

Pendragon

ISSN 0143 - 8379



MORTE D'ARTHUR 1485

¶ Here begynneth the fyrst
booke of the moost noble and
worthy prince kyng Arthur
somtyme kyng of grete Bry
tayne now called Englande
Whiche treateth of his noble
actes and feates of armes &
chualrye / and of his noble
knyghtes of the table rounde
and this volume is deuyned
in to .xxi. bookes.

BRITONS & SAXONS

* From Charles Evans-Gunther, Flint, Clwyd:

Just a few lines to make a very (brief) reply to Steve Blackburn's "Britons and Saxons" (Vol XVI Nos 3-4):

Suffice to say Mr Blackburn takes it a little more seriously than he says--but is absolutely correct to reply. I obviously said far too much at a time when many Welshmen were thinking of Llywelyn. Murder, I agree, may not have been the correct term--but betrayal is. Llywelyn, according to some, was lured to a meeting with Englishmen (lords--magnate) to discuss the possibility of them joining his rebellion against the King of England. Seemingly, they never turned up--but a troop of soldiers arrived surprising the Welsh "prince"--and mortally wounding him. He died away from his army--by the plots of English lords (relatives of Llywelyn but friends of the King.)

I would also like to correct him about Llywelyn's failure--his resources and art of combat cannot be questioned. He had, before Edward's "policing action" (since war is not truly the correct term), collected livestock, grain etc into his Snowdonian stronghold--knowing what tactics the English would use. Also he had just defeated an army sent to attack him from the north across the Menai Straits. At this point he felt confident enough to leave his stronghold and venture south. Llywelyn lost through unfair play--unchivalrous actions of the English lords of Mid Wales, possibly with Edward's knowledge. David, Llywelyn's brother, who started the second "uprising", proved to be less of a leader and eventually suffered the most atrocious death by Edward's order--hung, drawn and quartered. The Welsh proved themselves to be the most fear-

ful of warriors both against and for the English. Steve's 50% Welsh comes after the "Welsh Wars"--when Edward fought the Scots.

But I do not want further to defend my Welshness or Welsh history--patriotism can become fanaticism--and I am no fanatic.

Now to side with Steve I must say I too agree that there has been a tendency to make the Saxons into horrifying barbaric creatures (with horns, tails and pitchforks at the ready) and the Celts into poetic-artists defending their homeland. Both are correct and wrong at the same time. True, the Celts were poetic and artistic--but so were the Saxons. Both were of an "heroic society"--and could be vicious with their enemies (for instance the foreigner had no rights in Celtic society). It is so easy to simplify things into modern-day terms--but they lived over a thousand years ago in another world--as different as Japan was in the 19th century.

Once again I wholly agree with Steve that the Celtic element lost fairly to the Saxon element--as Saxon and Celt eventually lost to the Normans. I think Steve misunderstood my patriotism for fanaticism. I have enough English blood in me to see both sides (a touch of Irish too).

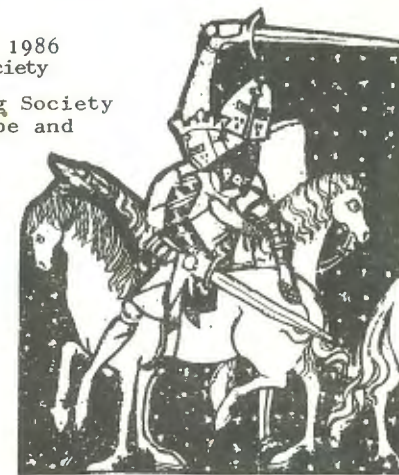
Nevertheless--I do not like the idea of Charles being compared to the mythical saviour Arthur. That I continue to disagree with. The monarchy today is purely a figurehead, without real power, and no King Charles/King Arthur will lift "Albion out of its new dark age..." We must do that. Politics aside, Britain must learn to grow up--it has proven itself to still be very childish!--so let's forget savagery, royal, political or religious; no superman is going to change Britain--the people will do that.

Pendragon

JOURNAL OF THE PENDRAGON SOCIETY
ISSN 0143-8379 Vol XVII No 4 Feb 1986
(Autumn 1984) JPS 68 ©Pendragon Society

Subscription Four issues, including Society membership: £4.50/\$10.00 (UK, Europe and overseas, surface) or \$12.00 (overseas, airmails). A cross in the box indicates subscription is due.

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125 York Road, Montpelier, Bristol BS6 5QG Secretary
Kate Pollard, 42 Burghley Road, St Andrews, Bristol BS6 5BN
Pendragon investigates Arthurian history and archaeology, and the mystery and mythology of the Matter of Britain. Opinions stated are those of the writer concerned.



IN FOURTEEN HUNDRED and eighty-five Malory's Morte was brought alive...

This bit of doggerel is not very ancient, but serves to remind us of an occasion which Pendragon ought to celebrate (albeit belatedly). This is the publication, just over 500 years ago, of Malory's Arthurian prose epic which his editor, William Caxton entitled Le Morte d'Arthur. It is likely that Malory intended naming it somewhat differently, as recorded at the end of the printed version:

"Here is the end of the whole book of King Arthur, and of his noble knights of the Round Table, that when they were together there was ever an hundred and forty..."

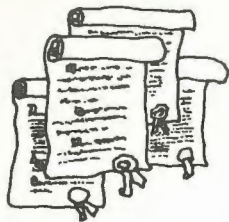
Caxton took the heading of the last section, the culmination of "The whole book of King Arthur and of his noble knights...", as the umbrella title, which is rather misleading. But Morte d'Arthur is its everyday handle

and it would be pedantic to call it otherwise.

Malory scholarship is a forbidding realm into which to stray, so I will steer clear of even a summary when many readers are much better informed than me. However, I am sure there are many Arthurian enthusiasts who, like me, were stimulated by one of the many bowdlerised but colourful Malory-inspired storybooks of their childhood. This "review" edition commemorates some of the paths down which literary enthusiasts have trod, inspired perhaps by the memory of that golden age which Malory sought to describe half a millenium ago.

A word of explanation for those expecting a Holy Grail issue: there are a couple of items yet to arrive which I would like to include. But, in the meantime, there is quite a lot of material--more reviews, letters, articles and news items--in hand (some of it getting very long in the

(Continued 2nd page foll:



Plantard's Secret Parchments.

(On the threshold of
madness, Part 22)

PAUL SMITH



On the 1st of October 1985 a brand-new "Prieuré Document" was deposited in the Bibliothèque Nationale of Paris. Purporting to be a translation of my article "The Plantard Grail" (*Pendragon* Vol XVII No 3), it was entitled "Le Mystérieux Rennes le Château" and was attributed to "Jania Macgillivray". The Deposition slip further revealed that the 14-page document was deposited by "Paul Smith" (a perfect forgery of my signature), who under the pseudonym of ROBERT SUFFERT had translated the article from English into French (despite the fact that I don't understand French!).

I had sent a copy of *Pendragon* Vol XVII No 3 to Pierre Plantard, and this was his response...

Needless to say, the document had nothing to do with Jania Macgillivray (one of the researchers for the Chronicle documentary, "The Shadow of the Templars"), nothing to do with me, nor my original *Pendragon* article. Far from being a "translation" of my article, "Le Mystérieux Rennes le Château" was nothing more than yet another repetition of Plantard's mythomania--how he was using the Rennes-le-Château mystery to further his own mythology. (Page 1 reproduced the cover pate of *Pendragon* Vol XVII No 3, whilst page 14 reproduced pages 24 and 27.)

One thing's for certain, Philippe de Cherisey was not involved in this latest puerile excursion, for he had died at the beginning of July 1985, and the curious feature at his funeral was that his coffin was placed not horizontally, but vertically.

There is a wicked allegation that the so-called "documents" which had been "discovered" by Berenger Saunière were sold by the priest's niece ("Madame James") in 1965 to Captain Roland Stanmore (Nutting) and Sir Thomas Frazer, and were deposited in a safe-deposit box of Lloyds Bank Europe Limited of London.¹

Bearing in mind that Sir Thomas Frazer had died some years ago, I decided to trace his only son. After initial enquiries I received the following response from him (20th August 1983):

"After your previous letters, and having the photocopies which you enclosed, I sent these to my solicitor, who was one of my father's executors, to see if he could throw any light on the matter.

He says they ring no bells as far as he is concerned, and he has no recollection of hearing of anyone by the name of Roland Stanmore.

He has been in touch with Lloyds Bank International (into which I gather Lloyds Bank Europe has now been absorbed), and received the following reply:

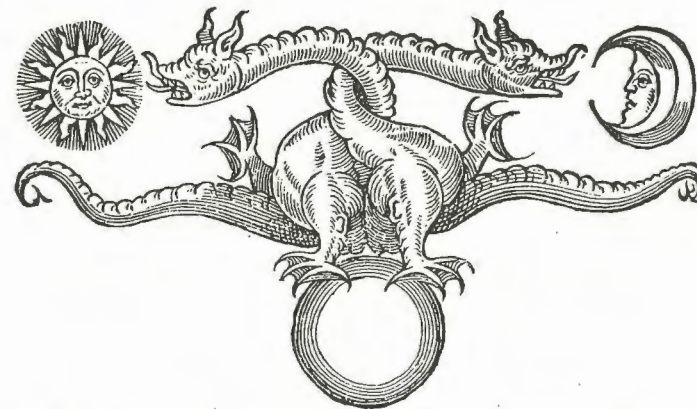
"In accordance with your request we have made a search in our present and past records and regret to advise that we cannot trace having maintained a dossier in the above name (Sir Thomas Frazer, OBE) or jointly with Captain Roland Stanmore. We are also unable to trace a record of a safe-deposit box or any details in connection with the documents to which you refer."

