# Pendragon

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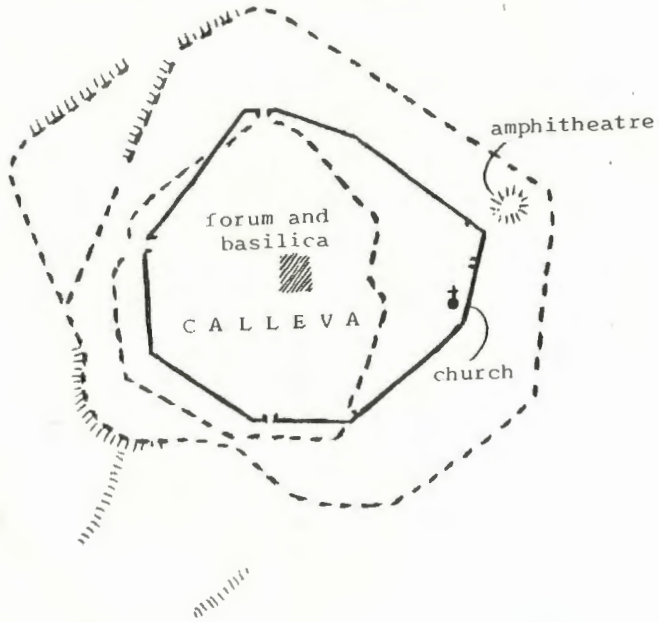
Illustrations The front cover design is based on a panel from the Banagher pillar in Ireland which André de Mandach suggests might be a portrait of Tristan. On the back cover is a probable portrait of Stilicho, the imperial general sent to Britain just before the fifth century to drive back the Irish; as Paul Karlsson Johnstone points out, his shield bears an icon of the Virgin and Child in the same way that Arthur's shield was said to have an icon of the Virgin.

SILCHESTER OUTING See page 28




# PENDRAGON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Editor Chris Lovegrove Production Roger Davie Webster, Kate Pollard, Adrian Vye Correspondence The Secretary, 27 Roslyn Road, 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.



# EDITORIAL

We all think we know what is meant by the Dark Ages. A few comments by Conor Cruise O'Brien might sum it up; in an article in The Observer (6.2.83) on the recent expulsion of Ghanaians from Nigeria he wrote
"The old unreconstructed right-side-up feelings of white racial superiority are still there, fed by much of the news from Africa. 'They can't get on without us. They have sunk into barbarism.' So Romans, 1500 years ago, must have shaken their heads at the tidings from post-imperial Britain. Roads all gone into pot-holes, baths in a filthy condition, hypocausts not maintained, people scrambling about all over the place, a proper mess. What else can you expect from barbarians, once you leave them to themselves?"

O'Brien's mockery of such attitudes highlights the difficulty of emotive terms such as Dark Ages, Barbarian Europe and so on in discussing the post-Roman period. For such reasons the Clwyd-based Dragon Society have been canvassing for a replacement epithet. Some suggestions have been: Age of Founding, Christian Heroic Era, Formative Years, Late Celtic British Age, Pre-Feudal Era, Settlement Period, Transitional Ages...

As W P Ker pointed out in 1904, "the Dark Ages and the Middle Ages used to be the same; two names for the same period... The Middle Age distinctly meant at first the time between ancient and modern civilisation". In time, "the long night of the Middle Ages" began to be confined to the period before 1100 as the new vernacular literature of the Age of Chivalry and Romance began to be appreciated. Now it seems to apply to a very limited era, as terms such as "The Lost Century" imply.

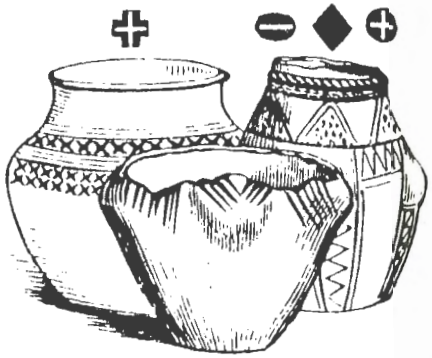
Historians and archaeologists have used alternatives, for example Post-Roman, Migration/Early Medieval, Early Christian, The Age of Arthur... So is it time to re-assess THE DARK AGES? Has this title outlived its usefulness? Write and let us know.

In the meantime, this issue examines the people involved in this much-debated period, starting with a beginner's guide to the 5th century, followed by studies of Arthur, Tristan and "Folco", continuing with the myth of the Merovingian Franks and concluding with Old News items. The exchange journals listing is being revised and will re-appear in an extended Noticeboard next issue. Next issue will be a readers' issue, plus reviews, Badon articles etc.

# A HISTORY OF THE FIFTH CENTURY IN BRITAIN I

Sam Brewster

Sixth-century Saxon urns from Kingston-on-Soar, Notts



INTRODUCTION

The interesting thing about the 5th century in Britain is that it was then that the Roman (or Classical) power was removed. The Celtic people of Britain revived and faced a new threat--the Germanic tribes called Anglo-Saxons and their introduction of an entirely new system which was feudalism. How did this country make out without the Romans?

In 407 the Roman army in Britain proclaimed one Constantine as emperor and he left Britain. Some believe that all the Roman legions left Britain with him, others that their pay simply ceased to arrive from Rome. In 410 the Roman Emperor Honorius told the Britons to look to their own defences.

There is evidence that, almost immediately on Roman withdrawal, local chieftains seized power in the less Romanized Highland Zone: Conan Meriadoc in Dumnonia (Devon and Cornwall) and Cunedda, who travelled from Manau Gododdin on the Firth of Forth to N Wales where he expelled the Irish and set up the kingdom of Gwynedd.

Also, in the Lowland Zone, a man called Coel (Roman: Coelius) probably became the DUX BRITANNIARUM (the Duke of the Britons) stationed in York, since many of the later northern kings were descended from him.

The other independent British kingdoms established from somewhere about this time onwards were Kent, Berneich, Deur, Elmet, Lothian, Strathclyde, Rheged, Powys, Dyfed and Gwent.

Gildas' "two returns" of the Romans I believe refer to



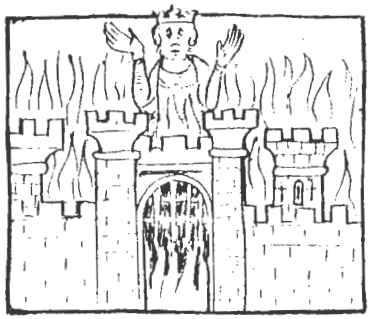
events earlier than 410.

VORTIGERN

From Roman times onwards there had been raids by the Anglo-Saxons on Britain. As for Anglo Saxon settlements, happily the archaeological evidence and the Welsh Annals agree on a date for this. The Annals say 428, and archaeology says c 430. The Annals state that at this time, Vortigern held rule in Britain. They also state that he came to power in 425. Who was this Vortigern?

Bede identified him with the man called the SUPERBUS TYRANNUS ("proud upstart") by Gildas --the name Vortigern means "supreme leader". According to Gildas, this leader advised at a council that the Anglo-Saxons should be invited to settle in this island to help to defend the Britons against the threat of the Picts in the North. Gildas has already said that the Picts and Scots (the latter from Ireland) had devasted the north of Britain as far as "the wall" (presumably Hadrian's), pulling the Britons off it with hooks. He then says that the Britons rallied and single-handed threw the Picts and Scots back, after which the Picts "for the first time" settled in the northernmost parts of Britain. It was the threat of their return that made the council under Vortigern invite the Anglo-Saxons to settle in parts of Britain.

This Vortigern would appear to be a very powerful person, practically a ruler over all Britain. A Roman document, the Notitia Dignitatum, describes various new officers in Britain presumably ruling in the last period of Roman control--and possibly later. The most important of these was the COMES BRITANNIARUM (the Count of the Britons). It is possible that

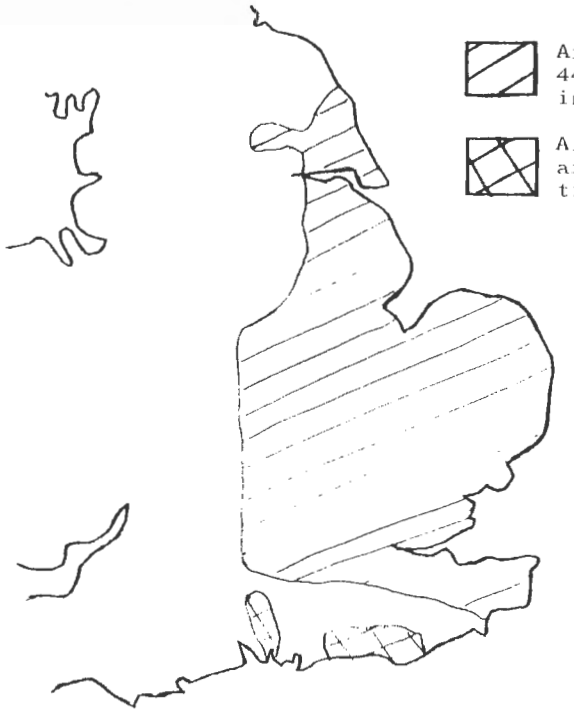


this post was held by Vortigern.

