

FACES OF MORGAN LE FAY

Pendragon

MIDSUMMER '88 EDITION



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Pendragon

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Pendragon investigated Arthurian History & Archaeology, and the
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are those of the writer concerned.

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(enclose S.A.E.)

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EDITORIAL (or the editor
surprised)

Wimbledon, West-country Hippie-bashing and greenfly are with us
simultaneously: it must be Midsummer again, and high time this
magazine was with you. However I only received Jacky Salter's
resignation yesterday, so in the absence of a proper editor, I shall
contrive to put this, the Morgan Le Fay edition together for you in a
couple of days snatched from work. So please overlook any extra
roughness in its presentation and lack of ornamentation. You, the
readership rose magnificently to the 'Morgan' challenge so I shall try
to rise to the Editor's chair with equal promptitude.

I hope you will enjoy these glimpses of Morgan's different faces:
'Taffy and the Morgan Index' is reproduced from the earlier CORNWALL
edition of PENDRAGON, which explains some odd references contained
therein.

The drawings, where indicated, were kindly done specially by
members Si Rouse and Jo Tovey, to whom I am very grateful and I am
pleased to be able to include them.

I am also grateful for the articles received, of course; please
keep them coming....and though it seems a bit much to ask, it'd be
wonderful if the typewritten ones could be double-spaced and on single
sides of an A4 sheet in the fond hope that I may not have to re-type
them! My typing is very slow, even with a word processor, and forms
the most arduous part of the magazine production task, if I'm to edit
as well as produce and distribute the magazine. But if you don't have
access to a typewriter, never mind, I'm grateful for your work anyway.

I have no set ideas for the next magazine's theme....except that
one member suggested something along the lines of 'The Appeal of the
popular Folk Hero'. As we have frequently pointed to thematic
similarities in the sagas of such worthies as, for
example, Beowulf, Caractacus, Robin Hood and Arthur, could we, perhaps,
explore this idea further? Or, as it will be the end of the tourist
season when the next magazine appears, could we look at surviving
local 'carnivals' and discuss the origins of some of our local
folk-lore heroes? As a widely distributed society we have geography
on our side in this respect. (The reader in question lives in
Nottingham, by the way!)

These are only suggestions. Don't let them put you off writing
something entirely different!

Meanwhile, back in Avalon..... Or Scotland.....

Kate Pollard.

MORGAN LE FAY & THE SACRED CAULDRON

David Pykitt



The relationship between the evil Queen Morgan Le Fay and the renowned King Arthur has been the subject of much discussion within literary circles for many years now, but the question still remains - who was Morgan Le Fay?

According to Sir Thomas Malory's 'Le Morte d' Arthur', Morgan Le Fay was the daughter of Gorlois and Ygerna, thus making her Arthur's half-sister, and she married Urien of Gorre. According to the Welsh Triads, however, Urien married Modron, the daughter of Avallach, but both sources make Urien the father of Yvaine, known in Welsh Tradition as Owen.

Roger Sherman Loomis in 'The Grail from Celtic Myth to Christian Symbol' casts Morgan Le Fay in the part of the Grail Bearer, and Lady Charlotte Guest in her notes for 'The Mabinogion' points out that the Welsh counterpart of Morgan is Modron. All the linguistic experts agree that the name Modron is a regular Welsh development of the great Celtic All-Mother Goddess Matrigona, worshipped by the Celts from Cisalpine Gaul to the lower Rhine. Matrigona's Welsh counterpart is Ceridwen, the goddess of the Sacred Cauldron.

Prof. John Rhys observes that the fay of Llyn-y-Fan Fach, a small lake at the foot of Bannau Sir Gaer near Llandeusan in the Carmarthen Fans, Dyfed, was Modron, who declared herself to be one of the Tuatha De Danaan, the people of the goddess Dana. This lake was until the last century a place of popular pilgrimage for the Welsh, and significantly it was sacred to the Lady of the Lake, who Dr. L.A. Waddell identifies with a deified Van matriarchal high-priestess of Sacred Cauldron.