Enough said.

REFERENCE

1. Jean Delaude *Le Cercle d'Ulysse* (1977) pp 2-3

PAUL SMITH



Editorial continued

tooth) so the Grail will still be a little delayed. It will be worth the wait!

A report on the 1985 "Cotswold" AGM is included here. Many thanks especially to Michael Darling, Geoff Dando, and Eddie and Anne Tooke for their stupendous efforts behind the scenes. Very much appreciated by those who attended. There will, I'm sure, be many delightful memories to recall in times to come.

Thanks too for the support and understanding concerning the problems the secretary and editor have had while still trying to keep the ship not only on course but also afloat! Any practical offers of help are always gratefully received!

Finally, some doubts have been expressed concerning the relevance of the Holy Blood, Holy Grail affair to *Pendragon* matters. I appreciate the doubts, but beg your indulgence for my including in this issue an account of the recent attempt to hijack *Pendragon* for the

nefarious purposes of Plantard's Priory of Sion. No doubt students are pondering the significance of the ubiquitous initials PS and of the number 17. Unfortunately, the word "Fakes" has not been removed from the reproduction of one of the few genuinely original pages in the so-called translation...

Thanks to Colin Walls; Peter Ratazzi; Sid Birchby; Hugh de Bris; John Matthews; Eddie Tooke; Kate Pollard (in no particular order) and the various authors and publishers who provided review copies of some of the works mentioned; to Paul Smith and Geoff Dando; and to authors of articles yet to come, and any one else whom I've mistakenly omitted.

Cover based on a page of the edition of *Morte d'Arthur* produced by Wynken de Worde, Caxton's successor in the early 16th century.

Reviews in the pages to come which appear anonymous are by the editor. Enraged authors please note that rejoinders must be brief.

PENDRAGON AGM AND COTSWOLD WEEKEND
14th, 15th, 16th June 1985

As the sun began to sink in the west, the commander-in-chief sat in the command vehicle awaiting the arrival of the officers of the invading troops. A pint (or was it really just a half) clutched in his hand, he considered the past six months he and his three brother (and sister) officers had spent making plans, scrapping plans and re-arranging plans. Now those plans were read ...and re-read...and re-read... and...(well, you know the rest). The hands of his chronometer swept steadily on. 1900 BST-- the ETA was 1840. Well, he conjectured, even the most organised armies suffer the occasional setback. Look at the Romans-- they had two attempts at conquering the barbarous Britanni.

1940 (time, not AD) and he continued to drink up the local brew and follow the local custom of "bottoms up"--and there were some lovely bottoms up there. It's hard going to make a half-pint last so long.

2040 (gosh, the years roll by fast!): a mini-invasion as the two local officers, and the advance party from the homelands, arrived together. The troops were all safely billeted, more would be arriving on the morrow; weather outlook promising; there seemed nothing to upset a pleasant weekend.

Saturday, 0945: the troops amassed to view the provinces of Glevumshire. First stop was an odd chapel and expensive church.¹ Both proved to be up to expectations and the approval of the company. Next stop, the timetable said... But nature has a way of upsetting the best-laid plans of any army and a short stop was called for--and even a boot could not persuade the battalion to move before it was ready.²

The troops re-assembled to move onto a religious establishment of calling.³ Here the second-in-command joined the company with a young lady from the outer posts of the Holy Pendragon Empire.⁴ Here two more ancient sites were viewed. Strange, colourful markings on the walls of one aroused much curiosity and ancient writings had to be consulted to learn their meanings. Across the road, and many "ahs" and "oohs" were heard as the troops began to appreciate the vastness of the abbi-tat of shouting.

An army marches on its stomach, and so an hostelry in the nearby hamlet⁵ (Shakespeare was nowhere in sight) was invaded. Comely serving wenches dished up delicate delights of culinary cuisine--ploughman's, hot-pot, fish and chips etc. After suitable respite it was back to the chariots and ever forward (providing the



Animal head from Deerhurst Church
(after H M Taylor)

driver could find the right gear!).

First the local manorial estate was to be viewed--valued at a mere half-a-cave.⁶ The Centurian wished desperately to show his distinguished guests around in person, but a firm negative attitude prevailed. Strange facts were assimilated during the ensuing hour: they used sponges on sticks in the loo; spent all day in the bath, often together; and didn't use soap.

The final visit of the day was to another estate. This one was in a complete state of ruin, and no longer contained a lord. However, spread below us on terraces it was just as impressive.⁷

In the evening Bacchus reigned supreme. Everybody ate and drank; minstrels played; jesters recited; and more colourful pictures magically appeared and disappeared; and, once again, the sword was pulled from the stone (no reflection on the cooking!); Zoë had kept the matriarchal line going. The army retired, exhausted, but satiated, to await the Coming of the Second Day.

Sunday 1030: a small band of hardy trooper gathered in the precincts of the seat of the Bishop.⁸ Today was to be a ritual beating of the bounds of the capital of this captured province, Glevum. Many strange sights were to be seen during the following hour: churches that are not, but houses and shops and, yes, a library (well, there had to be at least one during the weekend); monochrome cooks;⁹ walls that went up when they were pulled down; and the ancient rite of paddling in the fountain.

Another ancient hostelry was invaded for liquid refreshment--only three in two days--this army's slipping! And finally back to the Bishop's Seat to view the shop where a famous little man sat cross-legged and sewed magic garments.¹⁰ All this exercise had proved too much on the stomachs and so another Bacchanalian feast was arranged to assuage the hunger.

This time with the sun still at the zenith, with reflections clear upon the water the troopers lay and continued where they left off the night before, devouring sausage rolls, French (sorry, Gaulish) bread, and delicacies fit to grace the table of Uther Pendragon himself. In the sky above, an intrepid gladiator showed his skill in the new-fangled flying chariot, with an impromptu aerobic display; and on the river a flotilla of small boats passed on its way to invade provinces in the interior of this barbaric little island.

And so it was time for the farewells, goodbyes, see-you-soons and keep-in-touches. The second-in-command was off once again to duties in foreign countries; the commander with his wife and children to return home; the brother and sister officers to clear away the remains of the feast; and the invaders to their homeland to contemplate their.. what they had seen.

REFERENCES

1. Odda's Chapel and Deerhurst Church
2. Hobnails Inn
3. Hailes Abbey
4. Americas
5. Winchcombe
6. Chedworth
7. Witcombe villa
8. Gloucester Cathedral
9. Grey and Black Friars
10. The Tailor of Gloucester

GEOFF DANDO

REVIEWS

Beryl Mercer and Tricia Bramwell The Phoenix Rune-cards
Phoenix Runes, Amber, Mount Hawke, Truro, Cornwall TR4 8EA
£5.50

This is a set of 24 cards in full colour, representing the runes brought to England by the Anglo-Saxons, plus a booklet explaining the history and symbolism. Text and research by Beryl Mercer, artwork by Tricia Bramwell.

The author's stated purpose is "to stimulate interest in the study of the essentially English runic system"; that is to say, in what runes meant in Anglo-Saxon England rather than in those other Northern countries where other runic traditions are known. Her text therefore has a specific direction of some rarity.

All attempts to reconstruct a broken symbol-system are fraught with pitfalls, and runology in particular is still obscured by the excesses of the Nazis: the SS badge of two jagged lightning flashes, for instance, consisted of two runic symbols meaning sig or sigel, which was perverted to be "Sieg Heil". The author's text embodies a technique of myth-analysis which has been developed and tested continuously since 1969 by a number of runic study groups under my direction, and I feel that it provides, together with the cards, the most accurate and effective guide to the inner meaning and practical use of runes that has yet appeared.

"Never before" (I read) "have the Runes been represented pictorially, to take their place alongside the Tarot..." and this is certainly true. When oral or mnemonic methods of transmitting knowledge suffer a break, that knowledge is lost unless someone who knows how to write is at hand to record it. Runic knowledge was not so lucky. If, for instance, it had produced the same type of pictorial records that has illuminated what we know about ancient Egypt--but it didn't.

The Rune-cards go far to remedy the deficiency and to supply the extra pictorial dimension vital to modern minds. As for the Tarot allusion, investors might like to know that only 17 of the first Tarot cards of 1392 still exist, and that they are in a Paris museum and priceless. So buy now.

Does rune-casting work? And do we really need another means of divination? Well, yes and yes, I would say, though it depends on your personal attitude. Any coherent symbol-system works providing that it sufficiently relates to whatever it symbolises--atomic theory, democracy, I-Ching, flat-earth. When it ceases to relate, that is the time to reconsider, but meanwhile rune-casting is worth a try, and you won't find any better guide than this pack of cards.

No, I don't get a commission. But, as the late A Crowley said, "If you see a black egg, buy it!" (Well, I did so in Majorca a few years back, and it turned out to be a common old white marble egg painted black. One can't win.)

