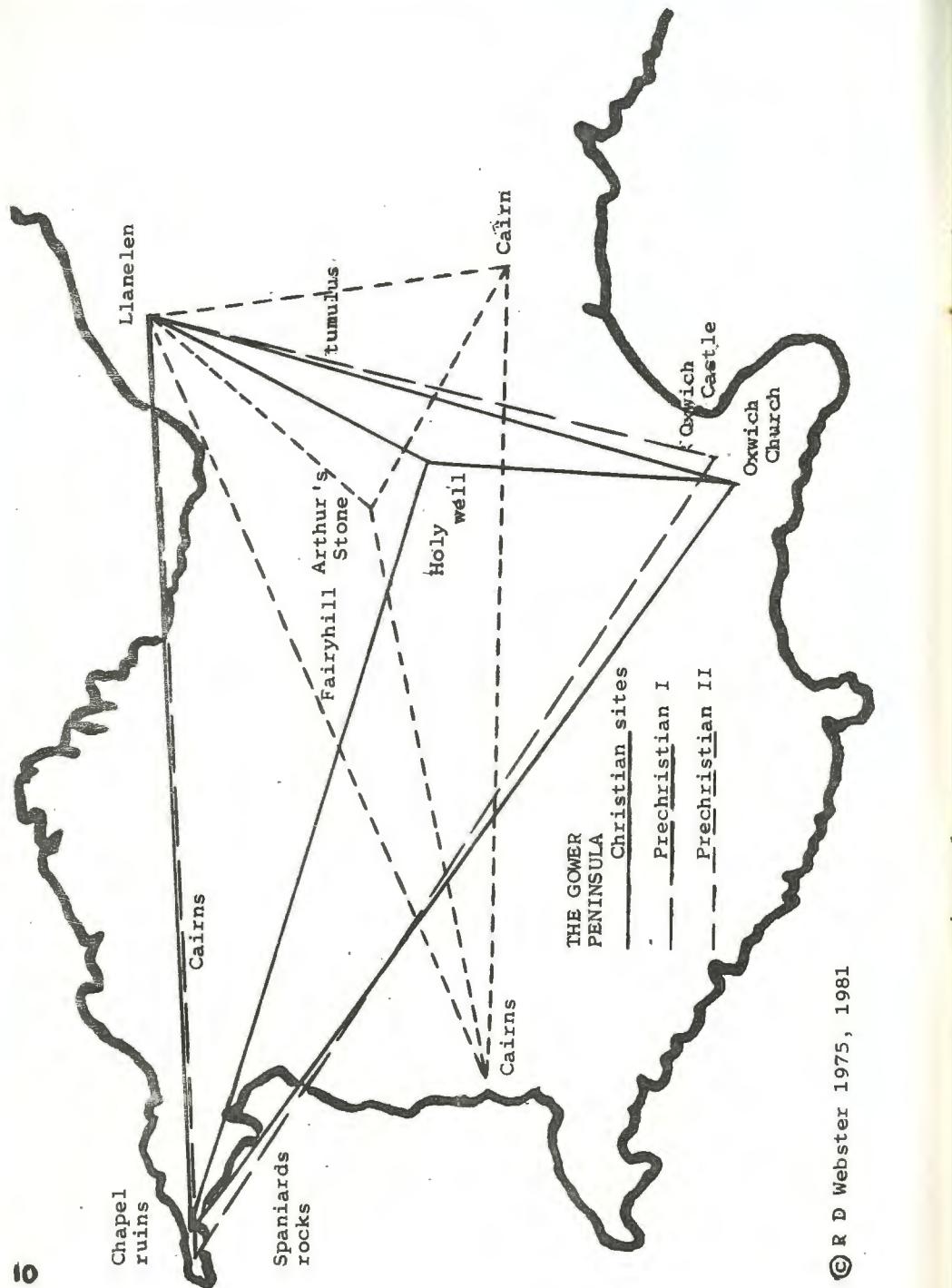
A GOWER TEMPLE

Directed by Anthony Ward, extra-mural students at Swansea's University College have made a major discovery on Cefn Bryn, Gower.

A 3500 year-old Bronze Age cairn is "important because the two entrances, running north and south through its circular mound of stones, suggest (it) was modelled on a Stone Age version built 2000 years earlier... This suggests that the late Stone Age and Bronze Age people were more settled than previously thought... (and) that there was a continuity in social tradition covering many generations."

The cairn with 2 entrances is the first of its type excavated in Wales, built for rituals rather than just burials (ie a meeting-place or temple). Cremated (?human) bone may have been exhumed from a burial chamber and re-interred in a dedicatory ceremony. The site, like 20 or 30 others on Cefn Bryn, is situated not far from Arthur's Stone.





Peculiar geometry of the Gower

R D WEBSTER

Once upon a time I would amuse myself by scribing long straight lines on OS maps, joining telephone kiosks, pubs, AA garages etc and chuckling evilly all the while. I still do. However, even one such as I, who waxes less than enthusiastic over terrestrial magnetism and the like, cannot ignore lines and patterns if they exist. Indeed, one would fail in honesty if one did not occasionally sit down and look for them.

Thus it was that I sat down one afternoon armed with pen, rule and a pile of duplicated copies of maps of the Gower Peninsula in Wales. Some hours later, having covered assorted maps with an appalling jumble of straight lines, I noticed what appeared to be an isosceles triangle in the midst of it all.

In fact I found three isosceles triangles, all differing slightly in their alignments. One was drawn using Christian sites and the other two using pre-Christian sites. All had Llanelen, the site of our Pendragon excavation, in common so that the differently aligned triangles pivoted upon it. The triangle drawn on Christian sites (solid line) contains another, smaller triangle. Llanelen and the church at Oxwich Green form the base; the apex of the outer triangle is at the ruined chapel near Spaniards Rocks and the apex of the inner triangle is formed by the Holy Well near Arthur's Stone. The dimensions are: base 4.8m; sides 7.2m; perpendicular height (outer) 6.8m, (inner) 0.5m; inner sides 2.4m; area (outer) 32.64 sq m, (inner) 2.4 sq m (m, by the way, represents the old and splendid imperial mile, not the corrupt and degenerate foreign metre).

The next triangle (broken line) takes Llanelen and the Castle nr Oxwich Green as its base and the promontory fort at Spaniards Rocks as its apex. The measurements are: base 4.55m; sides 7.4m; perpendicular height 7.0m; area 31.85 sq m.

The last triangle (dotted line) differs materially from the others in its alignment and, like the first, contains a smaller isosceles triangle. Base: Llanelen to cairn on Long Oaks farm; apex: cairns near 'The Beacon'; apex of inner triangle: Arthur's Stone. The measurements are: base 2.9m; sides (outer) 6.4m, (inner) 2.2m; perpendicular height (outer) 6.2m, (inner) 1.7m; area (outer) 17.98 sq m, (inner) 4.93 sq m.