It is further possible that he had his HQ at Wroxeter (Roman: Viriconium) where a post-Roman WOODEN town has been discovered, built in classical forms yet in timber. The Roman town has a Celtic name, Caer Guricon, and it is sufficiently close to the Kingdom of Powys where Vortigern had some connexions (according to the inscription on the Eliseg Pillar) and also to the cantref named after him: Gwerthyrnion. From Caer Guricon Vortigern could easily have travelled down the old Roman Watling Street to Kent to meet with the Anglo-Saxons there.

Vortigern probably allowed the Anglo-Saxons some land in the eastern parts of Britain, as well as provisions (mentioned by Gildas--it is Bede who talks of granting land, Gildas who speaks of provisions. Bede also says that these Anglo-Saxons won a victory first against the Picts). If we trust Nennius at all Kent was granted by Vortigern to the Anglo-Saxons in exchange for marrying Hengist's daughter.

Whether this granted land covered the whole territory the Anglo-Saxons occupied by 470 is a moot point: this would include (excluding Sussex and Hampshire) all the territory



Area settled between 440 and 470 as well as in Arthur's time

Area not settled until after 470--ie in Arthur's time

Map showing areas settled by the Anglo-Saxons, based on maps by John Morris

east of longtitude $1^{o}$ 3'W as far north as the Trent (which becomes the westernmost boundary) plus land in the Yorkshire Wolds, possibly including York.

Some of this land may have been gained during the rebellion of the Anglo-Saxons against the Britons. It seems, however, that they remained within this boundary (except for the conquest of Sussex) until 500 and beyond, implying some sort of agreement between the two peoples. This is one of the damnable problems of this period: why, if the Anglo-Saxons had been halted from 470 to 500, was a battle in 500 supposed to have been the decisive one which prevented a further spread?

GERMANUS

During this period the Britons were mostly Christians. We know that the Pelagian heresy took quite a hold in Britain by 429 (it is possible that Vortigern himself was a Pelagian--hence his constant portrayal as a villain) for at that time Germanus was sent to this country to preach against Pelagianism.

The Pelagian so-called Heresy was the disbelief in Original Sin and the belief that one could become good by one's own efforts. Pelagius itself (meaning "Islander") is a Latinised form of his real name, which was probably Morgan or Muirchu, depending on whether he came from Britain or Ireland.

The first visit of Germanus (Bishop of Auxerre) to the island in 429 was only a year after Vortigern had invited the first Anglo-Saxons to settle. Before the rebellion of the Anglo-Saxons (as I have dated it--see below) Germanus found a



still well-ordered British society when he visited the shrine of St Alban. He met men "of tribunician power". He also led a battle against an alliance of Picts and Anglo-Saxons, his side winning peacefully by shouting "Alleluia!" (whereabouts this took place is not known).

His second visit was in 443 when the rebellion was under way. Yet he managed to meet Britons without harassment. Perhaps he entered the country via Sussex, avoiding Kent where the rebellion was.

BACKDATING

The Anglo-Saxons did rebel, but far from spreading all over Britain as Gildas describes, they gained no further land outside the section already described.

If we "backdate" the arrival of Hengist and Horsa (said to have been in 449 in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle) to 428 (the date given by the Welsh Annals), then we can "backdate" the beginning of the rebellion to 434. ("Backdating" is quite logical since the DATES could not have survived in oral tradition, only the PERIODS OF TIME between battles.)

If the ASC is to be believed at least one place where the rebellion started was Kent. In that year they fought Vortigern and captured Canterbury (described as "taking the Kingdom", Canterbury being the future capital of Kent). Horsa was killed in that year.

Backdating the dates in the ASC for the conquest of Kent, while NOT backdating those for the conquest of Sussex by Aelle and Cissa (which began therefore in 477) agrees very well with the archaeological evidence. One of the battles of Aelle and Cissa was at Andredes-cester (Pevensey) in 491 in which they slew all the Britons in the place.

Backdating the beginning of the ASC in this way also accords with other evidence, ie two Continental historians recorded 439 or 441-2 as the time when Britain was overwhelmed by the Anglo-Saxons. According to the backdated ASC the people of Kent, after a battle at Crayford, fled into London in 436.

HILLFORTS

The only statement we need to accept from Gildas for this period is that the Roman towns were empty where he was, somewhere in the west, when he wrote c 540.

The reasons for this emptying were not brutal attacks by the Anglo-Saxons, as he thought, but an economic and social breakdown. Coins ceased to be used, the part of Britain that was still British broke up into a number of kingdoms, and the pre-Roman hillforts in territories west of the Anglo-Saxons were re-occupied and re-fortified. (There is a line of forts along the south coast of the Firth of Forth, including Edinburgh, but this would have been part of the anti-Pictish campaign.) South and west, the hillforts were re-occupied, partly as a precautionary protection against the possibility of Anglo-Saxon advances west, partly as a changing pattern in society that was taking place anyway. This development was actually PREVENTED in those areas settled by the Anglo-Saxons.



TO BE CONTINUED

The next section looks at the later fifth century and its historical figures.

# ARTHUR & FAMILY

by C.EVANS-GUNTHER

A genealogical look at Arthur

## ARTHUR--THE NAME

According to historians Arthur was a great warrior who fought against the Saxons sometime during the late fifth and early sixth centuries. Little can be gleaned from these ancient sources except that he was not a man of noble birth, certainly not a king, and that he was a Christian battle leader.

In this article the writer intends to make use of and attempt to interpret material found in medieval genealogies. In these we are given a somewhat different picture of Arthur. But first let us look at the name.

Experts have for a long time tried to explain our hero's name and in recent years the Roman gens Artorius has been getting some support. However, the earliest records of the name Arthur can be found in the Gododdin, in Nennius where Arthur takes on a little more shape, and in the Annales Cambriae or Welsh Annals.

In the years following the date of his 'death', 537, the name Arthur became popular. There was an Arthur of Dalriada, one from Ireland, another who was called the son of Bicuir the Briton, and the son of Pedr great-grandson of Vortiporix of Demetia. The name then disappears and doesn't return until after the Norman Arthurian 'chronicles'.

It is interesting to find in the genealogies a number of names with the element Arth-. In the Welsh language arth means bear, and in Old Celtic and Irish art is similar, as in Artogenus, 'son of a bear'. Among the above-mentioned names are:

| | |
|---|---|
| Arth | Arthfoddw |
| Arthafad | Arthgal |
| Arthafal | Arthlwys |
| Arthanad | Arthwg |
| Arthen | Arthwys |
| Arthfael | |

Most of these names seem to consist of two parts. Take for example Arthlwys: arth, bear + glwys, comely (or llwys, clear, holy) making 'Comely or Holy Bear'. Other names could mean: Little Bear, Iron Bear, Apple Bear, Bearish and straight Bear Animal connected names are not unusual or uncommon; there is March (Horse), Bran (Raven), Eidion (Ox) and Madog (Fox). So it is possible that the name Arthur is in fact Celtic and could mean 'Pure Bear'.

Having discussed the name of Arthur now let us look for his relatives, of which some can be found in the Mabinogi and others in the genealogies.

## THE MABINOGI

In the Mabinogi a number of relations can be extracted from that long list of heroes in the "Tale of Culhwch and Olwen":

> The sons of Iaen are called "men of Caer Dathal, kindred of Arthur's father".
> And then there is Gormant son of Rhicca, called "brother to Arthur on his mother's side";
> Llygadnudd Emys,
> Gwyrfoddw Hen,
> Gweir Gwrhyd Ennwir and
> Gweir Paladyr Hir, all uncles of Arthur, his "mother's brothers".

Amongst these heroes can also be found a son of Arthur called Gwydre (in Nennius Arthur is said to have had two other sons called Llachau and Amir).

The list mentions three other important Arthurian characters: Gwenhwyfar and the brothers Gwalchmai and Gwalhafed sons of Gwyar. Gwenhwyfar (The White



Phantom) daughter of Gogyrfan Gawr (there is a Caer Ogyrfan near Oswestry) is called the wife of Arthur. Gwalchmai son of Gwyar is said to be Arthur's nephew, "his sister's son, and first cousin", and Gwalhafed his brother (whom some scholars have linked with Galahad son of Lancelot. Gwalchmai can mean 'Hawk of May-Battle or of the Plain", and Gwalhafed could be 'Hawk of Summer'.

## THE GENEALOGIES

Now let us consider the genealogies which have come down to us in the form of the Bonedd y Saint (Pedigree of the Saints), the Bonedd yr Arwyr (Pedigree of the Heroes) and the Mostyn and Jesus College manuscripts. We must be forewarned however that these may have been influenced by the History of the Kings of Britain by Geoffrey of Monmouth.

MOSTYN MS 117 (m = son of):

> Arthur m Uthyr m Kustenin m Kynvawr m Tutwal m Morvawr m Eudaf m Kadwr m Kynon m Karadawc m Bran m Llyr Lledieth.