SID BIRCHBY



Geoffrey Ashe in association with Debrett's Peerage
The Discovery of King Arthur 1985 £12.95
Available post free from Miss Caroline Franks, Private Order Dept,
Debrett's Peerage Ltd, 73-77 Britannia Road, London SW6

In history and archaeology concentrating on individuals is unfashionable--Thiessen polygons, spectrographic analysis and the Mesolithic economy are of more significance. But individuals still fascinate, especially those with a bit of mystery, and this magazine would not exist if gathering statistics were its *raison d'être*. So The Discovery of Arthur is certainly of major importance to all personality-centred students of the Dark Ages.

The historical documentation for Arthur is very sparse. There are the folktales contained in Nennius' History of the Britons from the 9th century. And there are the entries for the "Arthurian" battles of Badon and Camlann in the Welsh Annals of the 10th century. The folklore throws more light on human psychology, however, and the Annals are rather too late to be reliable. All rigorous scholars of the period have been troubled by the apparent lack of contemporary allusion to Arthur in documents or inscriptions: in a relatively literate age a man of his supposed stature has escaped notice.

Discovery argues that Arthurian scholarship in Britain is too insular. If it wasn't, it would have taken more account of the Gaulish episodes contained in the 12th century so-called History of Geoffrey of Monmouth. Arthur's forays on the continent, which take up a considerable part of the narrative, are usually regarded as unhistorical and an embarrassment. But later continental chronicles place Arthur firmly in the late 5th century rather than the early 6th. Geoffrey of Monmouth, it is clear, is also working with irreconcilable dates. Arthur dies in 542, but flourishes in the time of Pope Leo (died 461). His heyday is quite obviously thought of as the 460s.

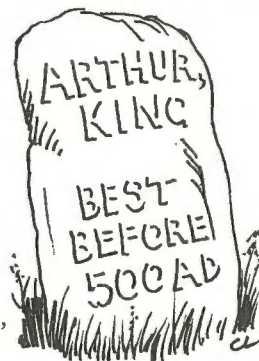
As we have reported before (Vol Xiv, No 3, Timeslip edition) Arthur, by these accounts, matches up with Riothamus, a king of Britain whose existence is in no doubt. With 12,000 troops he is reported to have fought Saxons successfully in the Loire valley, though his army was later decimated by the Visigoths. Ashe argues strongly for the equation of Riothamus with Arthur.

This is a very attractive hypothesis. It is Ashe's fourth essay on the subject, refined and expanded since "A Certain Ancient Book" first argued the case in Speculum. It certainly answers many questions, and solves many problems of chronology.

There are, of course, difficulties. Riothamus is never specifically identified with Arthur in any of the chronicles between the 5th and 12th centuries. Ashe has put less emphasis on the two being near anagrams of each other but continues to argue, against the opinions of some philologists, that Riothamus is not a name but a title: "Supreme King". He points out that many leaders were better known by their cognomen or nickname (eg Caligula) or title (Augustus) and that some we know only by the titles (eg Vortigern, "Overking"). These are useful analogies, though for Arthur-Riothamus no more than that. The two separate bodies of lore about Arthur in Britain and Riothamus in Gaul prior to the 11th/12th century is still worrying, though if we resorted to analogies we would note the recognisable correspondences between the native

Macsen legend and the continental history of Maximus.

Despite these doubts, Ashe has, I think, proved his case that Geoffrey's fictional European adventures of Arthur are based on Riothamus' expedition as detailed in continental histories no longer available to us. This does not prove there was no Arthur in the "traditional" period ascribed to him either side of 500 AD, and we may still believe that the richness of Arthurian lore need not owe its diversity to the exploits of a single. What it does prove is that, before Geoffrey of Monmouth, an implicit identification was made: that Riothamus and Arthur were one and the same. For sceptics the question is, how far back can we trace this implicit identification before the matter is beyond doubt?



Mary Stewart The Wicked Day Hodder & Stoughton £8.95

This book (the title is taken from Malory's reference to "the wicked Day of Destiny") came out in 1983 and takes a refreshingly new look at the story of Mordred. Having just re-read it with great enjoyment I should like to recommend it to Pendragon readers who may have missed it.

As it is Mordred's story we know from the offset that "it'll end in tears" but nevertheless the reader is caught up immediately in the graphic development of the familiar characters and their inter-relationship. The story is not one of brooding treachery because, as Mary Stewart explains, Mordred as the dark villain of the piece is a much later invention. She points out that centuries earlier the Annales Cambrienses relate that at Camlann both "Arthur and Medraut fell". No mention is made of their being in opposition.

Mordred's character, shaped by his Orkneys childhood, makes him tough but less evil than many. He has his own strengths and weaknesses: resourcefulness and ambition, coolness and detachment. Later on this makes him exceedingly powerful.

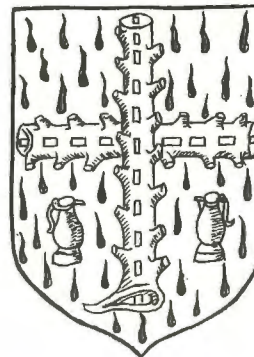
Mordred is aware of the prophecy regarding Arthur's fate as in his hands which is made by Merlin in the earlier trilogy--this is a thread which Mary Stewart decided to keep. When he begins to love Arthur as his father, he tries desperately to rid himself of the awesome burden, but learns that "fate has more than one arrow."

Mordred increases in power as Mary Stewart has him do "undercover work" for Arthur, keeping his eye on the bloodlusting sons of Morgause--his brothers. He certainly has the taste for eventual kingship--and also for Guinevere, though this is not returned, so he readily takes charge and eventually regentship and the care of Guinever in Arthur's absence, whilst their enemies move in from all directions.

News arrives that Arthur has fallen on the Burgundy battlefield and from thereon false messages, misunderstandings and suspicions fall thick and fast. But I won't spoil any more of the story, of which these are the barest bones. The book arrives at Camlann on

(continued second page following

Lionel Smithett Lewis Glastonbury--Her Saints RILKO 1985
£4.95 (RILKO Books, B Hargreaves, 10 Kedleston Drive,
Orpington, Kent BR5 2DR)



Centwine, a king of Wessex, is supposed to have given Glastonbury the epithet "The Mother of Saints," and the author of Glastonbury uses it as his inspiration to examine all the holy men and women who have ever been associated with the Abbey and surrounding area. These include Joseph of Arimathea, of course, the patron saints of Wales and Ireland and even a couple of kings, as well as "the most wonderful tradition of all" recounted in Blake's poem Jerusalem.

Mr Lewis outlines virtually all the Christian legends about Glastonbury, both medieval and modern. The traditional connections with Patrick, David, Bridget, Gildas and Paulinus date back several centuries. Gildas almost certainly visited here, and once commented

that "on an island...the true Christ...conferred his rays, ie his teaching. This first happened, as we know, in the last stages of the reign of Tiberius Caesar by whom the religion was allowed to spread without hindrance."

Gildas' statement is startling because of its implications. The island, of course, is Britain. Tiberius died in 37 AD. What Gildas seems to be saying is that Christianity reached here before this date. This witness from the 6th century may have picked up from Glastonbury the core of a tradition which eventually involved Joseph and even Jesus.

L S Lewis was a staunch supporter of the Avalonian stories and argued enthusiastically for their essential truth, even if some of the details may have been fanciful. He was a champion of Frederick Bligh Bond, vilified for his spiritualist leanings but whose epitaph was "His life's work was service to Glastonbury Abbey". Lewis sensed, as many others do, that there is something special about this Somerset town that sets it apart.

Despite this, I must register a warning to new readers to approach the text with a fine-toothed comb. Many of the medieval legends of the saints of the Abbey owe their existence to the early 12th century On the Antiquity of Glastonbury by William of Malmesbury. Or, rather, to interpolations by later writers whose glosses were incorporated uncredited into the main text in successive copies. Lewis however prefers to believe that the normally critical William allowed inconsistencies and unsupported statements into his work. (Even the "Mother of Saints" epithet may have crept into a bogus charter of King Ine of Wessex designed to protect the Abbey's privileges.)

This reviewer does not believe that the Joseph of Arimathea connection was first committed to writing until after the 12th century. Yet, that Christianity arrived in Britain by the 2nd century (and was referred to in contemporary documents) is highly likely, and here I agree with Lewis and his interpretation of some of Eusebius, Tertullian and Origen.

It may be argued that the statement of Gildas quoted above was not

quite as specific as it seems to be (see, for example, H M Porter "Appendix on Glastonbury Legends", The Celtic Church in Somerset Bath 1971). What may be significant however is that the inhabitants of Britain were said to have received the teachings "unenthusiastically". Not so Mr Lewis, champion of the legends, and we must be grateful for his endeavours to gather together all the available evidence on which to base an opinion. All modern students of the Glastonbury tales must take the legends seriously if they are to get to the root of why the Isle of Avalon continues to exert its pull on pilgrims. What better starting point, than Glastonbury--Her Saints in this re-issue, with its handsome new cover by Joyce Hargreaves (showing Joseph, Arthur, Dunstan and Bridget) and its background note by Elizabeth Leader outlining its significance for new readers. This is a reprint of the second (1927) edition of the book.