Whether or not any of the lines in these figures may be called leys is open to argument. Some of them pass over significant points: for instance the line connecting Llanelen to the apex of the third triangle passes over Druids Moor, Fairyhill and the telephone kiosk on the road junction in Llanrhidian, but most of the lines do nothing more than connect the points of triangles. The accuracy of these figures is only fair; they are drawn to a tolerance of $\pm 0.025m$ (1/40 mile) which would have been very impressive had our ancestors intended to survey in terms of enormous isosceles triangles, but very unimpressive to-day. I have no reason to suppose them significant. However, they are there, whether by chance or design, and if anyone can explain them I shall be glad to hear from them.

The sexual climate in the New Stone Age

RICK PLEWES

In my studies of the Matter of Britain one particular aspect of the described events always, until recently, eluded my understanding. I was hoping one day a blinding flash would occur and illuminate this particular dark corner, and was rather worried that it might not--when it did. In the Arthurian tales, again and again we come across pure knights worried that they might lose their virginity or dishonour their ladies, while the same ladies in the same positions apparently couldn't give a fig. Tristan develops a fine neurosis trying to keep his code of morals up to date with his exploits while Yseult (Beroul has this aspect best) develops only a bawdy sense of humour and a sharp wit. Lancelot goes mad twice as he fails to keep pace with his sexual intrigues and is overtaken by a sense of sin. Guinevere does not seem unduly worried until threatened with a bonfire party with her tied to the stake. Gawain is eagerly seduced by Bertilac's wife, but he won't actually go the whole hog. Again and again this situation occurs. And yet no one seems to notice how odd this is. In our own day, though change is on the way with the feminist wave, women say nay and clutch at their virginity while men pursue relentlessly with wily tricks and much determination their maidens to undo. How is this to be explained? What is the relevance of the womenfolk and the parts they play?

I suggest that all is back to front because the events took place in a matriarchal society. Women did not cower at the thought of being pregnant and unmarried, or suspected of infi-

delity because women held the key to life, the secret rites of fertility. Or, in other words, they and they alone understood the principles of gestation, menstruation and insemination. These were secrets which, since women are physically closer to the events, they were bound to acquire sooner than menfolk. The professional midwife became a very powerful figure, not only because of her ability to deliver children, but because of the long periods of time spent waiting for birth in the small hours of the morning. Midwives would become very well-informed people at the centre of the world of gossip. They would have talked long and slowly about the coincidence of the periodicity of the moon and menstruation, and the greater frequency with which birth occurred at the full moon, as indeed conception. Indeed, the moon acquired the nickname Midwife.

In those days men were not jealous. They did not know the rules of the game so they could not be aware that they might be cheated. All they knew was that women became magically fertile. It wasn't until the first stone circles were built that the trouble began. I tend to think they were built by and for men rather than women. Whatever their purposes the giant stone circles certainly acted as accurate calendars. As such they allowed men to begin to observe the behaviour of women in relationship to fertility. Note well the fact that many circles are associated with fertility, and also that there is a recurrence of the theme about trying to count the stones at certain

times of the year and failing. I've no doubt that as women realised that their supremacy was threatened they may well have tried to confuse the issue by lying about dates or trying to distort remembered facts. Bearing in mind that women must have known what was at stake and men didn't, the men were probably quite easily hoodwinked over the matter.

I can well imagine that the first few circles caused absolute social chaos and spread a wave of discontent, like women's lib today, with village after village having enormous rows as the menfolk learned how they had been supporting other men's children, and the concept of being cheated maritally sunk into the darker recesses of their brains. No longer could surface appearances be acceptable. Now women must be programmed not to cheat. After the circles had been erected, the wrangling continued for years as women tried to maintain the power and prevent men from gaining confidence in their new-found knowledge. Tricks were practised so that women might appear to bleed when first bedded with their husbands. If you remember the whole Arthurian cycle starts with two men, Uther and Merlin, trying to deceive a third, Gorlois, without a vast amount of protest on the part of Gorlois' wife. Merlin, who built the round table according to Malory, and Stonehenge according to Geoffrey (The Much Maligned) of Monmouth, knew the secrets of Paternity and intended by means of the rape of Gorlois' wife to secure a Pendragon for the future to rule in Britain.

Guinevere (remarkably infertile) enjoys the comfort of Lancelot, if not others as well, and is only questioned by a certain disloyal recognizable group in the court who eventually break away, rebel and destroy the Ar-

thurian realm. Merlin Stone, in her most important book The Paradise Papers, drew attention to the fact that snake poison from the Elapid family of snakes (craits and cobras) is remarkably similar to LSD in its molecular structure. (This is something that I am at present trying to check out and will keep you informed of the results.) Stone's suggestion is that snakes were used in many matriarchal cults (eg Crete, the Pythoness at Delphi, Cleopatra and the asp), and were kept in temples in large numbers so that a plentiful supply of doses of the enlightening drug was ready to hand. It occurs to me that enlightenment is not the only startling result of an LSD type drug. Ergot, a closely related molecule, and used in the Greek-based Eleusinian Mysteries of Persephone, Queen of the Dead, is the basis of a fundamental midwife's tool in use today--Ergometrin. Ergot is known to induce spontaneous abortion, or in small doses at the right time can probably be used to cause quick delivery of the placenta because of its ability to cause contractions. It is also a preventative against haemorrhaging. If the snake may be assumed to be the origin of the dragon myths then we can see how important the relationship of dragons and matriarchal societies must have been.

Here we have a mythical beast that is constantly seen guarding virgins. Of course we see these stories from the point of view of St George who killed the dragon and carried off the virgin. He would say that the girl wanted to be rescued. The victor always gets to choose which version of history is published. But the Arthurian Legend is a genuine survival of the Matriarchal view. In the last battle a snake is killed. It is the death of the snake which causes battle to commence

Just as it is the question of the Queen's promiscuity which has made the battle possible. After the battle Guinevere retires to a convent. A very symbolic act if it is considered as representing the change in the state of woman from being a queen to being a sexual prisoner. In the story we see a magician reveal that he has acquired the secret knowledge of the priestesses and use it to secure the future lineage of kings. We also see that whenever given power the future breed of kings tries to burn promiscuous women at the stake.

The stories gain a revival during the period of the crusades, because at that time the men are away fighting for long periods and the women regain considerable power. Despite the Christian overtones, the free women remain a recurrent theme except when they are being rescued from dragons. It seems to me that the Arthurian cycle represents an early sexist battle which occurred at a point when a significant change in consciousness took place. The rise of male consciousness took a very long time to complete so that the goddess religions were not immediately suppressed everywhere. By the end of the cycle, Morgan, Pendragon by blood, Lady of the Lake, Guardian of the Ancient Knowledge is in disgrace, while Merlin, who stole her secrets, is still high in our estimation. It appears in the confusion of the cover-up that Morgan is responsible for Arthur's death, but if the real identity of Morgan as Lady of the Lake is seen, it is quite clear that Arthur as he dies shows where his authority came from by returning his sword to the Lady of the Lake, whereupon out of the same lake come the Black Queens led by Morgan to take him back to Avalon. Arthur is securely in the camp of the Old Religion and Matriarchy. He never did mind about Guinevere's infidelities.