It must be pointed out here that the latter part of the list is out of order: Eudaf should come after Kynon and before Karadawc.

BONEDD YR ARWYR (v = son of):

> Arthur v Uther v Kustennin vendiget v Kynor v Tutwal v Turmwr Morvawr v Karadawc v Bran v Llyr Lledeith.

Here a number of characters have been left out, but in another family tree we have (ap = son of):

> Arthur ap Uthyr ap Kustennin ap Kynnfor ap Tudwal ap Morvawr ap Kadien ap Kynan ap Karadawc ap Bran ap Lledeith.

Once again a character is missing: Eudaf son of Karadawc.

In another genealogy to be found in the same manuscript is (verch = daughter of):

> Eigr verch Amlawdd ap Kynwal ap Ffrwdwr ap Gwrfawr ap Kad... ap Kynan ap Eudaf ap Bran ap Llyr a (= and) Gwen verch Cunedda.

JESUS COLLEGE MS 20

In this manuscript, another character from the Mabinogi, Geraint, seems to be related to Arthur:

> Geraint m Erbin m Kynvawr m Tudvawl m Gwrwawr m Gadeon m Kynan m Eudaf Hen ...

Kustennin is missed out of the above list but not in the following from the Pedigree of Saints:

BONEDD Y SAINT

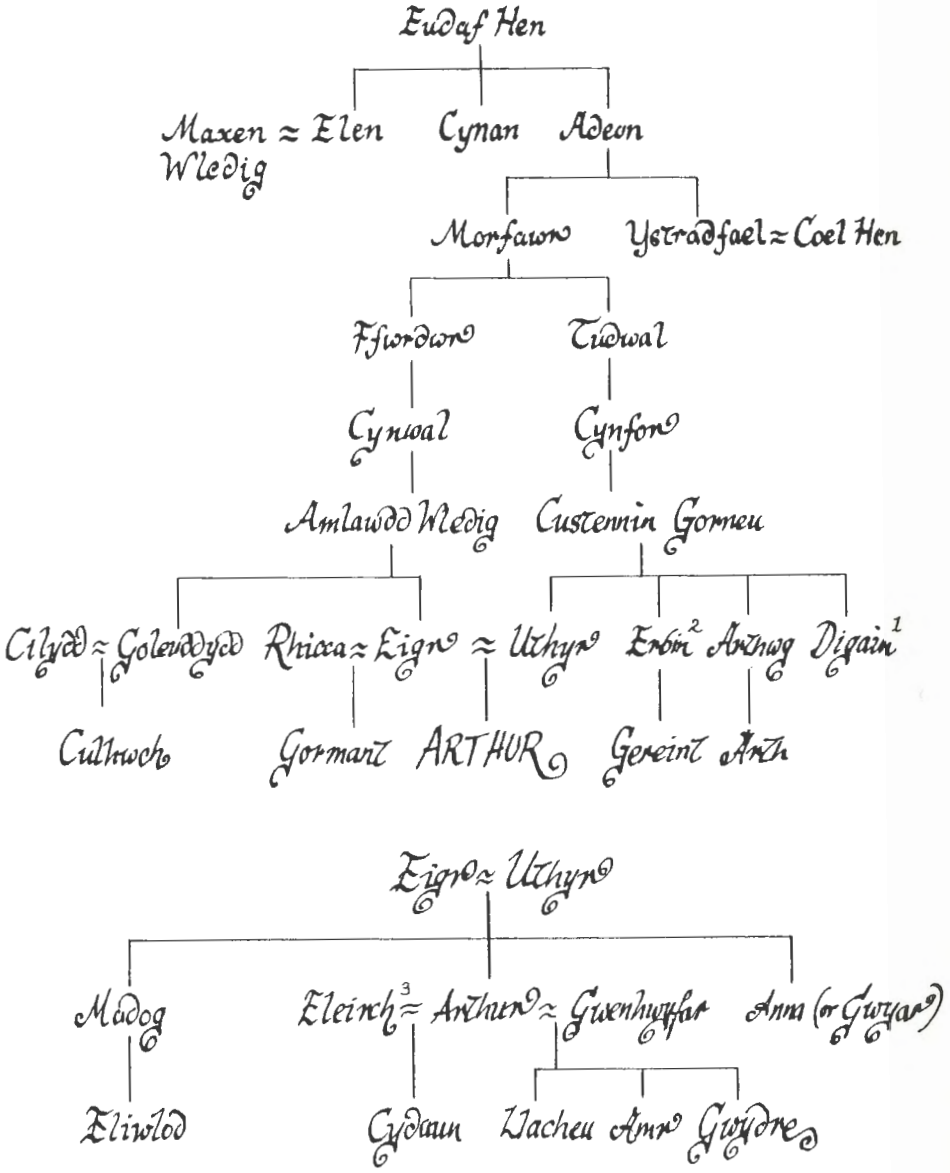
> Kynyr ac Iestin a Cattw a Selyf meibion (= sons of) Gereint ap Erbin ap Kustenin Gornau ap Kynvor ap Tutwal ap Kurmwr (Morvawr ennw arall: other name) ap Caden ap Kynan ap Eudaf ... etc.

## THE CHILDREN OF EUDAF

Two families seem here to be linked, Uthyr and Erbin both being the sons of Kustennin. However, some discrepancies may exist, especially with the children of Eudaf.[a] In the "Dream of Maxen Wledig" Eudaf is said to have three children: Elen, Cynan and Adeon or Gadeon. Rachel Bromwich points out that Gadeon may really be 'ag Adeon' as in 'Cynan ag Adeon meibion Eudaf' (Cynan and Adeon sons of Eudaf), and that then Caden, Kadwr, Kadien and Gadeon are in fact Adeon BROTHER of Cynan and NOT his son. If this is correct then Arthur is descended from Eudaf by way of Adeon (and not Geoffrey's King of Brittany, Cynan called Conan Meriadoc).

Though the story of Maxen is fanciful, it is based on Magnus Maximus, the Spanish Roman general declared emperor around

## The Family Tree of Arthur.






383 AD who had served in Britain since 368. Many stories are based on fact and Cynan and Adeon could have served with Magnus in Europe, and Cynan could have stayed in Brittany while his brother chose to return to N Wales. (On his return he probably found his parents dead and the land in flames from the Irish invaders.

So let us now look at the family tree of Arthur (see figure). Llyr and Bran are men from an earlier time, while the confusion may have arisen from Bran's son and Eudaf's father having the same name Caradawc. Eudaf and children are from the "Dream of Maxen Wledig" while Morfawr and Cynfor do not seem to show up anywhere else. Tudwal does bear the same name as a Breton saint, but he lived in the sixth century after the time of Arthur. Of the remaining ancestors of Arthur, Custennin and Uthyr pose some interesting problems which need to be looked at in more detail.

### CONSTANTINE

Custennin has the epithet of 'Gorneu' and this could be either the name of a place or a mispelling of Goreu, 'Best'. Corneu, like the later Cernyw, in the Middle Ages represented Cornwall, but it may have denoted another place originally. When the Saxons first came in contact with the people of Cornwall they called them the West Welsh or the 'Cornwealas'. Cornwall remained untouched by the Saxons until the 10th century when King Huwal of West Wales submitted to them in 926 after his land was invaded. The elements of the name Cornwall are 'corn' + 'wealh', the latter meaning the Welsh ('foreigners'). Orthographers do not seem agreed on what 'corn' means, while in Welsh it means a horn, in Anglo-Saxon it means a grain or simply corn.

In Roman times a people with a similar name to Cornish did exist: the Cornovii. These folk lived in the Midlands and may still have been living there during Arthur's time. While the Romans occupied Britain Cornwall and Devon were said to be the land of the Dumnonii, not the Cornovii, and Gildas calls the king of Devon and Cornwall Constantine of Dumnonia. It is possible, therefore that Gorneu originally represented not Cornwall but the land of the Cornovii, and that Arthur's ancestors were living in the Midlands.

Custennin may have, however, been an invention based on the great emperor Constantine, or Constantine the Usurper, or even the Constantine mentioned by Gildas. The same is true of Uthyr who could also have been a fabrication.

### UTHER PENDRAGON

In John Parry's article "Geoffrey of Monmouth and the Paternity of Arthur" he points out that Uthyr could be an appellation and not a proper name since 'uthr' means 'terrible', suggesting that Arthur mab Uthyr could actually mean Arthur the terrible son. But in the "Dialoque of Arthur and the Eagle" Eliwlod ap Madawc son of Uthyr can be found. There is also a Mabon son of Madron 'gwas Uthyr pendragon', which could either be 'Mabon the servant of the terrible warlord' or 'Mabon servant of Uthyr the Warlord'. So we are left with a bit of a mystery since Arthur's father is mentioned in the Mabinogi but never by name.