Frances Howard-Gordon Glastonbury, Maker of Myths
Gothic Image, Glastonbury 1982 £3.95

This superbly printed and illustrated 68 page booklet is the ideal souvenir for visitors to mystic Avalon. It's all here--the Zodiac, the maze, the Abbey, the links with Arthur, Joseph of Arimathea, the Mother of God and the Mother Goddess. The colour and monochrome photos by Tom Eveson and Bob Ring are a delight, and complement the text well. It's a pity the text isn't more critical. As an example, John Michell's famous vesica piscis over the town plan is mentioned as laid down by geomancers, but of the three sites "marking intersections in the terrestrial geometry", one (the Market Cross) is Victorian "medieval", another (the Abbey fish pond) may only have come into existence between 1821 and 1844 (see the Proceedings of the Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society for 1982, p 40) and the last (the Catholic church) was only built in 1939 (as the writer herself mentions on p 59).

However, to follow all the ramifications of every myth, ancient and modern, would have made this work impossibly long, and a select bibliography points the way for researchers. As a basic introduction, a "brief and undetailed study", this work fills a vacuum, and asks the really pertinent question, "Why Glastonbury? Why all this myth-making in one particular place?"

Continued from two pages before
page 336 after many adventures.

Mary Stewart explains that her sources are Geoffrey of Monmouth and Malory for embellishment; the book is a gripping read for Arthurian buffs and adventure story addicts alike.

KATE POLLARD

WRITER/TEACHER, 53, fairly attractive, wants male pen-pal 43-63 (age no barrier) interested in things Arthurian.
Rosemary J Long worth, PO Box 1410, Vienna, IL 62995 USA

ADVERTISEMENT

Gareth Knight The Secret Tradition in Arthurian Legend
The Aquarian Press (Thorson's Publishing Group) £6.65



With a name like Gareth Knight, the author could no more avoid writing a book on the Arthurian Theme than the Freiburg parapsychologist Prof Han(d)s Bender could help investigating Uri gelle-type phenomena. (All right, you disbelievers; check! Synchronicity rules; OK?) I now avidly await a book on tree-cropping by our esteemed secretary, Kate Pollard.

The worry in reviewing the work of a practising occultist is that one has to be very careful what one says, or:

Words of dread;
Blinding flash;
No more Ed--
Pile of ash.

Which would hamper my future involvement with Arthur and Glastonbury considerably--unless, of course, I changed my first name to Geoffrey ...

The Secret Tradition does not pretend to be a book for the sceptic; Knight takes the authenticity of Atlantean lore for granted. "Those who choose not to believe it may find much of this book of questionable validity." His initial aim is not to establish the truth of the Secret Tradition or of the Arthurian Legends but to correlate their symbolism.

Now Bertrand Russell considered that a mathematical web of some sort could be woven about any universe containing several objects. Similarly, one can weave a literary web about any group of ideas or events. However pure one's intentions, the structuring process is inevitably influenced by the desired end, and some--though not all--of the author's interpretations do appear to have a rather contrived character.

Thus, referring to Arthur's pursuit of the great hart, he says: "Their horses drop from beneath them, signifying the fading away of the lower physical consciousness." Does it? It could also mean that Arthur and his companions, riding high with their heads in the clouds, are brought down to earth with a bump.

This is not to say that the author's interpretation is wrong--merely that it is arbitrary. Gareth Knight, a lecturer and consultant on Jungian archetypal symbolism, himself acknowledges the subjective character of individual assessments: "Personal or literary fancy merely interprets or embroiders these emanations of the group or racial consciousness... stepping them down to the needs and modes of expression of a particular place and time."

A fellow-traveller where the occult is concerned (I never drive round a roundabout anti-clockwise and always hang garlic over my door to keep out the Inland Revenue) I accept this group emanation idea--especially in view of the archetypal implications of the theories of Rupert Sheldrake which have recently had a degree of statistical confirmation. Subliminal influences (Sheldrake's morphogenetic fields?) may well be operating behind the scenes, reverberating archaic chords in later ages; transcending time to

maintain the tradition.

But where is one to draw the line between a genuine harmony and imaginary associations? And to what extent does "creative visual imagination" (a phrase used by Knight in an earlier book A History of White Magic) play a part?

The author rejects the "framework of assumptions imposed by the current intellectual establishment" and anticipates support from "recent discoveries and realizations in modern physics and other disciplines." He could usefully have gone into more detail about these "discoveries and realizations" which clearly sanction some of his conclusions, if only by themselves abandoning conventional concepts.

Thus the Copenhagen Interpretation of Quantum Mechanics, cogent as ever after more than half a century, has it that "a complete understanding of reality lies beyond the capabilities of rational thought." Probably, then, any convincing link-up between the Tradition and the Legend could only be perceived intuitively, not analytically. Max Planck, author of The Quantum Theory, refers to "an aim which the poetic intuition may apprehend but which the intellect can never fully grasp."

Quantum mechanics also underwrites the effect of "creative visual imagination". Observers frequently discover what they expect to be there--by "collapsing the probability wave-function into a defined state." True, the Copenhagen Interpretation relates to microcosmic phenomena, but Prof H R Stapp, physicist at Lawrence Berkeley laboratories, referring to the theorem of physicist John Bell of CERN, says: "It puts the dilemma posed by quantum phenomena clearly into the realm of macroscopic phenomena..." Our ordinary ideas about the world are somehow profoundly deficient."

In quantum mechanical jargon, then, creative imagination could conceivably "collapse the archetypal probabilities of the Arthurian into defined states." Shadows could become substance...

Says Prof Paul Davies: "Events without causes, ghost images, reality triggered only by observation--all must apparently be accepted on the experimental evidence." Says Gareth Knight: "the operator's realizations may bring about change in the environment." (So lay off the ridicule, you Pendragons: I didn't invent the rules!)

In 1982 Prof Alain Aspect of Paris conducted an experiment which demonstrated that particles, once in contact with each other, may continue to interact across time and space in an unknown manner--defying the conventional laws of cause and effect. Knight considers that traditions, myths and legends may do the same.

And why not? Philosopher Sir Karl Popper believes that these entities possess a validity of their own, occupying one level of his three-level model of reality. They can, therefore (in the words of Dr Lyall Watson in Lifetide) "become... a source of further activity and materialization." As Knight says: "If a group meditates upon a constructive image sufficiently intensely it will become imbued with power and knowledge which will remain available for another group at a later time. who will be able to draw from this form as if it had an independent existence of its own."

Now for a little synchronistic diversion. Aspect's experiment was

designed to test Bell's Theorem. The modus operandi of the Bell interaction is completely unknown, functioning as it apparently does at superluminal (faster-than-light) speeds--which excludes it from our familiar (?) space-time continuum. So it can reasonably be argued that it "comes from another level of existence to perform certain tasks."

This phrase was not used by Alain Aspect or by John Bell but by Gareth Knight himself about--wait for it!--that familiar Arthurian theme, Le Bel Inconnu. Le Bel Inconnu: the Bell Unknown!

Now if I were an unprincipled, web-weaving wordsmith, I would continue to pile on the synchronistic agony. I am, so I will. In the late 12th century, a book called Le Bel Inconnu (The Beautiful Unknown) was written by one Renaud de Beaujeu, whose name can be translated "Fair hand" (as in card games). Now Malory's "beautiful unknown knight" was Gareth, who used the cognomen Beaumains, or Fair hands! Additionally, Gareth is the first name of our own Occult (Unknown?) Knight--though not having met him I cannot vouch for his beauty.

So it is that:

By craft, coincidence and quantum,
Past themes live on while people wantum.

(Eat your heart out, Tennyson!)

Back to the serious stuff... In the light of quantum mechanics, then, there is more to the Secret Tradition than debatable symbolic correspondences. Written by a man whose lucid style is matched by encyclopaedic knowledge, it is a fairly comprehensive survey of the whole occult, mystical and romantic theme, and maintains a high moral tone throughout.

Knight's passages on the Grail Quest and its meaning for our times make stimulating reading. "The story," he says, "is not yet ended, and it remains an inspiration, instruction and challenge for later generations to build the realm of Logres and all that can go with it... it is a living Mystery Tradition... reinterpreted for different times and seasons." This echoes Geoffrey Ashe's remark that Avalon and Camelot look forwards as well as backwards ("The ancient quests can still be renewed") and Richard Cavendish's view that "in our age of uncertainty, the central Arthurian theme has a particular urgency and appeal."

Physicist Fritjof Capra says: "Science does not need mysticism and mysticism does not need science; but man needs both." Occultist Gareth Knight writes of "two principles--science opposed... faith ... it is time they met in a complementary and reciprocal relation."

Beware, then, of insular attitudes. It is a mistake to be either too worldly or too whimsical. As Sir Mortimer Wheeler tells us: "The archaeologist may find the tub but altogether miss Diogenes." Nature, it has been said, is not divided into departments like universities. Deep understanding, then requires a multilateral approach.

It is also necessary to abandon, with the physicists, the classical idea of the "detached observer". There is no such thing. "Quantum theory," says Capra, "has introduced the concept of the participator to replace that of the observer, and may even find it necessary to include the human consciousness in its description of the world" (my emphasis). Participation in the Matter of Britain

is implicit in an evocative sentence of Knight's about "building strongly and systematically in the imagination the pictures of... Avalon and... the great church or temple of the Grail."

Should we then--in this twentieth century, with quantum mechanics as our authority--abandon detached attitudes and participate in the Arthurian saga--seeking to materialize its redemptive archetypes? As Mahatma Gandhi said when asked what he thought of Western civilization: "Ah! Now that would be a good idea!"