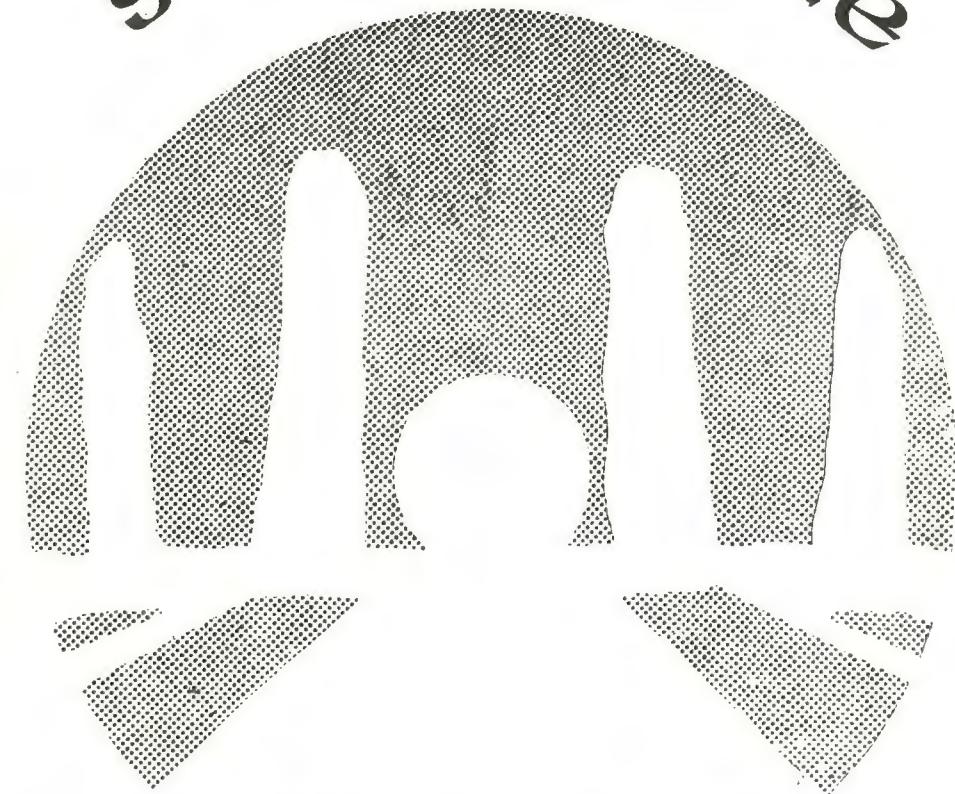
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the pantygarreg stone circle

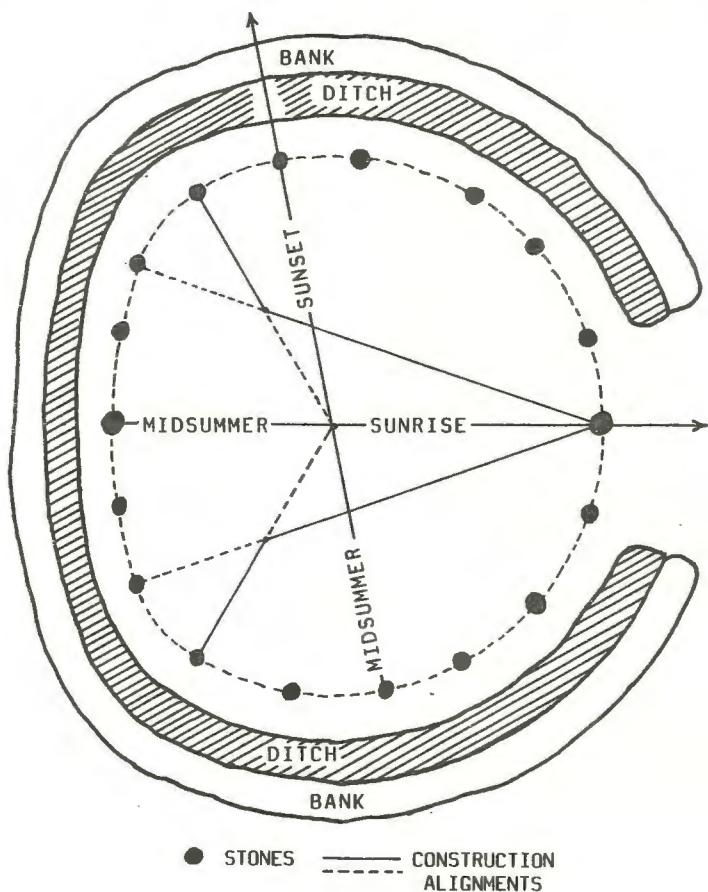


Written and illustrated by CHRIS TURNER

During last summer (1980) I designed and built a sun-aligned Bronze Age pattern enclosed stone circle. It is of a shape detected by Prof A Thom and classified by him as Type A Flattened Circle. The site is a spur of the Cambrian Mountains known as Pantygarreg, OS ref SN 665547.

The scheme started when I was lent a book because "You're interested in this sort of stuff". This tome claimed that Stonehenge etc was built by the Egyptians (this time) using fourth millennium BC pyramid techniques with sixth century BC Greek maths with funeral pyre smoke to stop the sun getting in your eyes when sighting alignments. After I stopped twitching, I resolved to show to my satisfaction that a classic Bronze Age circle could be laid out without recourse to anything other than could be safely assumed to have been available to contemporary British society. I laid down guidelines for myself which excluded the use of Greek maths, any form of writing or annotation, any system of storage and retrieval of information and any gratuitous help from the inhabitants of Sirius IV.

As an initial base, I took Prof Thom's elegant constructions of Stone Circle types and set myself to reproduce these shapes exactly using nothing other than ropes, wooden pegs and bits and pieces lying around in the field such as sticks, leaves, pebbles etc. In practice, I found that there is no known Megalithic shape that can-



not be exactly constructed by these methods using considerably less operations than Prof Thom (who, of necessity, uses Euclidian geometry in his constructions) and consequently less opportunity for error. Using the most rudimentary of techniques, the full scale constructions have an elegance and simplicity which is breathtaking.

The next step was to find someone who happened to have an odd half acre lying around that they wouldn't mind having a stone circle erected upon. The offer came within a week from neighbours who had what they called their "Magic Hillside" where they had always wanted a circle but didn't know how to build one and please would I build one for them. The site, on a spur of mountain, is superb, with good sharp horizons, soil which has never been tilled and an unobstructed view across the costal plain of Mid Wales. Best of all, I was given carte blanche to do what I wanted without reference. What more could a Pendragon ask?