A different picture is painted by the genealogies but some of the names did survive to be used by medieval chroniclers--Gwenhwyfar became Guinevere,

Gwalchmai turned into Gawain, Uthyr (pronounced Ithyr) grew into Uther and Eigr became Igraine. Of course the above genealogies could be fakes created by storytellers or men like Iolo Morgannwg.b These lists cry out for serious study but until then the history of the real Arthur is shrouded in the mists of time, left in the shadow of the later Arthur of the Romances.

NOTES TO THE TEXT

a. In the Mabinogi Segontium (modern Caernarfon) is indicated to be the home of Eudaf.

b. Iolo Morgannwg's real name was Edward Williams, and it is believed that he is responsible for the forging of a number of poems credited to the medieval poet Dafydd ap Gwilym.

NOTES TO THE FAMILY TREE

1. St Digain had a church at Llangernyw, 'Holy place of the Cornovii' in Clwyd.
2. Erbin's name is found at Erbistock, 'Erbin's stockade' in Clwyd.
3. Elierch daughter of Iaen of Caer Dathal is called 'mam Cydaun ap Arthur'.

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REVIEW

Randoll Coate & Adrian Fisher
A Celebration of Mazes
Minotaur Designs 1982
28pp illus

£1.00 from Adrian Fisher, Minotaur Designs, 40 Whitecroft, St Alban's, Herts AL1 1UU (includes p & p in W Europe)

This is a 28 page illustrated booklet in the same format as Pendragon which comprises a basic guide for maze beginners. Its contents include a potted history of mazes with short sections devoted to the Cretan, the medieval Christian, and the comparatively recent puzzle hedge mazes--with a concluding section on the symbolic mazes designed by the writers of the booklet. A comprehensive list of British public mazes in good condition (from their Minotaur World Maze List), bibliography and glossary are included in this little book which was printed by our own printer Roger Webster.

KATE POLLARD



# THE BANAGHER PILLAR

## A de Mandach

Among Celtic works of art undoubtedly the most curious is the pillar from Banagher on the Shannon, in County Offaly, Ireland. In 1870 it was transferred to the great abbey of Clon macnoise (the name of which recalls the Tristan-like tale of Noise and Deirdre)[1] and since 1929 it has been in Dublin at the National Museum of Ireland. T L Cooke, M Keane, J Graves, J Romilly Allen, H S Crawford, R A S Macalister, A W Clapham and especially Françoise Henry have all described it in detail --but not one of these scholars has offered an explanatory hypothesis. The pillar suggests a story--told in five scenes.[2]

Fig 3
Scene 1: Tristan (?) killing the dragon

The front face of the monolith is divided into three scenes, separated by two mouldings: on the first a loathly dragon, open-mouthed, displays an endless, sinuous tongue; below, a horseman carries a crook or "crozier" in his left hand and a kind of bag in his right. His single, long plait is out of keeping. He wears no head-gear at all.

Does this figure not represent Tristan in the course of despatching the dragon in the forests of Ireland, perhaps not far from the river Shannon and Banagher? He is preparing to cut out the monster's poisonous tongue before carrying away this proof of victory in his game-bag! In fact this token will be of use to him on his return to the royal castle when the steward shows Isolt the dragon's head as proof of his own triumph over the beast. Then Tristan will produce the severed tongue from his bag, and its presence will testify that the monster's mouth is lacking a tongue.

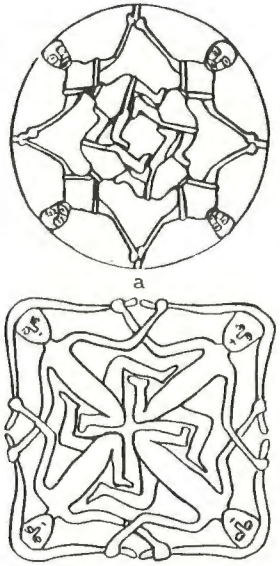
The second scene presents a majestic hart in a trap. Surely this recalls Tristan's arrival in Cornwall, the hart's capture by the hunters near the river, and the hero's demonstration of the "refined" method of flaying according to the Tristramssaga and Gottfried. The saga in particular provides the details--but the exact manner of taking the hart is not explained. Bédier thinks "it seems, reading the Saga, that it is the hounds which have brought it down," and transcribes it as: "Now the hunters, having secured the hart, got ready to quarter it like a pig." In reality, the texts remain sibylline on the manner of securing the hart.[3]

In the third scene appear two groups of two intertwined figures forming a cross as they obey some subtle geometrical laws (fig 1c). One of the figures is presented full-face with two plaits, shall we say, and thick eyebrows. The other is seen in profile, eyebrowless, and his hair is visible as separate plaits.

Perhaps it's not a question of plaits as such but of a symbolic representation of narrow bonds between two men, or two aspects of one man alone. "In a scheme of polygons and intertwined squares," writes Françoise Henry, "the legs, arms and hair of four figures order themselves and interlace." She adds that this composition is met with again in the neighbouring, contemporary Kilcullen cross (fig 1b) AND CAN BE TRACED BACK TO A LITTLE-KNOWN ORIENTAL MOTIF, a striking example of which is offered by an Iranian bronze (fig 1a): "But what was, in Persia, only juxtaposed," she continues, "in Ireland, is combined, and a web of arms and legs binds the four figures one with another."[4]

Fig 4
Scene 2: The capture of the hart

BELOW Fig 1
Four decorative panels from Iran and Ireland juxtaposed by Françoise Henry
a. Bronze from Luristan, ancient western Iran
b. Panel from Old Kilcullen Cross, Kildare, Ireland



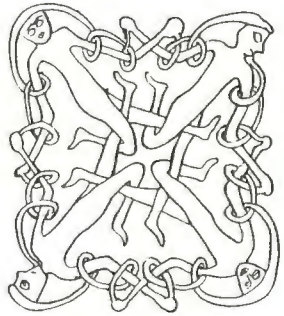


In 1965, Françoise Henry stated her ideas precisely, declaring that Eastern or Byzantine silver dishes could have played the part of intermediaries between oriental art proper and native Irish sculpture,[5] The interpretation of this scene causes problems. Is it a matter of a symbol of intertwined relationships between men, or between two men? No-one knows.

The fourth scene, on the back of the pillar, presents a dog barking with joy, holding a large bone between well-set teeth. May we not identify it with "Husdent", the pleasant pet dog of Tristan and Isolt, who shows his fine teeth as a reminder of his name "Husdent", meaning Good Teeth? (Fig 2)

The fifth scene represents a character similar to the dragon slayer from scene one above, with his single very long plait curled up at the end, in hand-to-hand combat with a warrior who is bearded (and so, perhaps older). The latter wears important head-gear, symbolic of a high-ranking personage. Can this be taken as the struggle of the dragon-slayer (Tristan) with the Morholt, a man of mature years, great Irish military chief and the King of Ireland's own brother-in-law? Thus, at beginning and end of the sculptured tale we find a scene directly related to Ireland.

Following our interpretation, the dragon-slayer is not a bishop, as Cooke held in 1853.[6] As for the dragon's tongue, the game-bag, the capture of the hart, the dog showing his dazzling fangs and the combatants wrestling hand-to-hand, no other tale relates them better than Tristan and Isolt. Let us note that the fashion of wearing the plait, very rare in the



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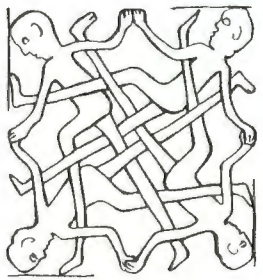

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c. Panel from the Banagher pillar, Offaly, Ireland

Scene 3: Two groups of two interlaced figures
d. Panel from the northern cross at Ahenny, Tipperary, Ireland

Fig 2
Scene 4: The dog with good teeth (Husdent?)

Celtic world, finds its parallel in the hair-do of the enemy barons killed by Tristan.

Now, as Françoise Henry says, THIS PILLAR IS UNIQUE IN THE WEST. Above all, IT DATES FROM THE EIGHTH CENTURY.

Finally, it falls to scholars, and in the first place to M Charles Foulon to whom we present this humble tribute, to judge if this Banagher pillar deserves the interpretation which we have given it.



First published in "Mélanges de langue et litterature français du moyen age et de la Renaissance offerts à Charles Foulon" (Marche Romane, Liège 1981 177-183). Trans C Lovegrove.

Fig 5a
Panel of knots, Banagher pillar

Fig 5b
The wrestlers in hand-to-hand combat

NOTES

1. A de Mandach, "Aux portes de Lantŷen en Cornouailles: une tombe du VIe siècle portant le nom de Tristan" and "Aux portes de Lantŷen en Cornouailles: une tombe du VIe siècle portant, outre le nom de Tristan, celui d'Iseut", Le Moyen Age 78, 1972 pp 227-242 and 81, 1975, pp 3-35, especially pp 3-20.