With the survival of Western--and Eastern--civilization in the balance, it may be that an unconscious, archetype-inspired realization of the need to do something about it lies at the root of our interest in Arthur--that lone champion of sanity in an earlier Dark Age...

EDDIE TOOKE



from the Gundestrup cauldron

Nikolai Tolstoy The Quest for Merlin Hamish Hamilton 1985 £12.95

Nikolai Tolstoy's book is the product of a long-standing obsession: to discover the real Merlin hiding behind the archetype. His search has taken him far afield, in both time and space, to the shamanistic practitioners of Siberia, the Druids who left their mark on the history of the Celtic world, and through the tortuous coils of the Arthurian legends.

In the course of following this splendid route, he has discovered much that adds to an overall picture of Merlin--the traces of shamanism, the folkloristic elements in the stories relating to him, the sites where he may once have lived and prophesied.

Yet despite all this richness I was somehow disappointed. By concentrating more or less exclusively on the fragments of history and lore buried in the corpus of Merlin literature, Tolstoy emerges with an almost coherent picture--but is it of the real Merlin? It seems to me that by choosing to ignore the mystical side of Merlin's character, and by failing to take into account the whole of the archetype, much is lost, and that what we are left with is far from the whole story.

This said, I must confess that I have nothing but admiration for Tolstoy's painstaking scholarship and knowledge of the Celtic world. His identification of Hart Fell as a possible retreat for the authentic Merlin figure, is a fascinating piece of detective work.

Yet still I am dissatisfied. Tolstoy's apparent denial, early in the book, that myth possesses any objective reality outside a function for explaining archetypal truths perhaps lies at the undoubted heart of this unease. In the same way Merlin is denied any reality beyond a doubtful historical one--anything more is explained away at the end of the book as psychological imagery.

Any recommendation, then, must be a qualified one, and I await still the definitive Merlin book (Bob Stewart's soon to be published Vision of Merlin may fulfil this need) which will reveal more of the character who is reputed to have said:

"Because I am dark and always shall be, let my book be dark and mysterious in those places where I will not show myself."

JOHN MATTHEWS

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Andrew Collins The Brentford Griffin Earthquest Books 1985
£1.25 from 19 St Davids Way, Wickford, Essex SS11 8EX



This highly readable and profusely illustrated account of sightings of a griffin in modern suburban London boils down to one apparently genuine vision of the winged beastie.

But Andy Collins' reports are always full of synchronous events, ambivalent personalities and curious facts, so this bizarre chronicle is not such a straightforward case of an apparent hoax on the gullible as might at first appear.

So, if you're interested in history, heraldry, urban folklore, place-names, psychic phenomena, local political intrigue, and cryptozoology, then this is a book for you. One writer, Peter Costello, thinks the origin of the fabulous griffin is to be found in the Bearded Vulture. What the origin of the Brentford Griffin is, however, is another matter.

CHRIS LOVEGROVE

Andrew Collins The Running Well Mystery The Supernaturalist 1983
£1.85 o/p

Andrew Collins The Knights of Danbury Earthquest Books 1985
£1.95 from 19 St Davids Way, Wickford, Essex SS11 8EX

To achieve a balanced view of either of these books by Andrew Collins is virtually impossible. Mr Collins fills his work with myriad unqualified statements and uses a logic base that runs from a fractional plus to a minus integer in the space of a short sentence. Only those readers of the "sit tight and believe" school will find either book tolerable.

The Running Well Mystery is really a "Five Go Mad in Essex" saga, all leylines, geomancy, ancient knowledge and "What is the secret of the Black Magic (sic) Box", or, as it is in this case, a piece of medieval tomb decoration. Mr Collins takes the legends and folk tales of one Essex parish and finds in them the chariot of Ezekial, the Secret of the Universe and who poisoned Uncle Arthur's cat, all in one go. Heaven only knows what he would come

up with if let loose in the West Country: Cargo Cults in Shepton Mallet and the source of the Easter Island heads in Radstock probably. This is not to say of course that Mr Collins' claim of a millenia-old landscape geometry is not recorded on a 14th century tomb; or that his Essex village was the site of a mysterious religious cult, but the application of Occam's Razor to his conclusions would surely raise his "still, small voice" a good octave in pitch!

The Knights of Danbury is another "village" investigation, again in mystic Essex. This time Mr Collins excels himself with regard to the topicality and breadth of his frames of reference. Yes, it's all here--Templars, Holy Blood, Freemasons, secret societies, zodiacs, heraldry, psychic messages, Gnosticism and Egyptiana, in a volume replete with photographs of such relevance as "Danbury Post Office" circa 1915 and "the local bus", 1909. It reads like one of the duller sections of The Hitch Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy (Douglas Adams please forgive me). The book begins with a preface which states that it has been written from an Earth Mysteries viewpoint (do not confuse with Stonehenge Viewpoint); it goes on to tell us that Earth Mysteries is a "multi-disciplinary subject of free thought". Mr Collins, having abrogated the entire field, concentrates on "free thought" quite free of rationality, understanding or humility: he merrily quotes other authors habitually out of context to support his merest fancies.

Taking the historical finding of a preserved corpse in the parish church at Danbury, Mr Collins builds a story that is ludicrous in the extreme; he would have us believe that the ancient Egyptians circa 3000-1200 BC passed on their knowledge of embalming to the Islamic world 700+ AD, who then gave it to the Knights Templar 1113-1312 AD, who then became the repository of all knowledge for corpse preservation during the Middle Ages. It should be pointed out that Egyptian mummification involves the total removal of the viscera, a practice quite unacceptable to any Christian believing in actual bodily resurrection, and that anyway the preservation of Egyptian mummies is 90% due to the dessicating climate of North Africa.

The ramblings of Mr Collins should really remain unmentioned other than to disassociate them from the work of writers who have dealt intelligently and honestly with the subjects so successfully rubbished by Mr Collins.

HUGH DE BRIS

Brian Larkman, Philip Heselton Earth Mysteries: An Exploratory Introduction Northern Earth Mysteries Group 1985 £1.00 plus postage from 170 Victoria Ave, Hull, HU5 3DY

In terms of what it sets out to do--to provide "a short general introduction to Earth Mysteries at a reasonable price"--this well-produced booklet is very successful. It summarises certain "alternative" ways of looking at the environment and ecology which have become particularly popular in the past decade, specifically man's relationship with and response to the Earth as an organism. You may not agree with all the concepts expounded here--ancient alignments, terrestrial zodiacs, psychic archaeology, secret traditions --but the authors for the most part pursue reasonable arguments and the intelligent reader will separate the wheat from the chaff.

Philip Heselton, Jimmy Goddard, Paul Baines
Skyways & Landmarks Revisited Northern Earth Mysteries Group
 (170 Victoria Ave, Hull HU5 3DY) & Surrey Earth Mysteries Group
 1985 £1.00 from Philip Heselton (plus postage)

William Bloom and Marko Pogacnik Leylines and Ecology
 1985 95p from Gothic Image, 7 High Street, Glastonbury



These are further slim volumes which avoid giving explanation or reasoned argument; but are less offensive to the thoughtful reader by dint of a certain humility of writing. Both are really about forms of philosophy which the reader may accept or reject according to taste; there are no pretensions to historical or archaeological discoveries here.

Skyways & Landmarks Revisited is an evaluation by the authors (creators of The Ley Hunter magazine way back in 1965) of the work of their mentor of long ago, one Tony Wedd. Wedd believed in the UFO connection with ley lines and this book deals with the sites on the South Downs that Mr Wedd considered important. It is not without some charm and even if one finds the UFO theory an anathema this remains a pleasant catalogue of of certain flights of human fancy.

Leylines and Ecology is more directly philosophical and more easily shot with holes. The authors' sincerity can not be doubted, though their mix of physics, Dion Fortunism, and Eastern Mysticism is pretty ungainly.

The ley lines here are those of the "distributive energy system"; the authors apply many qualities to this energy, not the least being that it is the source of Bliss. This presumably is the Bliss that features in Hindu mysticism, Bliss being a translation of the Sanskrit word Anand which may be more properly read as Heavenly Bliss. In Hindu thought Anand is all-pervading, though man may not perceive it as such. According to Bloom and Pogacnik however such Bliss runs only in lines. And they even give a picture of what these lines look like in cross-section: all spirals and double helices.

There is little new to be found here; those who have read Guy Underwood, Tom Graves and John Michell will be familiar with all that is said. It is a book for those who want to find their salvation at Stonehenge or Glastonbury Tor and who believe that famines can be solved by activating blind springs. The spirit of '66 lives on.

HUGH DE BRIS

Carl T Endemann Voyage into the Past Alta Napa Press, 1969 Mora Ave, Calistoga, Calif 94515 1981 \$10.90



This book is the antithesis of Ian Wilson's Reincarnation? (Penguin 1982) which came to the conclusion that remembrance of past lives was not proved but instead gave a fascinating insight into the spontaneous creativity of the Unconscious. However, if, like Carl T Endemann, you personally meet someone you mutually recognise from 700 years ago, feel affinity with certain languages, locations and cultures, and experience strange coincidences, it is easier to believe in reincarnation than to imagine complicated alternative theories. Add to that 144 eminent historical personages and the many adherents of a few major religions who also believe, and it may seem churlish to doubt. Yet this reviewer is not convinced--

is it healthy scepticism or cultural prejudice? For converts, however, the poems which make up a good half of the book may evoke more vividly than prose the author's own remembered past lives.