The site was plotted out with the help of two friends from the village. Between us, we laid out the ground plan, struck the alignments and marked the positions of the stones and ditch. The basic dimensions we laid out were a circle approximately 50ft in diameter with a ditch 8ft outside this. By the time the ditch had been dug to a width of two feet and a depth of 8 inches and the spoil piled outside and turfed to form the bank, the overall width of the complex was 80ft. The ditch itself is 200ft long and even though the proportions are modest, it required the excavation of 9 cubic yards of earth. The measurements were defined only after the circle was completed. The original layout used no unit of length, Megalithic or otherwise.

Having plotted the site, it then only required a few days fine weather to complete the actual physical construction with a team of volunteer labour from the village. The weather was consistently against us--constant rain interrupted only by the odd shower. Towards the middle of July, there was promise of a short break in the weather so I dashed round everyone I could think of with an invitation to help on site. Interest was universal, but most had commitments of one sort or another for the week-end and on Saturday we mustered only about a dozen helpers, including five children ranging in age from thirteen down to five. Even with such meagre resources, we dragged sixteen stones from an old quarry 150ft down-hill from the site and dug the pits to receive them by lunchtime. By three in the afternoon, all the stones had been set in place and work had already started on cutting the surrounding ditch and bank. By the time we left in early evening, the ditch was nearly a third completed.

Once again, rain became the enemy and only a few hours were possible on Sunday. The ditch-and-bank was proving to be a daunting project and the end of the day still left half the feature untouched. It was not finally completed for another three weeks, most of which was spent wondering if the rain was going to stop long enough to do anything before it started again. At last, we had a day of scattered showers and six of us made a last push on the final twenty yards and the project was eventually finished at tea-time.

For those involved, the work was very much a social event. Most

textbook illustrations of henge construction show workforce gangs of adult male hairy trogs with little evidence of women and no sign of children at all. At no time did we muster more than four adult males, the remainder being women and children. The amount of constructive effort put in by all members of the team was astonishing and my estimated schedule was cut by a third on the children's work alone. The women, of course, handled much heavier work more ably than a man would expect. There was a useful place for everyone and the work progressed the more smoothly for being a family (and by extension, tribal) effort.

A notable aspect of the project was the enthusiasm generated right from the start in the idea of building a stone circle amongst people who knew next to nothing about archaeology and who couldn't tell a fougou from a hole in the ground. I had the distinct impression that any other project, such as Saxon husbandry, would have met with considerable apathy. The immediate interest in the project seems attributable to the fact that, for reasons which are not very clear, the concept of the Megalithic Stone Circle is rooted more deeply in the imagination than any type of historical monument.

The most unexpected result of the Pantygarreg project can probably be best summed up in the awful phrase "psychic spin-off". Over the years, I have taught myself not to dismiss observable phenomena just because they may be incompatible with my own preconceptions. When I noticed a shift in my own reactions to the circle and slightly odd behaviour in people working on site, I tried to observe as objectively as possible and leave any attempt at interpretation to a later date. A number of people in the team, myself included, noticed an unprompted compulsion to perform certain actions which can only be described as ritualistic. These included depositing a current coin and personalised items under the alignment stone which was itself kept back until last by common consent, private pouring of the last of the celebration bottle over the stones, touching the alignment stone on entering and leaving the enclosure, and so on. These actions were noted in several team members, visitors and children, and were often performed when no one else seemed to be watching. When asked the reasons for their behaviour, the only reason volunteered was that they just felt it was important and could give no rational explanation.

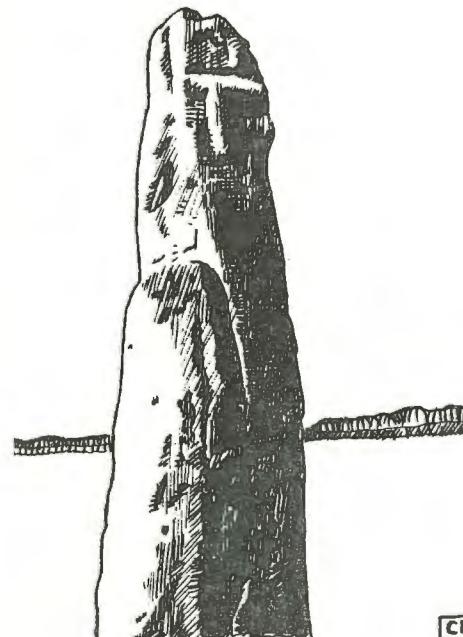
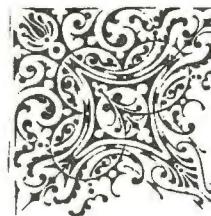
It is not possible to give details of the construction and design within the scope of a short article. I have kept full notes and the amount of material gleaned from this exercise is currently being collated into book form (potential publishers please note). It just remains to point out that whatever impact a visit to a stone circle may have, it is nothing compared to the effect of building your own.

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ANDRÉ DE MANDACH

The long stone blessed by St Samson

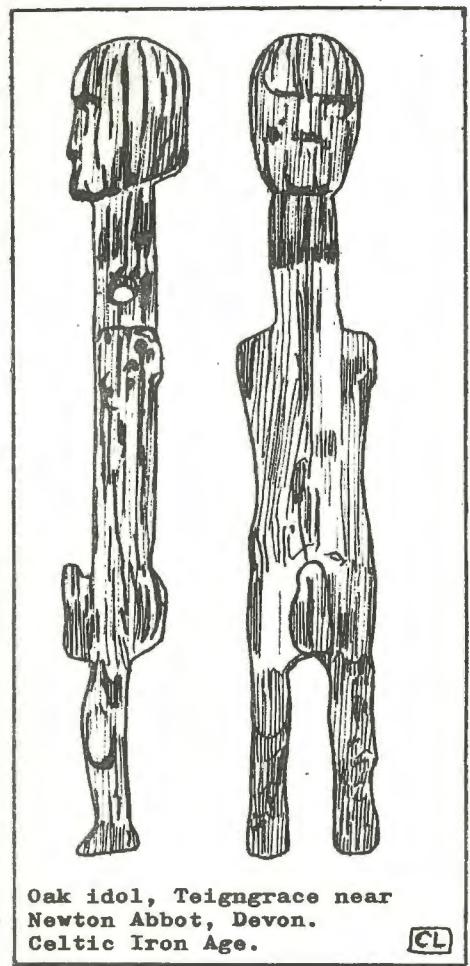


When Saint Samson arrived in Cornwall, some time after his consecration as a bishop by Saint Dyfrig/Dubricius in south-eastern Wales, he dispersed dancing crowds around a standing stone and blessed the monolith, carving out of it a cross in order to exemplify its new, Christian meaning.