2. Bibliography: Eric H L Sexton, A Descriptive and Bibliographical List of Irish Figure Sculptures of the Early Christian Period, Portland, Maine, 1946, pp 65-66; Françoise Henry La sculpture irlandaise pendant les douze premiers siècles de l'ère chrétienne, Paris, 1933 (Thèse principale du doctorat d'État, Sorbonne), I. Texte, 238 P, 145 fig; II. Planches, 171 pl, pp 53, 66, 85, 97-98, 117, 123, 138, 165, pl 38-39, fig 19, 45, 60; Idem Irish Art in the Early Christian Period (to 800 AD), London-Ithaca-New York, 1965, XVI-256 p, 3 maps, 34 fig, 112 plates, 14 in colour, VIII documentary plates, pp 100, 144n, 145, 146, 199, pl



92-94. Cf original French editions, photo: Pierre Belzeaux, Coll: Zodiaque, La nuit des temps, nº 18, Abbaye Sainte Marie de la Pierre qui Vire, Saint Léger Vauban (Yonne): under the title "L'Art Irlandais", 1963.

3. Joseph Bédier, Le Roman de Tristan et Iseut selon Thomas, Paris 1902-1905, SATF, I, p 43 and n 1; Alfrun Gunnlaugsdottir Tristan en el Norte [Spanish translation of the Norse "Tristamssaga", with commentary and study; thesis for the University of Barcelona, under the guidance of Martin de Riquer and Paul Aebischer], Reykjavik, 1978 (Stofnun Árna Magnússonar á Íslandi, Rit 17), 45.

4. Françoise Henry, La sculpture, op cit, p 85 and fig 45a and c (fig 1 here); cf A de Mandach, "Legend and Reality: Recent excavations and research in Cornwall concerning Tristan and Isolt", Tristania, IV, 1, May 1979, introduction.

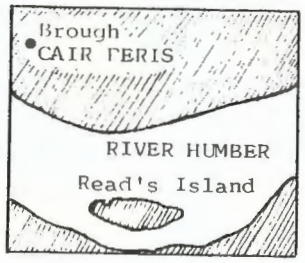
5. Françoise Henry, Irish Art, op cit, p 145; A de Mandach, "Les liens entre Wîs et Râmîn et Tristan et Iseut: la clef de l'énigme?", XIIe Congrès International Arthurien, Regensburg, 7-15 août 1979, communication du 10 août; A de Mandach, Tristan and Isolt: Legend and Reality. Orient and Occident, ch 1-4 (in preparation).

6. The dragonslayer's implement is one designed to kill the dragon, a kind of "failsafe" boomerang, or a staff (according to Françoise Henry). On the above-mentioned Old Kilcullen Cross (Co Kildare) preserved in the National Museum of Ireland in Dublin, one finds a warrior equally bereft of head-gear, also holding a "staff" (?) in his left hand; in his right he holds an axe, the point of which is placed above the head of a man lying on the ground (the victim). Whatever Cooke, among others, may have said of it in 1854, the "staff" seems incapable of being interpreted as a crozier. If it's a matter of a bishop--eg St Samson killing the dragon--he would in all likelihood be wearing a mitre. Cf the related cross of Ahenny (= the Vale of Fire) and the slab at St Andrews in Scotland, in F Henry, La sculpture, op cit, fig 102a; p 199; fig 132. On St Samson in Cornwall and Tristan: A de Mandach "The shrinking tombstone of Tristan and Isolt", Journal of Medieval History, 4, 1978, pp 227-242; Dennis Johnson, "The true romance between Tristan and Isolde", The Guardian, July 19, 1978.

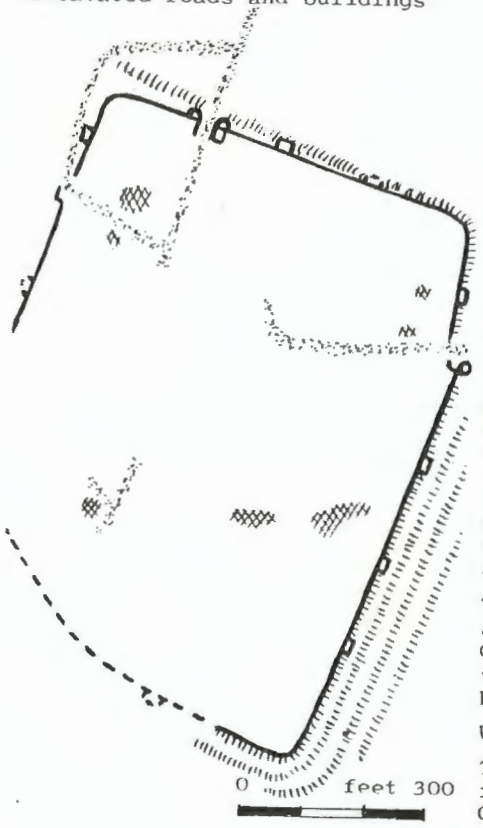
Fig 6
Carved panel, Old Kilcullen Cross, Kildare, Ireland

# FOLCA OF PARIS

## P K JOHNSTONE




Brough-on-Humber
Late 3rd/4th cent stone walls, excavated roads and buildings




Every schoolboy is supposed to know that Geoffrey of Monmouth, "that learned and unscrupulous old canon of St George's at Oxford" was a prince of liars. Or was he merely guilty of the human frailty of trying to fill in the gaps he found in his "Breton book"? Since E W B Nicholson in 1896 and Acton Griscom in 1929, everyone who has seriously considered this question has entered very considerable reservations. Even the great Stuart Piggott, very definitely an "establishment" archaeologist, in his magisterial study of 1941 in Antiquity, came down solidly on the side of those who hold that Geoffrey had sources otherwise unknown to us.

This is not to say that Geoffrey is always to be taken literally. There is padding, certainly, and he was capable of misunderstanding what he found in the Breton book. Here we will consider just one instance.

The story as found in Geoffrey (Historia Regum Britanniae IX, 11) is that King Arthur invaded France, then still a part of the Roman Empire (so, sometime before AD 486) and besieged Paris. A Roman "tribune" named Flollo, serving under the Emperor Leo (ruled only the Eastern Empire 457-474) defending Paris, challenged Arthur to a duel--"and Arthur liked nothing better than that" says the Welsh version. The duel was on the ISLE DE LA CITÉ in the Seine.

There is not a word of this in any late-Roman source, or in Gregory of Tours, so it is obvious that nothing like it ever happened...

Wait a little!

The city we know as Paris was in Roman times LUTETIA PARISIORUM, "the mud-hut city of the



Parisii". But there was another settlement of Parisii in Roman Britain, where they had four smallish towns on Humberside. One of these was PETUARIA PARISIORUM, "the fourth town of the Parisii", now Brough-on-Humber, south of York. And in Nennius' list of the 28 cities of Dark Age Britain, Brough appears as CAIR PERIS. But to Geoffrey, translating about AD 1130, this could only mean Paris, France. He found a quite impossible Emperor, and went on.

But is not this business of challenge and single combat hopelessly anachronistic? Not at all. King Theodoric the Ostrogoth (c 470-526) fought just such a duel with a Bulgar (Hun) champion named Xerxer, won the fight and chivalrously spared Xerxer's life. The continental-English King Offa the Gentle won a duel against two Saxon foes at Rendsburg in Schleswig c AD 375. There are several detailed accounts of such fights in Procopixus' Gothic Wars c 550.

And how about the island--in the Humber, not the Seine? It is still there, just south of Brough, now called Read's Island. If the Britons were approaching from the south or west, this island afforded a perfect battleground, in full view of both sides, yet cut off from the armies by the river, so that the encounter would be a true holmganga in the Norse style.

### CAIR PERIS

When did Arthur move on Petuaria/Cair Peris? I know of no precise method of dating it. Certainly it was not before 486, but it could be much later. Geoffrey puts it after Arthur's great victory at "Badonic Mount", now Bathampton Down, overlooking Bath (Aquae Sulis, Cair Badon), which I have definitely fixed to the early spring of AD 503 ("A Consular Chronology of Dark Age Britain" in Antiquity 1962, pp 102-109). After Badon there was "mopping-up" to be done, and Read's Island could well be part of it, c 504-7.

The man who commanded the defence of Petuaria was a Saxon--and let us remember that the Saxons, unlike the Romans, detested static siege warfare. On the other side, Arthur, like nearly all commanders in the Roman tradition, wished only to make the Saxons serve him. Unlike Wortamorix in 442, and Cadwallon II in 633, Arthur was not trying to drive the Saxons clear out of Britain. His plan was to civilise and absorb them --and it was by no means a complete failure. He had many Saxon allies, just as William the Conqueror did in the years after 1066.

### SINGLE COMBAT

Arthur's opponent is given as Flollo--a totally unknown name. Therefore probably a scribal error in the Breton book, which in the form that it came to Geoffrey was not very old--perhaps a century at most. But it may have been a modernised copy of something much older. This is hardly vital. The real problem is whether the events detailed are authentic. Geoffrey presents Arthur and "Flollo" as first jousting on horseback, then fighting on foot. I think the jousting can safely be eliminated as padding. The Britons did fight on horseback --we are even told the name of Arthur's favourite warhorse, Llam(g)rei "Grey Leaper"--a mare, not a stallion. But the Saxons knew themselves for clumsy horsemen. Their leaders often rode to battle, but dis-

mounted to fight.