Harold Morland The Matter of Britain Graal Publications, 9 St Clement's Mansions, Lillie Rd, London SW6 7PG 1984 £3.95

The Matter of Britain is the name given to the mythology of this island as recorded in the medieval period. It treats principally with the Arthurian legends, just as the Matter of France dealt with Charlemagne. This makes it the ideal title for a series of haiku poems dealing with Elaine, Perceval, Merlin, Vivian, Morgan, Kay, Yseult, Mordred and the rest. But though placed in a medieval setting, Morland's poems get inside the head of each of these characters. We see them not merely as archetypes or symbols, but as humans, with strengths and weaknesses, fears and aspirations, blindneses and insights. I won't make the mistake of wrenching a simile or metaphor out of context for the purposes of quotation. I will only say that this philistine reviewer, normally jaundiced against would-be born-again Malories, saw the Arthurian cycle anew; the freshness has yet to evaporate.

Carl Heinz Kurz The Singer with the High Hat Alta Napa Press, Calistoga, Calif 94515 1984 \$4.95

This is the moving story of Süsskind von Trimberg, a minnesinger or German troubadour who spent most of his poetic life on the move, and died in obscurity in 1241. Perhaps minnesinger is the wrong word, because Süsskind did not sing about the traditional subject minne or "high love", but about the human condition in general. This was not always popular with the patrons of his art, nor with his fellow believers, for Süsskind was that rarity, a Jewish poet in a Gentile world. The high hat of the title was part of the distinguishing clothing Jews of the time had to wear, thanks to Pope Innocent. Süsskind was doubly marked out. The poet,

Carl Heinz Kurz writes in the first person, and shows a natural empathy with someone who, like himself, has had to suffer deprivations and travel widely to follow his chosen craft.

Nigel Pennick Natural Measure (70p incl postage) The Cosmic Axis (£1.20 incl postage) Runestaves & Oghams (£1.30 incl postage)
O S Reuter Skylöre of the North ("Germanische Himmelskunde" trans M Behrend: £1.20 incl postage)
Runestaff Publications, 142 Pheasant Rise, Bar Hill, Cambridge.
CB3 8SD 1985



Four more titles are here added to Nigel Pennick's growing Runestaff Publications' library (the first two dealt with labyrinths and with ancient board games in Northern Europe). The titles to some extent speak for themselves, dealing, as they do, with northern traditions and their relevance to us moderns. Unlike many such publications, Runestaff goes direct to the work of early insular and continental scholars instead of more derivative modern works, and this gives the contents of the books rather special significance.

And they are all rather good value too, eschewing frills and glossy hype and exaggerated claims. Worth supporting.

"Cennydd" The Holy Grail and the Red Dragon

No price, but probably about 50p plus postage, from K Rees, 429 Pentregethin Road, Gendros, Swansea, West Glam, SA5 8AQ. 1984

The author here touches on several themes relevant to Welsh legend, the Dark Ages and the Gower peninsula in particular. He mentions the legendary history of Hu Gadarn, culture hero of the ancient Cymry, who brought a code of morals and conduct from ancient Sumer to Britain. He then moves on to the story of Joseph and his nephew Jesus coming to Glastonbury, the raising of the red dragon standard by Arthur, and the Age of the Saints in Britain during the so-called Dark Ages. In a special section on the Gower he points out the many links the area has with the Celtic holy men and women of the period, including Teilo, Illtyd, Cattwg, Fili, David, Cennydd, Madoc, and Rhidian.

Ken Rees has obviously tried hard to link a lot of interesting subject areas together, but to an outsider coming fresh upon these ideas the effect must be very confusing. To a reader who already knows something about the material mentioned, the reaction is puzzlement over the author's intentions. Part of the problem is working in isolation, and if a revised edition is being considered (which may be worth doing) the author should consult with others to avoid the pitfalls he has unwittingly already met in both subject presentation and production.

Jeremy Harte The Dragon of Christchurch

South-Western Antiquarian Society Occasional Paper No 1, 1985
About £1.00 from J Harte, 35a West St, Abbotsbury near Weymouth, Dorset



As befits the publication of an antiquarian society, this booklet has the splendidly full title of "The Dragon of Christchurch/ and other wonders seen on a journey through the West of England in 1113/ from Hermann of Laon's Miracles of Our Lady/ translated with notes by Jeremy Harte". The occasion was a fund-raising mission made by French canons to rebuild their church destroyed by fire.

Pendragons will recall the story of the punch-up resulting from a Cornishman's claims that King Arthur still lived, but the tales of spiteful miracles and religious gullibility are interspersed with accounts of Bristol slave-traders, suicides, ecclesiastical rivalry and the dragon of the title. There is an introduction, notes, appendix and bibliography as well as the excellent readable translation. Recommended.

Rodney Castleden The Wilmington Giant
Turnstone Press 1983 £5.95

This is an odd book, of equal parts interest and annoyance. Of immediate irritation is the clichéd insertion of a piece of inspiring poetry at the beginning of each chapter.

Mr Castleden begins the book by making a reasonable study of the numerous historic interpretations of the Wilmington hill figure's origins; alas, he soon becomes embroiled in making favourable arguments for innumerable theories, only to spend many further pages arguing strongly against them. The reader soon becomes lost in his rhetoric and those good and interesting points that are made are left hidden amongst the verbiage.

After plodding through the plethora of origin theories, the author eventually "comes clean" and admits to having a commitment to a particular view: he believes the Giant to be a Neolithic work. To support this theory, Mr Castleden quotes much from archaeological texts; this though does not stop him from taking regular swipes at "grave-robbing" excavators. It is obvious that the author has read a great deal on the archaeology of Sussex, but he lacks skill in making reasoned deductive arguments from his reading. At one point he naively suggests direct contact between Pharaonic Egypt and Britain on the basis that beads of Egyptian manufacture have been found in Neolithic horizons; these are tiny in number and surely represent diffuse trading!

Selected Neolithic sites in the vicinity of Wilmington are considered in an attempt to find corroboration for the "Neolithic Giant" and some good points are raised, but the paucity of hard evidence leaves much of the substance of the book as speculation.

As a first book it is not a bad try; Mr Castleden's worst fault is

to write without a grain of humour; it is perhaps some sort of achievement to make Atkinson or Daniel seem like a laugh a minute. Worth a visit to your library but not the £5.95 to add it to your bookshelf.

HUGH DE BRIS

John Matthews (ed) At the Table of the Grail Routledge and Kegan Paul 1984 £5.95



In this book twelve questers who have savoured the dishes they most desired at the table of the Grail describe the insights they have gained by being present. These are not strictly academic essays--though evidence of scholarship is here--but imaginative and personal responses after many years' study and meditation.

Certain themes re-appear in various contributions. The importance of the feminine principle--reflected perhaps in five of the authors being women--is re-iterated to counterbalance the male-dominated world of knights and combats. Caitlin Matthews, in "Sophia: Companion on the Quest", points out the relationship between the Grail Maiden and the Hideous Damsel (Cundrie), and connects them with the ancient Goddess in various guises--as Sovereignty, as the Shekinah in Jewish traditions, as Wisdom or Sophia in Gnostic Christianity who is also the Holy Spirit, who for us is in voluntary exile from Heaven. Helen Luke's "Return of Dindrane" talks of the problems of women priests in the Christian tradition and discusses the significance of Percival's sister giving freely of her blood to become a redemptive sacrificial victim.

Questing for the Grail is a personal journey which involves psychological transformation before achievement is attained. Hannah Closs (who died in 1953) notes in her essay ("The Meeting of the Waters") that "the way of the Grail is the way of self-recognition, of acceptance of the Shadow" archetype of Jungian psychology. Other archetypes are met with in Dolores Ashcroft-Nowicki's "The Path to the Grail" where the reader is invited to embark on a creative meditation, imbuing characters met with on a quest story with a life of their own. Lois Lang-Sims ("The Desire of the Heart: a Meditation") also suggests that a development of

one's perception needs to take place before the quest is achieved: "The quest IS the question. When the goal is achieved the question simply answers itself." The question and answer of disciple and master is a feature of many philosophies and religious teachings--when the question is asked with a pure motive, the answer is ready to be revealed.

Was the Grail real? Brian Cleeve ("The World's Need") believes in an occult tradition which claims that the son of Joseph of Arimathea took a terracotta cup from John the Evangelist and brought it to Britain. Encased in a medieval gold chalice reliquary it was stolen in London in 1908 and eventually destroyed. One of its companion relics was the "Antioch" chalice, now in New York.

Bob Stewart ("The Grail as Bodily Vessel") on the other hand believes a different occult tradition where the cruets of blood and water brought by Joseph to Britain symbolise the female and male offspring of Jesus. Not the literal descendants of Jesus recently popularised by Holy Blood, Holy Grail (or Ravenscroft's Cup of Destiny) but the spiritual reincarnations who have contributed to a secret lore of "genetic magic" concerning controlled fertility and timed conceptions. This Gnostic form of ancestor worship, Stewart asserts, is the basis of the peculiar variation of the grail archetype as two cruets, met with in Robert de Boron's version of the legends.