Saint Samson lived for a while in the Padstow area where the ruins of a chapel remind us of his passage, as well as in St Kew on the right bank of the R Camel. Among the conversions he achieved one is described in detail: Samson dwelt at the time in the region later called Tricurium, ie Petrucorium, the tract of his fellow missionary Saint Petrock whose centres of activities spread over central Cornwall.¹ In the late Middle Ages Cornwall was divided into hundreds, one of them being the Hundreds of Trigg, extending from the Padstow district of the north coast to Lostwithiel on the river Fowey, only three miles from Castle Dore crossroads. So it would be misleading to conclude from this late development that the boundaries of the Trigg/Tricurium area were the same as in c 600 when The Life of Saint Samson was written.

Saint Samson came upon the subjects of one count Gwedian. He converted those persons who were celebrating heathen rites about an idol on a standing stone; this idol is called idolum in the Latin text, and it is described as an abominable image, simulacrum abominabile. When Samson achieved their conversion they ashamedly smashed the idol into pieces ('idolum penitus destruxerunt') and the holy missionary took a piece of iron and carved out of the remaining standing stone the sign of the cross ('signumque crucis quod sanctus Samson sua manu cum quodam ferro in lapide stante sculpsit...'). Thus the pagan standing monolith, centre

point of roaring bacchanals, became a holy stone.



Oak idol, Teigngrace near Newton Abbot, Devon.
Celtic Iron Age.

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The open question is where this incident occurred. Several Cornish antiquarians have offered suggestions. Doble, in The Saints of Cornwall, discusses some of the presumptive sites, but none sounds convincing, as Mr Frederick Pedler points out. "It was in the 'pagum quem Tricurium vocant,' and Taylor equates this with the Hundreds of Trigg. It was at the top of the

hill ('vertice montis') in a forbidding region ('in sinistra parte'). Furthermore, it was in a place where a boy could drive a herd of horses at high speed ('nam puer quidem equos in cursu dirigens a quodam veloci equo ad terram cecedit') and it was by healing this boy after his fall (regarded as a miracle) that Samson converted the pagans."²

Nowadays boys drive herds of horses at high speed on Bodmin Moor every evening at sundown. In the sixth century many other areas were as unhampered by asphalt roads and hedges or stone fences.

What, one fancies, did Samson do after converting the pagans--including, perhaps, their count, Gwedian? No doubt he needed some place of worship to baptize them, a church where they could perform their Christian rites. Thus it is plausible to seek the standing stone bearing an ancient cross in the vicinity of an old chapel erected by Saint Samson. Now two such churches exist:

1 The church of St Samson in South Hill north-west of Callington and south of Launceston. Its standing monolith is to be found now in the churchyard--with four feet of the stone lying below ground. It is adorned with a XP monogram and the inscription CUMREGNI FILI MAUCI dating from the sixth/seventh centuries. This rock too was sanctified by a sign of Christ and used as a tombstone at the time of Saint Samson or later. The knotty point is that the sign does not represent a cross but a XP mark (Greek chi-rho).³

2 The alternative possibility consists of St Samson's church and cell or monastery in Golant situated one mile east of the Castle Dore crossroads.⁴ Orig-

inally the tract of land south of the Castle Dore crossroads was a peninsula--boats could reach St Blazey and Treessmill in the west, the Fowey fjord forming the eastern border. Today the peninsula is reduced to a southern part of its former area. According to James Gover, it was called Menebilly in 1582, a name which seems to go back to Menebilly, "Stone of the Colts" as Oliver Padel has suggested to me; on the authority of others (Norden, 1610-12) it might originate from Meneth-Beli, "The Hill of Beli".⁵ Both theories may fit here: the first refers to a standing stone connected in some way with young horses (and possibly with an event or miracle related to both the stone and the young, fast horses), the second concerns a hill where the the idol of Beli or Baal stood.

*
Another argument ought to be brought forward: Samson did not carve a XP sign out of the standing stone, but he chiselled a cross. Now crosses were not common in the early Christian centuries: "We can note here," writes Charles Thomas, "that the Cross, best known of the Christian symbols, was still viewed with some ambiguity as the manner of Christ's death and as an emblem of criminal execution--it did not become widely current in Ireland or Britain much before 600--and that in its place we find the chi-rho, a monogram of the first two (Greek) capital letters in Christos ('the Anointed One')."⁶

The archaic sign of the cross represents a T, a letter called in Greek tau. As Hencken points out, "the T-shaped cross representing the original instrument of crucifixion appears as early as the 2nd century in the catacombs of Rome and occurs in ivories as late as the 5th century,

while the more familiar equal-armed cross came into fashion during the 5th and 6th centuries. It is entirely natural, however, that the older form should linger a little longer in a rather backward Christian community in Cornwall."⁷ If Saint Samson carved out such a symbol c 525-30, he probably must have chiselled a tau cross.

Stupendously the only standing monolith in Britain showing a tau is the Tristan and Isolt Stone situated precisely in the area of the church founded by Saint Samson and built for the saint by his converts. The tau cross is actually carved out of the stone, an extremely rare feature in central Cornwall, even in the whole British Isles. No parallel case is known. Therefore it is not very bold to suggest that the stele with the sixth century inscription mentioned above, lying in the neighbourhood of the church of St Samson, might be the genuine monolith carved by Saint Samson.

NOTES

1 Joseph Loth in Revue Celtique 35, 1914, 295

Paul Grosjean "Vie et miracles de S Petroc" Analecta Bollandiana 74, 1956, 131-188 470-496

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2 Letter of F Pedler to C Bristow, Oct 26 1978, p2

3 Nikolaus Pevsner The Buildings of England: Cornwall 2nd ed rev by Enid Radcliffe, Penguin 1977, 214
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PERUVIAN CURRENT

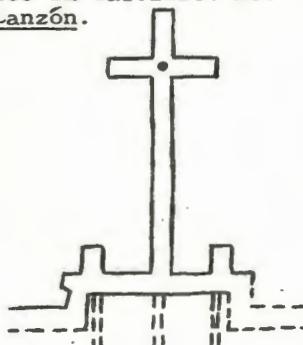
STEVEN BANKS

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Fig 1: Profile of head of Lanzón, granite monolith 15ft high embedded in stone floor and ceiling of Castillo of Chavín de Huantar.

Fig 2: Part of galleries in Castillo. Dot = Lanzón.