Before we go any further, let us deal with the cryptic name Flollo. Many emendations are possible, but the best one seems to be from Flollo to FOLCO or FFOLCA. This is a known Old English (Anglo-Saxon) name. A Folco appears in Saxo Grammaticus as an ally of Offa the Gentle. In its Frankish form, as Fulke, it still survives.

Folca charged with lifted long stabbing-spear. Arthur turned the thrust aside with his famous shield, Wyneb-gwrth-ucher "Face-against-darkness", alluding to the picture of the Virgin Mary on its front--a similar icon appears on the shield of Stilicho in the diptych preserved at Monza. The ground was probably muddy, and Arthur fell as he parried the blow. A great shout went up from the British host--his men were eager to rescue him. But Folca was off balance, and he too fell.

In a moment both had risen and were slashing away with the polished steel spathas of that day--about as long and heavy as baseball bats, and nearly as stiff. Then Folca's blade reached for Arthur's face. It is clear that Arthur's was not a "Sutton Hoo" type helmet with a modelled face-cover. These offered a little more protection, but were hotter and gave a more restricted view. Arthur probably wore a Roman-type helmet with an added strengthening band over the forehead. This turned Folca's blade, but not before it laid open Arthur's forehead. Blood poured into the Briton's eyes and he staggered, very close to defeat.

Folca rushed in for the kill, but Arthur's counter was quicker. His famous sword Caletbolc ("Hardy-in-the-Gap") split Folca's helm and head. Brough and York yielded without another blow. There is a very old Welsh saying: "Not good the act of one sword, unless it sends two others back into their sheaths". So this was a good blow, which sent hundreds of swords into sheaths.

HISTORICITY

History or romance?There is no truly absolute proof, but I say --history. Not just because the details ring true. For, in his book, Celt, Roman and Saxon (1858, p 367). Thomas Wright mentions a marble Roman coffin (re-used?) found in one of the originally-Roman cemeteries which surround York (Eburacum) in which was found the skeleton of a very large and muscular man, whose skull had been split with a mighty blow. Folca? Why not? We know that the incoming Saxons did use the Romano-British cemeteries.

Nor is this all. In the East Riding of Yorkshire there is a small town, Folkton, earlier FOLCAN TUN "Folca's farmstead".

Note how well these clues agree. If we admit that Geoffrey's account has a 50% chance of being true, then the proximity of Read's Island gives us 75% odds in favour of historicity. The placename Folkton gives 87.5%, and the skeleton with the split skull brings the odds to 93.75% in Geoffrey's favour. I rest my case.

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# ET IN ARCADIA EGO
# The Children of Magdala.

## Stanley Newman

The strange story of Bérenger Saunière and of his remarkable church at Rennes-le-Château is now familiar to all through the book The Holy & the Holy Grail, but the true explanation of his sudden acquisition of immense wealth, and the odd fact that when he died he owned absolutely nothing, has yet to be given.

The most obvious question still remains: Where did Saunière's wealth come from? According to the parchments found by Saunière the treasure was that of Dagobert II, the last of the Merovingian kings of France, deriving ultimately from the treasure of Jerusalem carried off by Titus and looted in turn from Rome by Alaric.

It has also been suggested that what Saunière found was the Royal Treasury of France, concealed by Blanche of Castile during the Peasants' Revolt of the 13th century. She had told her son, Louis IX, of its hiding-place but by the time of Philip the Fair the secret had been lost and it may have been the case that his destruction of the Order of the Temple was motivated by a desire to find his lost inheritance.

An even more remarkable theory is that of Henry Lincoln and his co-authors who suggest that Saunière's wealth came from payments made to him by members of the Priory of Sion who wished to buy his silence over the amazing discovery he had made (but which, of course, they had known all along): that the Merovingian dynasty was descended from Jesus Christ who had married Mary Magdalene, produced children and fled from Palestine to Southern France. Even more sensational was the "fact" that their descendants are still alive today, protected by the Priory of Sion.

But this "Holy Blood" theory needs careful examination. It must be acknowledged that the documents concerning the Priory of Sion, which have been known only since 1956, do concern the survival of the Merovingian dynasty since the death of Dagobert II (but it should also be pointed out that scholarly opinion rejects the notion that any members of that dynasty survived). If there is an underground movement dedicated to restoring the Merovingians--irrespective of the additional claim of descent from Jesus Christ--its existence must be proved, and to do that we must first examine the people most concerned: the Hautpoul family who owned Rennes-le-Château and its surrounding lands.

PAN IS DEAD

It is known that the Hautpoul family were active in the Crusades, that one of their number became a Templar Grand Master and that they had Cathar sympathies which brought them trouble enough in the 13th century. But is was not until 1644 that their claim to the Barony of Rennes-le-Château was first

set out in full in a collection of papers accompanying the will of François-Pierre d'Hautpoul. This strange will vanished at the death of its maker and did not reappear until 1774 when the lawyer who held it, Jean-Baptiste Siau, refused to give it to the then baron, Pierre d'Hautpoul, saying: "It would be unwise of me to let a will of such great consequence out of my hands". He did, however, eventually give the papers to Pierre's widow, Marie de Negri d'Albes, who entrusted them to her chaplain, the Curé of Rennes, Antoine Bigou; he, in turn, concealed them and it is thought that the parchments found by Saunière were his handiwork. Part of one of the hidden messages concealed in the parchments reveal the following information:

POUSSIN TENIERS GARDENT LA CLEF

("Poussin, Teniers, hold the key").

This reference to Poussin and Teniers relates to paintings by them which contain symbolic representations of the true secret of Rennes. Most important is Poussin's painting The Shepherds of Arcady which was painted, in the Louvre copy, between 1645 and 1650. Further, both Teniers and Poussin were in Paris at times when François-Pierre was also there, and they could--and almost certainly did--meet him and learn the secret, the symbols of which appear in their work.

Despite this key, shown to the world through the paintings, no one grasped the significance of the symbolism until Saunière found the hidden parchments. He did interpret them and went on to unearth not only the 'secret' but also the treasure. His next task was to find a buyer.

He could not approach the Haut-poul family for they were technically its owners already--and equally they could not try to 'dispose' of Saunière once they knew he had found the treasure for they would, in doing so, dispose of all knowledge of its whereabouts--nor could he sell the royal treasure of France to a hostile, republican government. As a servant of the Vatican he could not sell his knowledge to the Papacy (and by its very nature the secret would not have been welcome to the Vatican) but he must seek out the one royal family with a direct interest in the treasure and in the secret: the Hapsburgs who were still the Holy Roman Emperors.

It is known that Saunière received visits from a member of the Hapsburg royal family, that accounts in an Austrian bank for both Saunière and his Hapsburg visitor were opened on the same day and that money passed from the Hapsburg account to Saunière's. Further, because of his receipt of money from an Austrian source Saunière was accused of spying and was obliged to ask the Austrian not to send further payments.

But what of Poussin's painting itself? The shepherds, with expressionless--deadpan--faces, surround the tomb whose message ET IN ARCADIA EGO seems to imply the presence of Pan. But Pan is dead, as Plutarch relates the story of Thamus the Helmsman bearing the message "Pan is Dead" to the island of Paxi (Pax 681 as in the parchments) and hears the cries of anguish from its shepherd inhabitants. Pan had died with the advent of Christianity, but Jesus, too, was dead and Poussin deliberately equated Pan with Jesus for the purposes of the symbolism of his painting:



Jesus as Pan because the Devil has prevailed, the Merovingians even now are overcome and the Devil triumphs.

The true secret of Rennes was known by François-Pierre d'Hautpoul and transmitted by him to Poussin so that it could be recorded in the painting. The secret is simply the survival of the Merovingian bloodline, and it is expressed in the painting by the equation of the Merovingians with Christ and His closest companions. The symbolism of the painting is straightforward once one knows what it is, but it has led astray many who wish to take the equation with Christ as literal rather than symbolic. It is Dagobert II who is depicted (in the tomb) as the dead Pan/Jesus who is 'sleeping' but will one day 'awake' to lead his people as their Messiah. The parallel is exact: the Disciples await the return of Jesus, the Merovingians await the return and restoration of their leader.

## SURVIVAL

What of the rest of the picture?

The pointing shepherd is Sigibert IV, as Peter (the Rock), and the woman looking on is his wife Magdala, as the Magdalene, who sustained the Merovingian bloodline. But this does not equate her directly with the Magdalene whose life of chastity (following her overcoming of her base desires) mirrors Jesus' overcoming of death itself; it is a purely symbolic equation. For the preservers and protectors of the Merovingian bloodline--the Priory of Sion--there must be, even now, symbolic children of the Magdalene, who are equated with salvation by the Atonement. Each child born into the bloodline being a new Incarnation bringing the 'salvation of mankind/France'--the potential restoration of the true royal dynasty. There is no biological bloodline from Jesus (it was a purely pagan dynasty until the conversion of Clovis after his great victory over the Alemanni) but a symbolic one. Dagobert is seen as Jesus, and Magdala as the Magdalene. The painting emphasises not origins but survival--and it is the survival of the Merovingians after Dagobert that is the central theme of the Lobineau genealogies which are so important in the mythos of Rennes-le-Château.