Other occult traditions are examined by Adam McLean ("Alchemical transmutation") and Gareth Knight ("Merlin and the Grail"). Personally, I found the latter contribution quite the most tedious in this collection with its unsubstantiated assertions and self-opinionated criticisms (Brian Cleeve's essay was runner-up). Geoffrey Ashe's "The Grail of the Golden Age" and John Matthews' "Temples of the Grail" put the subject very much more successfully into its historical and geographical contexts. This left "Glatissant", Peter Lamborn Wilson's piece, a creative re-working of themes from the Grail canon, to complete the dozen writings. For readers interested in the spiritual significance of the legends this work gives plenty to think about.

CHRIS LOVEGROVE



N BRIEF. Some books we have had our notice drawn to include Anthony Mockler, King Arthur and his Knights £8.95 Oxford Books for Children. A "new version of the great stories of the Forest" (?) illustrated by Nick Harris.

The Romance of Arthur edited by James L Wilhelm and Laila Zamuelis Gross. A single volume anthology of new translations of Arthurian material in Latin chronicles, early Welsh tradition, Geoffrey, Chretien, Malory etc (\$39 or \$15 pbk ONLY from Garland Publishing Inc, 136 Madison Ave, New York, NY 10016. Also from Garland, an important publication The Arthurian Encyclopaedia, edited by the President of the International Arthurian Society, Norris J Lacy, must rank high on any Pendragon booklist: 700 pages, 49 illustrations and \$60. More details from Garland Publishing, 15 Bolton Street, London W1Y 7PA and next issue.

Ellen Cooney's The Quest for the Holy Grail is 77 poems on the Grail legend first published in 1981 (Duir Press, \$5.95 plus \$1 mailing costs, 919 Sutter St No 9, San Francisco CA 94109 USA.

Letter:

DEAD WAITE BOBS TO THE SURFACE?

* From Robert Coon, Glastonbury:

I feel it my duty to reply to Mr R A Gilbert's incompetent review of my book, Elliptical Navigations, which recently appeared in Pendragon (XVII 1). It takes no courage whatsoever for me to say that rarely in the history of esoteric book reviewing has so much vile and misleading verbiage been foisted on the readers of this journal. I pray that the editors of Pendragon think very carefully before soliciting Mr Gilbert to review another book. May he confine himself in the future to what he IS excellent at--collecting and selling old and obscure books.

The following is a paragraph-by-paragraph commentary on Gilbert's astonishing parade of errors and absurdities:

He accuses me of immodesty because my biography (or "curriculum vitae", as Mr Gilbert the A E Waite scholar terms it) states that I have "been initiated into all major world religions." Surely Mr Gilbert should calm down, relax, and recall--himself being an historian of certain esoteric groups--that any fool can be initiated into a spiritual tradition as a neophyte. The biography does not claim, and neither do I, that I have been made Pope or Archbishop yet! Perhaps the following euphemism would be more pleasing to the Gilbert palate: "has been an enthusiastic student of Comparative Religion for 17 years..."?

He brands the play "The Adventures of Aleister Crowley" a "worthless piece of magical theatre." Did Mr Gilbert actually travel all the way from

Bristol to subject his tender sensibilities to this comedy that was well received by a vast majority of the audience? It is surprising to learn that Mr Gilbert is also a pudding theatre critic.

He objects to my ranking Mr Crowley as the greatest Cabalist of the 20th century; and prefers Gershom Scholem, Martin Buber, and Dion Fortune. I would like to point out that Crowley is highly regarded as a Cabalist by such scholars as Israel Regardie, Colin Wilson, and many others. Gilbert's intellectual conservatism in Cabalistic issues is made quite clear in his 3-part series on Cabala which appeared in Pendragon during 1976. He brands as "bizarre" and "nonsensical" the viewpoint of Eliphas Levi, "who calimed (sic) to see in the Kabbalah a Universal Doctrine containing the synthesis and summation of all religions..." Instead, Gilbert--whilom Reader in Psychology at a nearby University--sees Cabala as an "essentially Jewish" psychiatric aid, "having been born within Judaism for the consolation of Israel in the time of the Greater Exile." This is the same as saying that the Sun newspaper exists for the consolation of perverts unable to live in Soho. I prefer the more universal position of Levi expressed above--as do the vast majority of mystics who have experienced the living wisdom of Cabala.

Dion Fortune wrote a book on Cabala, Crowley did not. Apparently Mr Gilbert feels secure in his judgments only when he has a solid book in hand. The letter killeth, but the Spirit Lives... Cabala is an oral tradition--Crowley understood this and mastered its application in his daily life. I do recommend the COMPLETE works of Gershom Scholem on page 67 of my book. Buber is excellent at conveying the spirit of the Jewish Hasidic tradition,

but is of little use to the practising Cabalist. However, his definition of Cabala on page 215 of The Legend of the Baal-Shem is superb: Cabala is "knowledge to be transmitted ONLY by word of mouth."

Gilbert rashly claims that Cabala originated after 70 AD! Yet any Jewish mystic will tell you that Cabala is an oral tradition that can be traced back through Solomon, Moses, and ultimately to the Godhood itself. Mr Gilbert is very selective, to say the least, in calling upon Jewish WRITTEN authority to attack my book. It simply isn't cricket, Mr Gilbert, to totally ignore certain traditions of Cabala on one hand; and then to call upon the authority of the Sepher Yetzirah to refute my structural portrayal of the Restored Millennial Tree of Life with its 13 spheres. You claim my "total ignorance" of the Sepher Yetzirah. I am sorry to disillusion you, Mr Gilbert, but I have an extensive library of Jewish Cabalistic literature, including three different translations of the Sepher Yetzirah, which I have enthusiastically studied for over a decade. As you use the Yetzirah as an infallible authority to condemn my point of view, I would like to ask you this: From what year do the WRITTEN texts of Cabalism begin to contain only absolute truth--and since what year should I stop believing everything I read in print?

I consider the Tree of Life as a Living Tree that is growing and evolving exciting new spheres and pathways. Mr Gilbert, if you are a close student of Gershom Scholem, then you should be aware that the 10-sphere Tree is known traditionally as the "Fallen" Tree, reflective of humanity's imperfective state outside the Garden of Eden. The Hasidic doctrine of Tikkun (the spiritual repairing of "broken vessels" in an attempt to uplift and restore



this earth--including the Image of the Tree--to Edenic perfection); the tradition of "the Beard of Truth and its 13 springs are fountains" as contained in Mathers' translation of parts of the Zohar, The Kabbalah Unveiled; and the Mayan prophecy of "13 Heavens, and the Tree of Life shall blossom with a fruit never before known in the Creation" as developed in the writings of the American Indian, Tony Shearer--all provide an ample and respected ancestry for my own development of "13 sphere" Cabala.

Mr Gilbert makes two very incredible mistakes in this same paragraph of unremitting assaults upon my innovative Cabalistic work. He wrongly and rashly claims that "Enochian Cabala... has never had any existence in time or tradition outside the drivellings of Aleister Crowley." I regret to inform Mr Gilbert that Mr Crowley, whom he obviously holds a low opinion of, NEVER wrote a single word concerning Enochian Cabala! To the contrary, Crowley was very conservative in his treatment of Cabala, Perhaps Mr Gilbert is confusing Enochian Cabala with Enochian Magic--which is a totally different discipline. Yet even this possible confusion would not exonerate Gilbert in the least, for

Enochian magic did not originate with Crowley, but was developed from the work of Dee and Kelly by the Golden Dawn prior to Crowley's association with that Magical Order.

Mr Gilbert, it is time to cease your ignorant ranting on and on about the "drivellings" of Crowley, my "lunatic attributions" and "total ignorance" etc etc ad nauseam--to stop wasting the better part of three pages of Pendragon attacking me; and to look deeply into the mirror and begin to correct your own glaring faults.

I must now point out the most sad error among the many contained in paragraph 5 of Gilbert's inane rant. It fully illustrates his sorry and amateurish approach as a book reviewer. He says that "even Crowley would not be so crassly ignorant as to number the Fool XXII rather than 0." This one statement epitomizes Gilbert's irresponsible tactics. He brands me as crassly ignorant and implies that Crowley was quite ignorant himself. However, once again, our foolhardy reviewer builds upon a non-existent foundation. The problem is this: Nowhere in my text do I number the Fool Tarot card XXII! Any schoolboy who has managed to get his CSE in English would not be confused on this point. In plain terms, Mr Gilbert is putting false ideas into my book that are not there and then calling me names based on these non-existent statements! And Mr Gilbert has not the excuse of "careless reading" to offer us in hope of obtaining remission for his sins, because he uses the same technique of misquote and attack later in his review--as I shall clearly show.