In "With Custer at Badon" (Vol XIV No 1) Chris Turner wrote of the North American Indians' "obsession with the symbol of the circle and its derivatives". I would omit the word "North" because on a recent visit to Peru it was evident to me that the South American Indians also recognized the importance of the circle. Archaeologists find that their earliest settlements, from about 10,000 BC, are centred about a sacred stone, or a pile of small stones, and the idea of clustering around and concentrating on a singularity (which may be an object or a person) goes right through to the Inca Empire. Its capital city of Cuzco centred on the Temple of the Sun, from which four roads radiated to the four divisions of the Empire: Chinchasuyu to the NW, Antisuyu to the NE, Collasuyu to the SE, and Contisuyu to the SW. The very centre of the Temple itself marked the place where Manco Capac, the First Inca, thrust his golden staff into the ground. Moreover every Inca was a single, all-powerful central figure about whom society was disposed in widening circles.

There is one monument of particular interest, the so-called (by the Spanish) Lanzón in the Castillo at Chavín de Huantar, on the crossing of the Andes crest road with a main highway between uplands and coast, in the state of Chavín which flourished 850-300 BC. The Lanzón stands at the intersection of the two principal passages in the Castillo, which are oriented on the cardinal points. It is a shaft of granite, with a step half way along its length, and just below the step is carved a mask in low relief (Fig 1). The ends of the shaft are solidly locked into the stones of the ceiling and floor, so it is not possible to see their shape, but judging from the lines of the exposed parts it looks as though the top might be square or rounded and the bottom pointed. The total length is about fifteen feet.

While in the country I did not visit the Castillo--it is not easily accessible--but I saw a full-scale model of the Lanzón and its setting in a Lima museum

So what is it? Clearly the shaft was erected and the building completed around it. It must surely mark the centre of the Chavín world: it looks as though it holds apart and connects heaven and earth. I think the fanged and snake-locked mask is only to warn "keep away": the Chavín god is impressive rather than scary. The Lanzón does not look to me like a weapon: it may be a digging stick, the implement used in ancient Peru to till the ground. This all seems to add up; it was thrust into the ground, and surrounded by a significantly planned and impressive building, in order to pull together the forces of nature at a central point under the control of man. This concept was important to the Peruvians, who saw time as spans of a thousand years, each ending in the breakdown of man's control, and a period of chaos. There are echoes here of the Etruscan's ten seculae, the Christian millennium, and The Cherry Orchard.

Implements are ceremoniously thrust into the ground by gods, demons or great men. Arthur was exceptional: he drew the sword from the stone. I wonder who put it in.

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4 Arthur Langdon Old Cornish Crosses Truro 1896
H O'Neill Hencken The Archaeology of Cornwall and Scilly Methuen, London 1932, 227
T F G and Henry Dexter Cornish Crosses, Christian and Pagan Longmans and Green, London & Toronto 1935, 166

5 James Gover The placenames of Cornwall (Typescript, Truro Museum)
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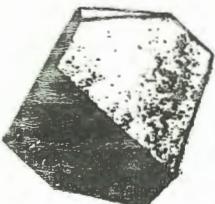
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6 Charles Thomas Britain and Ireland in Early Christian Times AD 400-800 Thames & Hudson, London 1971, 144p, 74 figs 53-56
T Taylor The Celtic Christianity of Cornwall 1916
M W Bartlet and R P C Hanson Christianity in Britain: 300-700 Leicester 1968

7 Hencken op cit 227

The Grail as stone

Reviews: CHRIS LOVEGROVE



Wolfram von Eschenbach Parzival translated by A T Hatto (Penguin 1980) £2.50
Colin Bloy Dowsing Ley Line Energies and the Search for the Grail (RILKO 1980)
Ingrid Nyborg-Fjellander The Inner Significance of the Grail Legend (enquiries to 5 Astreavägen, 5-181 31 LIDINGÖ, Sweden)

First, Mrs Nyborg-Fjellander's booklet. She is editor of the Swedish magazine Graal, and has been associated with several Arthurian-inspired movements in Sweden and America. There are a few inaccuracies in her text (eg "Cadbury an old castle was excavated which was proven to be identical to Camelot") but she rightly recognises the power of the Grail legends and their ability to survive and mould themselves to the aspirations of any age. One anecdote she gives is startling if its implications are correct: a certain "Major Tudor Pole had one small chalice from his forefathers which was said to have gone from father to son from King Arthur's time. He did not claim it was the Grail, but said it most probably was one of the small cups the Knights used at the ceremonies..."

LAPIS EXILIS

The idea of the Grail as a chalice dates back at least to Chrétien de Troyes' Li Contes del Gral of the later 12th century. His gral is of bejewelled gold, full of radiance, from the Old French greal or grasal meaning vessel, cup, bowl or basin. Now it's generally accepted that, early in the 13th century, Wolfram von Eschenbach got the main outline of his Parzival from Chrétien's story. Hatto's new translation is very welcome, another in a series of medieval Arthurian stories Penguin Books are slowly bringing out (will some enterprising publisher now produce a new translation of Chretien's unfinished account?). It succeeds the previous, now virtually unobtainable, translation by Mustard and Passage in the States in 1961, and includes recent research in Hatto's interesting and at times forthright notes. What is most striking among Wolfram's changes and developments is his concept of the Grail not as a chalice or receptacle but as a STONE.

It seems clear that Wolfram's command of French was very basic and that he had no idea what a gral was. Where did he get the idea that it could be a stone "of the purest kind"? Alchemy has been suggested: Wolfram's Grail is called lapsit exillis (ie lapis exilis, "a worthless stone"), a term used soon after as an alchemical term for the Philosopher's Stone which transmuted both matter and spirit into a purer state. We are also told that the phoenix, an alchemical symbol, rose again from ashes by the power of the Grail. But beyond these two references, there is little that is explicitly alchemical.

CULT OBJECT?

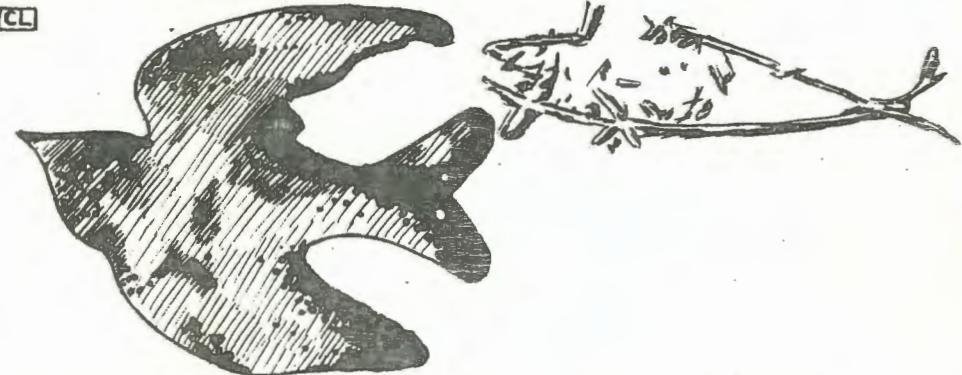
There is a possibility that Wolfram's Grail was a cult object. A hermit, Trevrisent, tells the hero Parzival in the 9th book or chapter that on Good Fridays a heaven-sent dove leaves a consecrated mass-wafer on the stone. The Grail-King, Anfortas, is sustained by this stone, and Parzival first discovers him as an angler or "sportsman".