If the Hapsburgs did pay Saunière then the treasure is back in its rightful owners' hands --for Otto von Hapsburg, the current head of the family, is also titular King of Jerusalem. And with the evidence of the parchments and paintings seen as symbolic, the 'secret' finds its rightful interpretation: the survival of the Merovingians as themselves, as rulers of France--heirs of the Christian tradition and not as literal children of Christ. Holy Blood perhaps, but by office and not by descent from the Son of God.

The truth thus lies around the survival of the Merovingians through Magdala, and like parasites they have forced themselves upon the 'blueprint' of Christianity, exchanging Redemption for the Sin of mankind: here, Chastity becomes the Devil. The all-important reinstatement through preserving the bloodline becomes the real 'resurrection'. The simple fact remains: if Dagobert II had not married the Visigoth Princess Giselle de Razès he would not have inherited

the treasure (the parchments do insist that the treasure belonged specifically to Dagobert himself and not to the Merovingians generally), he would not have been deposed, there would be no Poussin painting and no Gospel equation. The mystery would be debased, the treasure of Rennes-le-Château would be mundane buried treasure and not the secret hoard that has spawned its own fool's gold in the shape of The Holy Blood and the Holy Grail which tries to convert the fantasy of a biological bloodline into a reality and to suppress the spiritual bloodline which is the true reality of Rennes.

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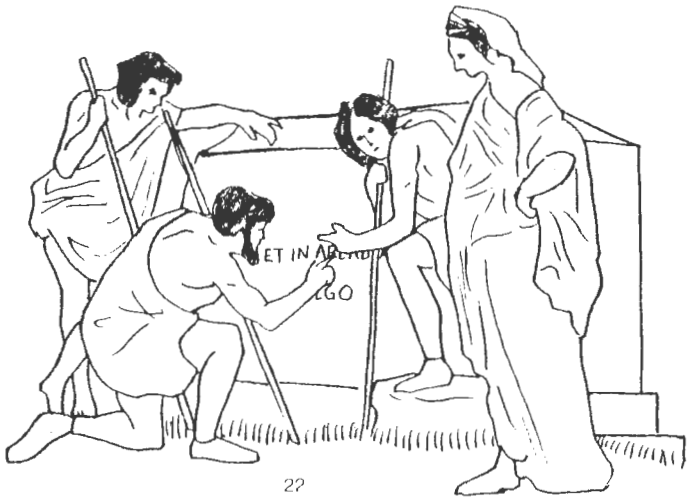
BELOW

Poussin's "Shepherds of Arcady"





# OLD News TIMES FORGOTTEN

## THE RIOTHAMUS COMMITTEE

It was announced over Christmas 1982 that an Arthurian Committee had been formed by Debretts Peerage Ltd, and that its findings will be incorporated in a publication (due in 1984) which will re-examine both Arthur's origins and the influence of the Arthurian legends on the UK monarchy, English literature and British culture worldwide.

Geoffrey Ashe will lead the committee. As we have reported (Vol XIV No 3 "Timeslip" 6-8) Geoffrey believes there are definite links between a certain Riothamus and the subsequent legends of Arthur.

Riothamus was a British king who entered Continental history in about 469. His exploits may have supplied details for Arthur's supposed Continental wars, and his name may even have been Arthur (Riothamus being a title: Great King).

Prof Leon Fleuriot (from Brittany) and Prof Barbara Moorman (of the University of Southern Mississippi) have done related work in this field and are also on the committee, as is also Sir Iain Moncrieffe of that Ilk.

In Royal Highness Sir Iain has suggested that Prince Charles and Prince William (both of whom have Arthur as one of their four names) might possibly be related to this early British ruler.

Barbara Moorman's research seems to have highlighted three French documents (two in Latin, one in French) which refer to this Arthur Riothamus. The most relevant is a chronicle of events up to 1525 set down in French by Philippe de Vigneulles.

* Information culled from Wells Journal; Monterey Peninsula Herald, Calif; USA Today and Dragon No 5. Monitored by Dave Gorringe, Dianne Binnington, Roy Nickerson, Paddy Slater and Charles Evans-Gunther.

## THE MAGIC CROSS (continued)

The saga of the alleged Glastonbury Cross rumbles on. An experienced journalist reports that "in the 15 years I have prowled around the lighted windows of Fleet Street like Grendel's Mother I have never come upon such a story".[1] And its supposed finder still refuses to hand the cross over.

To recap: in November 1981 Derek Mahoney, 49, searching through mud excavated from a lake at Forty Hall, Enfield, found a small lead cross.

At the British Museum, the Keeper of Medieval and Later Antiquities noted that the cross was, within an eighth

of an inch, the size of the cross found, it was said, above King Arthur's grave at Glastonbury c 1191.[2]

The latest developments are these. Mahoney, jailed in April 1972 for two years for contempt of a court order to give up the cross, was brought before a High Court Judge after only nine months to reconsider. He refused. Then, with remission, his sentence would have ended in July 1983 instead of April 1984. But, more recently, comes news of his release.[3]

Where is the cross? "It is in a container, completely waterproof, and buried well down in the ground so that any change in temperature will not affect it."

Is it genuine? Geoffrey Ashe thinks not: "It appeared almost certain that this was a false alarm."[4] Presumably he feels that either the cross is a later copy or that Mahoney, once employed by Lesney Toys as a mouldmaker, may have made it himself.

But the story may not be as simple as at first appears.

First of all, Forty Hall belonged to a certain R Gough in the early nineteenth century. It was this Gough who in 1789 brought out a three-volume translation of Camden's Britannia. And it was Camden who, in his own 1607 edition of Britannia, presented the only known illustration of the cross from "life", as it were. Is the cross a copy made in Gough's lifetime as the BM thinks? Or is Gough's illustration (see figure) a more accurate facsimile of the cross Camden saw and which, in later years, found its way into Forty Hall's lake?

Secondly, the background of the finder himself gives grounds for a hint of mystery.

Derek Mahoney, his brother Ronald and their mother live in Enfield in "a strange dark house, the paper sagging from the walls with dampness".[5] Brother Ronald, it appears, sold a house in 1973 by auction. But the auctioneer, the Mahoneys allege, declined to place a reserve price on the property; the house was then bought for only half the expected sale price by a "plant". Their solicitors were unable to obtain redress upon which the Mahoneys began an angry campaign against corrupt practices by solicitors.



The finding of the cross seemed to be a sign in their campaign. The dredging operations at the lake had revealed some old Elizabethan bricks in a wall, and later a knife and the cross. These were all photographed and when the foreman involved in the pond-clearing raised no objections, Derek Mahoney took the objects home.

The alternative for these objects would have been a skip.[6] But when Enfield Council heard of the cross from a report in the Enfield Advertiser they took the action which then made the national news.

What may possibly be of relevance here is the fact that the house sold in 1973, the catalyst in this unfortunate saga, was in Somerset, according to Michael Lewis (in Earthquest News). WHERE in Somerset? Is there any connection with the fact that the cross was last heard of in Wells in Somerset in the late eighteenth century? Or did the Mahoneys' link with Somerset provide the germ of an idea to draw attention to their legal battle when the cross fortuitously came to light?

The whole episode poses some interesting questions, as expressed by Bryon Rogers: "Say Arthur did return, and say that the hand holding the sword appeared in the lake owned by Enfield Borough Council. If the old king refused to hand it over he, too, would be in Pentonville... It would be better for all of us if he did not return."

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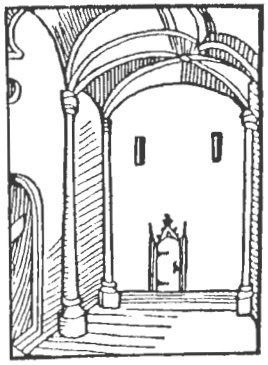
4. G Ashe Avalonian Quest (Methuen 1982) p 75n.
5. Rogers op cit
6. Michael Lewis "Derek Mahoney and King Arthur's Cross", Earthquest News No 5, Winter 1982, 13f.

Monitors: Dave Gorringe, Peter Ratazzi



WHOLLY RELICS

The Italian newspaper Republica from an inventory of traceable holy relics noted the following:

John the Baptist:
10 skulls
50 right-handed index fingers "with which he pointed at Jesus"

Andrew the Apostle:
5 spines
150 ribs
"several" skulls

The Apostle Jacob:
18 arms

St George of England:
30 skeletons'-worth of bones

Miraculous indeed! Though I have heard it said that the claim of an armada's-worth of relics of the True Cross is exaggerated.
(Private Eye True Stories 3.12)

## THE TRISTAN & ISOLT STONE (continued)

Were Tristan and Isolt historical figures or merely characters in medieval romances?