The Roman numerals are NOT the numbers of tarot cards, but are the numbers of PATHWAYS of the Tree of Life DIAGRAM as shown on page 46 of my text. I quote from

page 48: "There are two major arcana tarot cards governing each pathway marked by Roman numerals in the above diagram." It takes no cabalistic expertise whatsoever for a reader of my book to: A. Turn to "the above diagram" on page 46, B. notice the 24 Roman numerals MARKING 24 PATHWAYS, C. consult the table on pages 48-9 and D. discover that the Fool is attributed to the pathway connecting Kether to Chokmah (Pluto to Neptune in planetary terms) descending the Tree; and to the pathway between Malkuth and Yesod if ascending. I might add that the descending attribution of the Fool to the Kether-Chokmah pathway is quite traditional among contemporary occultists. Mr Gilbert brands my attributions "lunatic". He simply shows either a complete ignorance or else a total contempt of the historical evolution of angelic, planetary, and tarot attributions to pathways of the Tree of Life. The vast majority of my attributions are traditional. And in those areas where I am innovative, such as the assigning of the planets Uranus, Neptune and Pluto to the spheres Daath, Chokmah and Kether respectively--I do so with reverence for a Living Tree capable of assimilating every new advance in the evolution of either cosmology or the human spirit.

I must say, in response to Gilbert's 6th paragraph where he attempts to create a dualistic distinction between the sephiroth and the created universe, that my position is identical to William Blake's "Man has no Body separate from his Soul." Mr Gilbert seems to be an armchair cabalist. I doubt that he invokes angels. I care very little whether Saturn is considered a visible manifestation of the Hebrew sephiroth Binah--or whether Binah is regarded as the pure and unsullied essence within Saturn. Matter and Spirit

are One. And when it comes to the practical matter of teaching Cabala, I find that the usage of the planetary, rather than the Hebrew, names makes this ancient wisdom much more accessible to the contemporary student.

I have no complaints with Gilbert when he actually quotes me. I have shown his definition of of Gematria, followed by his quotation of my own, to several knowledgeable individuals: all without hesitation preferred mine as being in line with progressive thinking.

On to paragraph 7 and another load of mistakes and follies from Mr Gilbert... He begins by saying that Edward Kelley was not a "Sir". It is a well-known fact that Kelley WAS knighted by Rudolph II of Bohemia, who was certainly the ruler of a legitimate European state. Perhaps Gilbert takes the insular and chauvinistic position that the only real knighthood in the world is English!

He goes on to doubt whether Kelley ever visited Glastonbury, saying "there is not one shred of evidence." This is a most surprising claim from Mr Gilbert. It is well known in the town of Glastonbury that Dee and Kelley visited the Abbey C 1580. Turning to a standard and authoritative text, Alchemy by John Holmyard, we find this on page 204: "Some time before they left England, Dee and Kelly had journeyed to Somerset, where, in the ruins of Glastonbury Abbey, Kelly had the exceeding good fortune to unearth a supply of the philosopher's stone prepared by no less a person than St Dunstan." Inspired by his work at Glastonbury, Kelly wrote several alchemical texts based on his understanding of Dunstan. Mr Holmyard, a Somerset man, is a distinguished and respected scholar and was Chairman of the Society for the Study of Al-

chemy and Early Chemistry in 1957, the year of publication for the quote above.

I fail to understand why Gilbert is so hostile to everything in my book. I have encountered no other reader with his disparaging attitude. I also must regretfully inform the offended Mr Gilbert that my new book, The Search for Excalibur, will be published in 1985 as Glastonbury Paper No 2. One chapter of this work will contain a summary of my researches involving Dee and Kelly in Somerset, their Arthurian and alchemical work in the area, and their very important connections with the Dyer family of Glastonbury.



Continuing through the atrocities of Gilbert's paragraph 7: He once again misrepresents what I say and then uses his own error to attack me. He shakes the finger and takes me to task for claiming that the Rosicrucian movement originated in Glastonbury. The only problem with this, Mr Gilbert, is that I make no such statement anywhere in my book! If the curious reader will turn to page 35 of Elliptical Navigations, he or she will find this clear statement: "The Rosicrucian Movement originated with Glastonbury's own Dr John Dee and Edward Kelly." Again, I would suggest that this is not a lunatic raving idea emanating from my fevered imagination, but is simply a statement based upon the very best and most recent

scholarship concerning the origins of Rosicrucianism.

If the interested reader would like to form his own opinion regarding this particular issue, rather than bouncing back and forth like a shuttlecock between Gilbert's strong opinions and my own, I would suggest a thorough reading of the following works by England's foremost scholar of Elizabethan occultism--Dr Frances Yates: The Rosicrucian Enlightenment, The Theatre of the World, and The Occult Philosophy in the Elizabethan Age. From among dozens of possible quotes I offer the following representative: "The major influence behind the German Rosicrucian movement was UNDOUBTEDLY John Dee. One can hardly as yet realize what this means. John Dee now becomes a towering figure in the European scene." (The Rosicrucian Enlightenment, Paladin ed, p 265.)

Returning to the seemingly inexhaustible plethora of errors that Gilbert somehow manages to compress into paragraph 7, I must--along with 30,000 Ethiopian Jews--protest his abrupt denial of the Queen of Sheba's African connections. There are two traditions: a Moslem version stemming from the Koran which claims her as Arabian; and a strong and living Ethiopian heritage. Flavius Josephus, who wrote centuries before the Koran came into existence, stated categorically that Sheba was African. He called her "The Queen of Egypt and Ethiopia". This ties in with the Nubian dimension of Egyptian culture. The Ethiopian tradition is BOTH more ancient AND more alive today--witness the plight of Ethiopian Jews in the current famine--than is the Arabian. (Two works by the great Egyptologist, Sir E Wallis Budge are useful: A History of Ethiopia and The Queen of Sheba and her only Son Menyelek.

There exist to this day Cabalistic scholars in Haiti and Brazil who recognize Sheba as the founder of their traditions. These currents can easily be traced back to the West Coast of Africa and ultimately back to Ethiopia. I refer the interested reader to the learned and substantial work by the Haitian Milo Rigard (whose scholarship is deeply respected by Joseph Campbell), La tradition Voodoo haïtien (Paris: Editions Nidaus 1953).

Of special interest to Pendragons is the importance of a BLACK Queen of Sheba to the alchemical symbolism of von Eschenbach's Parzival. Belakane, the mother of Fierrefiz, is based upon the Ethiopian Queen. Numerous scholarly articles developing this theme can be traced in the pages of The Grail Legend by Jung and von Franz.

In paragraph 9 of his review (?), Gilbert once again distorts my text to serve his own hostile and ill-tempered purposes. He begins by accurately quoting me (p 57 of EN) concerning my belief that there exist a number of physically immortal humans who have fully attained the Holy Grail. However, Gilbert misleads when he continues: "he lists some fifty of these would-be immortals..." The lists he refers to is contained in a separate and earlier section of my book and clearly is not my roll call of historical immortals. Rather, I introduce the list with this statement: "Here are a few historical and LEGENDARY figures who have attained or ARE ASSOCIATED with Physical Immortality." Hence, his assault upon Paracelsus and Moroni as immortals is rather pointless. There exists a strong Alsatian tradition concerning the immortality of Paracelsus. Gilbert says that Paracelsus "MOST DEFINITELY died on September 24th, 1541." Perhaps he was an eye-witness to this

event! His tendency to use strong and authoritarian terms such as "most definitely" simply does not deceive anyone familiar with the various points under discussion. The faking of one's own death is a well-known tradition in alchemical literature and is an hypothesis that could resolve the mysterious circumstances and inconsistencies surrounding the supposed "death" of Paracelsus. Much greater detail concerning the biographies of "immortals" will be found in my forthcoming history of Immortalist Philosophy--The Enoch Effect. I might add that, contrary to Mr Gilbert's 100% hostile attitude, such scholars as Geoffrey Ashe and Paul Screeton have expressed their gratitude to me for my list of "would-be" immortals.

Mr Gilbert also manages to simultaneously reveal his ignorance of American Indian traditions involving Moroni and to insult the millions of members of the Mormon Church in the same sentence--no small achievement! The writings of the American Indian Tony Shearer, who is NOT a Mormon, clearly develop the connections between Moroni and the ancient Mayan city Palenque, where the golden plates of Moroni were originally kept. Gilbert calls my ancestor, Joseph Smith, an "ignorant, mendacious and ill-regarded pseudo-prophet." In response to this, i--who am not a Mormon--can only say that a much greater religious thinker than Mr Gilbert, Count Leo Tolstoy, held a very high regard for Joseph Smith and the original teachings of Mormonism.

Why Gilbert has wasted so much space in Pendragon with his abusive and misleading nonsense, I do not know. Any number of scholars with Arthurian interests would have done my book better justice--might I suggest Colin Wilson, John Michell, Geoffrey Ashe, Paul Screeton or Anthony Roberts as potential

reviewers of my Arthurian works scheduled to be published over the next few years? Any of these gentlemen would do a better and more CONSTRUCTIVE job than Mr R A Gilbert.

Finally, the greatest injustice that Gilbert inflicts upon the Pendragon readership is his absolute failure to mention in any context the extensive and pervading Arthurian-Holy Grail content of my book! In a journal devoted to Arthurian matters, this is simply incomprehensible and incompetent.

Mr Gilbert will undoubtedly be disheartened to hear that Elliptical Navigations has already sold out--a revised edition called Voyage to Avalon is being prepared. Perhaps I should personally deliver my next published "atrocity" to Mr Gilbert's doorstep in Bristol--would I be invited in for a cup of tea and an amiable chat???



A postscript informs me that copies of Robert Coon's "controversial" works on Arthurian subjects may be obtained from Helios, High Street, Glastonbury. They may even have a few EN in stock... Bob Gilbert's original review was in our "Glastonbury" edition; we may even have a few copies left of that...

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