Now, we are all used to the notion that the Templars and Cathars are irretrievably linked with the Grail. Wolfram's Grail Knights are templeise, conventionally translated as Templars, whose emblem is the turtledove, presumably the same dove that leaves the consecrated host. The links with the Cathars are re-iterated in a recent issue of the magazine Prediction:

"The night before Montségur capitulated...Aicart, Poitevin, Hugh and Alfaro...carried with them the most sacred treasure of the Cathars, and...making their escape into the surrounding mountains...concealed it in one of the innumerable caves of that region...near Tarascon-sur-Ariège..."

The suggestion was that this most sacred treasure was none other than the Grail, and that the Cathars with their piety were the models for the Grail Company. In support of this the symbol of the dove found at Ussat in Ariège (fig 1) and of the fish scratched on rock at Ornlac (fig 2) and illustrated in the Cathar MS Le Rituel de Lyon are put forward.

CL



Unfortunately both dove and fish were and still are orthodox Catholic symbols too, and the Ussat dove and the Ornlac fish are of unknown provenance. In any case, the vegetarian, peace-loving, sex-hating Cathars would find little to praise in Parzival, and even less in the Queste del Saint Graal which so elevated their enemies, the white-robed Cistercians. As to what the Cathar sacred treasure consisted of, we may probably never know, but it was not likely to be Wolfram's Grail, associated as it is with the consecrated wafer of Catholicism, and with Christ's Passion, and with the ancestry of nobility who entertained themselves with gratuitous violence.

However! We must now consider the experience of dowser Colin Bloy in the same mountains into which the Cathar treasure disappeared in 1244.

In 1976 Bloy set off for Andorra in the Pyrenees. Just before, he invited Bill Lewis, the well-known dowser, to "map-dowse" in his absence for the cave of the four fugitives from Montségur. Once in Andorra Bloy enquired for a cave in a valley near the village of Arinsal. This he duly visited, led there by a reference in a French publication. Subsequently a letter from Bill Lewis in Britain arrived, confirming that "The Grail of the last Cathars is in Arinsal". Encouraged by this but after considerable difficulty and more visits with caving and digging equipment Bloy, by dowsing, found an object: "It glinted in the sunlight. It fitted into my cupped hands, and within the centre in the form of a crystal was an equal armed cross." The next day (August 26th) the lower mountains were very unseasonably covered in snow deposited by the previous night's gale...

Now it is worth noting that Bloy, like Tudor Pole, does not claim to have found THE Grail, only that he may have found A Grail. He certainly feels that his stone is something special and that it has some extraordinary qualities. Whether it is connected with Cathars or Templars is another matter, and he does not appear to push this aspect too much. The equal-armed cross is claimed by some as a Cathar cross as it doesn't imply Christ's crucifixion (a doctrine repugnant to Cathars) but some authorities are sceptical concerning the many such crosses ascribed to Cathars in the south of France (eg Canon E Delaruelle, Professor of the Catholic Institute of Toulouse). As to whether it is the model for Wolfram's Grail, we shall have to consider the other qualities he ascribes to it.

SPECULUM?

Geoffrey Ashe championed the idea of the Grail as a scrying-glass or speculum, akin to fortune-tellers' crystal balls. According to Wolfram the names and lineages of those called to the Grail, both rich and poor, were on occasion seen inscribed around its edge. (This edge clearly limits the kind of shapes the Grail could be.) Edward Kelly, the seer for Elizabethan magus John Dee, viewed angelic words in a polished glass, and crystals, mirrors and still water have also been used throughout history. The final appearance of the Grail in Parzival is enigmatic, but invites speculation along these lines...

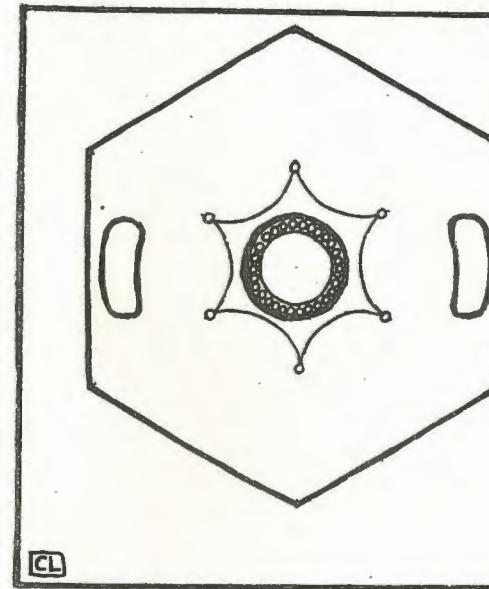
Parzival's heathen half-brother, Feirefiz, needs to become Christian in order to marry. He is led into the Temple and into the presence of the Grail. Before it is a font, of ruby, standing on a round, stepped pedestal of jasper:

"The font was tilted a little towards the Gral (sic) and it immediately filled with water, neither too hot nor too cold. An aged priest was standing there... 'We see by means of water...' As to seeing the Gral, until the holy water covered him he (Feirefiz) had been blind: but afterwards the Gral was unveiled to his vision. After this christening, writing was seen on the Gral..."

These quotations, although plucked from their context, are enough to show that Wolfram intended to establish a connection between his Grail and the visionary powers of the true Christian mystic. Feirefiz' conversion allowed him to view the Grail, perhaps a miracle or perhaps an engineered denouement, "done by mirrors" which permitted him to glimpse the Grail as a reflec-

tion in the font water. Such a trick is known to have been perpetrated in pagan mysteries. Maybe the Grail was expected to function in the same way?

In Genoa's Cathedral of San Lorenzo is il sacro catino, the Holy Bowl. Once believed to be of emerald, this hexagonal two-handled bowl of moulded dark green glass came as Crusader booty from Caesarea in 1101 and found its way to Genoa by 1147. By the 16th century it had attracted the usual legends: it was the Queen of Sheba's gift to Solomon, a eucharistic dish at the Last Supper, and Nicodemus used it to catch Christ's blood at the Crucifixion... Current opinion suggests it was manufactured in Syria-Palestine, or Asia-Minor, perhaps as early as the 1st century AD. As a bowl it has an edge, could be used for scrying, and imitates emerald, a precious stone. Wolfram's Grail is borne "upon a green achmardi" (a piece of silk material) which is certainly the closest we get to its colour.



CL

Restored design of Il Sacro Catino or Sacred Basin of 1st century Roman glass (?) in the Museum of the San Lorenzo treasury. Broken into ten pieces, one remains in the Louvre to where Napoleon took it for specialist examination in 1800. Tholos-shaped chambers built in 1956 by Franco Albini house it under the cathedral court.