"Old News" has already reported on Professor André de Mandach's researches on the famous Tristan Stone near Fowey in Cornwall.[1] He had already established that the inscription on the stone pillar not only read

DRVSTANS HIC IACIT
CVNOWORI FILIVS

but that in 1538 John Leland had transcribed a third line, now unfortunately lost:

CVM DOMINA CLVSILLA

Mandach had suggested that a translation (such as

"Tristan here lies,
Of Cunomorus the son,[2]
With the Lady Clusilla")

might point to real and not just literary links between Drustanus /Tristan and Clu-silla/I-solt.

Further research and correspondence has led Mandach to a refinement of this approach on epigraphical and linguistic grounds.[3]

It appears that Leland misinterpreted the beginning of the lady's name. What reads as CLV should probably be OV.

In Celtic inscriptions Os "are not often entirely round, in fact it's not uncommon to find them in a squared form with or without gaps when carving on stone: CIV."[4]

It would have been easy for Leland to make this out as CLV. The third line now reads as "With the Lady Ousilla."

Old Celtic OU (meaning "good, excellent") evolved into EU (cf Welsh EUDAF). Thus OUSÍLLA of the Dark Ages would have become EUSILLA, then, in 10th century Cornish, ÉUSILL (with the stress on the first syllable).

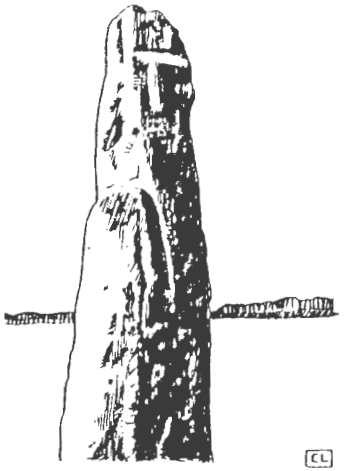
Other forms of the name are ESELT, ESYLT or ESSYLT, and YSOL.

ESELT is found in a Cornish charter of 967 attached to the placename Hyrt Eselt. ESYLT is the Welsh form of her name, and YSOL is found in the Sneyd I MS of Thomas' Tristan (12th century, one of the earliest written versions of the legend).

This seems a more convincing argument for identifying the Tristan and Isolt of legend as the historical figures Drustans and Ousilla mentioned on the Cornish monolith, and a rather exciting example of more light being shed on the Dark Ages.[5]

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. "The Tristan (& Isolt?) Stone" in Pendragon XIV, 4 (Old Stones issue) p 8.
2. The W of CVNOWORI is an inverted M; Cunomorus became Cynfawr in Welsh.
3. André de Mandach "Le Berceau des Amours Splendides de Tristan et Iseut" (Kümmerle Verlag 1982) 22ff.
4. Mandach, op cit, p 23.
5. Mandach "The long stone blessed by St Samson", Pendragon XIV, 4 19ff.



CL



## KING ORPHEUS

A recent theory about Arthur takes as a starting point the famous mosaic pavement at Woodchester in Gloucestershire.

There are an "exceptional number of British pavements which in the first half of the fourth century depicted Orpheus subduing earth's wild creatures by the charm of his voice": eight or nine in fact, the most for any Roman province.[1] A contemporary writer, Eusebius, compared Christ to Orpheus, and it may be that they have some Christian significance.

Most of the surviving examples belong to one of the four known schools of mosaicists in Roman Britain, the Corinium-Cirencester School; these are Newton St Loe (Som), Withington, Barton Farm and Dyer Street (all by Cirencester), Woodchester and possibly Pit Meads (Wilts). Two later examples come from the Petuarian school at Brough-on-Humber: Horkstow and Winterton (Lincs); and another example from Littlecote Park (Wilts) belongs to no particular school.

The peculiarity of the Corinian Orpheus pavements is that, alone of Roman provinces, the design consists basically of concentric circles of wild creatures around a moreorless central Orpheus figure.

The superficial similarity of these to medieval depictions of the Round Table seems to have led Ron Fletcher to his personal hypothesis that "Arthur took his name from Orpheus and that his knights took their names from features of the mosaic design" at the palatial villa of Woodchester.[2]

Mr Fletcher believes that Woodchester, the former residence of the area's governor, was Arthur's HQ, established here after battles around 450 AD with a certain "Ceaulin" (whom he identifies as St Columba).

Unfortunately much of Mr Fletcher's theories (such as the Saxon Ceawlin being Columba) are just plain silly. The fatal battle of Camlarn for example was fought, he claims, on the R Cam near Dursley in Gloucestershire. Why? "The first reference I ever found to the battle was of Arthur coming from Caerleon across the Severn to fight the battle of Camlann at noon. The lowest fording point on the Severn is at Arlingham and Camlann could not be far away if he had to fight there at noon'," he argues.

There is more: Arlingham is in the Whitstone Hundred. The eastern bank of the Severn was known as "the Sword Ora". Arthur's wresting of the "sword" Ora from the Whit-"stone" area gave rise to the Excalibur legend...

Other such explanations are not really worth mentioning. Why Mr Fletcher had to familiarise himself with Hebrew, Turkish and Egyptian to unravel Arthurian secrets is a mystery in itself, but among 8000 pages of notes, fruits of ten years' research, is it too much to hope there is real evidence to prove his contention that Arthur is buried near Woodchester?

1. D J Smith "The Mosaic Pavements" in The Roman Villa in Britain (RKP 1969) 88
2. Allan Guy "New light is shed on Arthur legends" Bristol Evening Post 7.2.83

Monitor: Kate Pollard

# Calleva Excursus

PENDRAGON OUTING TO SILCHESTER

On Saturday August 8th 1982 Pendragon members, with friends from the Research Into Lost Knowledge Organisation and from Sangreal magazine, visited the Roman town of Silchester.

After some conviviality at the Calleva Arms, the outing proceeded to the Calleva Museum and its displays; here, some of us noted a spider which had somehow been preserved between a map of the Roman town and its protective transparent sheeting and we pondered on its significance. Thence we strolled towards the centre of the town, now good farming land belying its name Calleva or 'Woodland Town'.

On the site of the forum, the hub of the town, we were very kindly given a commentary by director Michael Fulford on current excavations of the Basilica or Town Hall. This stood on a metre-high platform and should eventually give an opportunity to examine the early and pre-Roman settlement preserved beneath. The Basilica itself may have continued standing into the middle ages.

We then were guided round the remains of the amphitheatre to the north-east of the town. Despite problems of drainage, much progress had been made in exposing its structure, including two possible shrines from about 250-300 AD, and a 12th century fortification of the arena (perhaps during the Stephen and Matilda civil wars).

The guided tour over, we then visited the charming church of St Mary-the-Virgin, built in the temple precinct of Calleva, by the East Gate. Geoffrey of Monmouth claimed this as the site of King Arthur's crowning by St Dyfrig (Dubricius).

There is, however, little genuine Dark Age material here. An Irishman, Ebicatos, is mentioned in ogams found at Silchester (the most eastern ogam inscription yet found) and perhaps he commanded hired Irish troops in the 6th century. A supposed British ruler of the period may have been a certain Einiaun, for Camden's Britannia reported that local people of the 16th century gave the name "Onion's pennies" to Roman coins from Silchester, "fancying this Onion a great giant who formerly lived in this city".

We took in the impressive remains of Calleva's southernmost stone walls before the kind hospitality of Dorothy and Charles Nankivell completed a memorable and pleasant day.

It was good to see so many friends (in such fine weather too!) and thanks are due to all those who helped make it a success.

Back home, with a chance to digest excavation reports from '79-81, it was interesting to note, in among the "Silchester horse" motifs, a spider on page seventeen...


George C Boon The Roman Town... at Silchester, Hampshire (Calleva Museum, rev ed 1972)

John Morris The Age of Arthur (Weidenfeld & Nicholson 1973) p 562 for Onion's pennies

Michael Fulford Guide to the Silchester Excavations 1979-81 (Reading University)


CHRIS LOVEGROVE




SOME OF THE SITES MENTIONED IN THIS ISSUE

OBITUARIES:

SIDDISHIT

Sadly, we have to announce the death, in Devon where he lived, of Desmond Hoskins, our good friend & long time member.

Our acquaintance began many years ago, in the fifties, when we lived in Winchester & he & his family in Farnham. He was, in fact, a leading figure in the quest which resulted in the setting up of the Pendragon Society. Desmond fought several major battles in his life time Alamein was an earlier skirmish, the latest & longest was against a severe stroke & its after effects.

Unstoppably he wrote Westward to Arthur — & most recently an article in answer to Roger Webster's Horse at Baden piece which will appear in the next issue of Pendragon ..... it was a special article.... handwritten..... received with joy at this end as it showed another battle had been won!

He is remembered with affection by the original society members.... We would like to express our sympathy to his wife, Joy, daughter & grandchildren.

WITTI

We also mark the passing of another old member Michael Benkert, of Larbert. Newer members may remember his various contributions to the magazine. Most of his contributions went on back-stage as he gave support & help to many of our projects, notably to the Yarlington dig - one of our B.C. projects (ie Before Cadbury).

I'm personally grateful for his family advice on my secretarial problems and he funded many AGMs for us, although he could not attend them personally in his later years.