ENERGY

But however we might explain, or explain away, some of its main characteristics--its religious associations, its links with nobility, its scrying possibilities--no single object or relic combines all these with its chief enigma. How can a stone, which we imagine as cold and lifeless, sustain and rejuvenate living things?

Its power is clearly due to the mass wafer, brought on Good Fridays by the dove--respectively symbols of redemption and spirit--but the power emanates from the stone itself. How does this come about?

We may care to recall St Peter's references to "living stone" (1 Peter, 2: 4-8). But Colin Bloy suggests another answer. In investigating worldwide energies which dowsers claim to detect, he and others have come to some conclusions. One of the essential conditions for the creation of activity within this worldwide energy system, he says, is "an act of elevated consciousness. The priest saying the Mass, the healer in the act of healing, the spiritualist medium in contact, the political leader deploying his will--all have something in common... An individual act of visualisation or willing, with a particular brain rhythm, may be able to lock itself into (this) system... and cause changes of events, individual circumstances, metal bending, apparitions, healing, telekinesis, group behavioural shifts, and so on. If it is not true, there is ample evidence that important people in history have believed it to be so..."

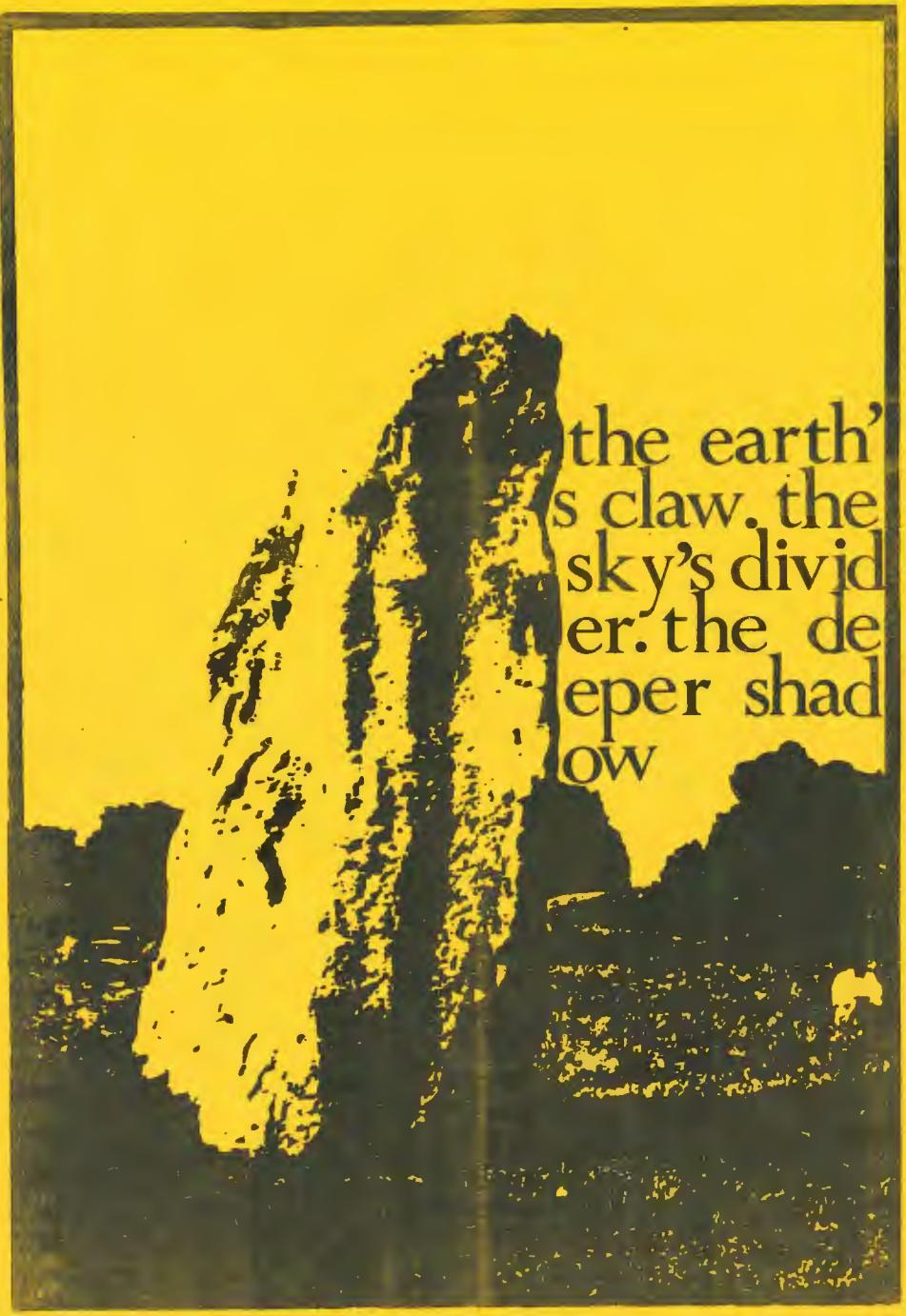
We may, if we like, believe that Wolfram's Grail was imagined as the focus for the spiritual and healing activities of the Grail Community at the Castle of Munsalvaesche. Parzival, having learned the essential Christian virtues--faith, hope, and especially compassion--may thus have been the long-awaited "elevated consciousness" required to restore Anfortas, the ailing Grail King, to health, and to succeed him in office.

And while this is not the whole answer to the vexed question of the Grail, it may be a pointer.

R M Twist The Sacred Stone Circles and Avenues of Cornwall and Western Europe (1962) Available from the author, Elwynick, St Anthony, Portscatho, TRURO TR2 5EY.

The Israelites celebrated Passover at Gilgal on the 10th Nisan, 1451 BC by erecting 12 stones and the author suggests that this reference has misled scientists into attributing the building of Stonehenge etc to roughly the same time. He believes the date of erection of many stone circles in W Europe to be much more recent and reveals that they are counting devices to establish the date of Easter. Many circles or avenues have 29-30 stones (the age in days of the moon), 12 (for counting months), 8 (for the eight-year cycle invented by Cleostratus in 500 BC to correlate the moon's movement around the earth and the earth around the sun), 19 (for the more accurate cycle inaugurated by Meton in 432 BC) and 76 (invented by Callippus in 330 BC and consisting of four Metonic cycles). Twist also lists British sites with these numbers of stones. He argues too that Stonehenge was originally built to an 84-year cycle in the early Christian era (hence the Q and R holes there), but was changed back to a Metonic cycle when the Celtic Church resorted to the Roman way of establishing Easter (hence the bluestone horseshoe). Why are most of the circles in the West and North of the British Isles? "Surely they were erected to train the bishops of the Celtic Church?" he suggests. An ingenious theory, but one which needs to take in other factors for dating megalithic monuments.





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