In the 'Vita Merlini' (c.1150/51), Geoffrey of Monmouth describes Morgan as the chief of nine sisters presiding over the "insula pomorum que fortunata", or "the island of apples which is called fortunate". According to H.H. Sayce in 'Y Cymmrodorion' Vol.X, the Celtic word for apple, the sacred fruit of the Celts, is abal, and Ynys Aballach or Avallach is derived from this. The Latin equivalent is Insula Avallonis, Geoffrey's island in the western ocean to which King Arthur is carried after being wounded in battle. Geoffrey depicts it as a land of perpetual youth, fertility, feasting, and every kind of sensuous pleasure, ruled over by Morgan and her nine sisters. Morgan takes charge of the wounded Arthur, declaring that he will have to stay with her in her Magical island for a long period of time, but that she will eventually be able to make him whole.

Geoffrey's description of Morgan and her island kingdom corresponds with a passage in the 'Gesta Regum Britanniae', written in c.1235 by Guillaume de Rennes and quoted by Prof. John Rhys in his 'Studies in the Arthurian Legend'. It describes a mighty princess attended by nine maidens in a miraculously fertile island kingdom called Avallon, and it is implied that she is the daughter of the king of Avallon. Arthur bequeathes the diadem of royalty and sets up another in his place. Wounded beyond measure, he comes to the court of the king of Avallon, where the Royal Virgin, who is the guardian of this place, attends to his wounds and becomes his mistress.



The island realm of Morgan and her nine sisters is restating a theme already found in 'Preiddiau Annwn', a poem attributed to the Welsh bard Taliesin. This poem predates both the 'Vita Merlini' and the 'Gesta Regum Britanniae', and relates how Arthur and his host make a series of raids on a number of caerau or fortresses to capture a magic cauldron attended by nine maidens, who kindle the fire beneath it with their breath. They prepare their cauldron in a quadrangular caer in the island of the strong door. The vessel has the property of testing the mettle of warriors, for it will not boil the food of a coward or perjurer. At the cost of many lives, the cauldron is eventually captured, and only seven return from the expedition, including of course Arthur himself, Llunch Llemynawg, lord of the lakes, and the author Taliesin.

The Swiss priest Ulrich von Zatzikhofen in his 'Lanzelet' (c.1195) describes a fay having the beauty, learning and healing powers of Geoffrey's Morgan, presiding over an island kingdom, and being the mother of Mabuz, the Anglo-Norman form of Mabon, who in Welsh tradition is the son of Modron. Lancelot is brought up in seclusion by this water fay on an island where he is taught skill at arms. The island in which Lancelot is fostered is clearly Avallon where Modron rules as queen with her nine attendant maidens. The Isle of Joy where Modron dwelt with her nine maidens is easily recognizable, like Morgans's Avallon, as a Celtic Elysium, such as the Island of Sena in the western sea, and Lancelot may be identified with Lluch Llemynawg, Lord of the Lakes, who features so prominently in Taliesin's 'Preiddiau Annwn'.

The nine attendant maidens of Annwn bring to mind a passage in Pomponius Mela's 'De Situ Orbis', Book III, written during the Claudian period in the first century A.D., which describes the Island of Sena (the Ile de Sein off Plogoff in Finistere, Brittany) in the British Sea, opposite the Ofismician coast, as being remarkable for an oracle of the Gallic god. Its priestesses, holy in perpetual virginity, are said to be nine in number. They are called Gallicenae, and are thought to be endowed with singular powers. By their charms they are able to raise the winds and the seas, to turn themselves into what animals they will, to cure wounds, and diseases incurable by others, to know and predict the future, but this they do only for navigators who go there purposely to consult them. In his 'Histoire de France'. M. Martin states his belief that these insular maidens were the servants of Ceridwen, the Celtic goddess of the Sacred Cauldron. The second verse of 'Preiddiau Annwn' by Taliesin alludes to the mystic cauldron of Ceridwen, and the island of the strong door mentioned in the fourth verse has reference to the island of Sena, where dwelt the nine damsels or druidesses.

The Isle de Sein is said to have been the Roman Insula Sena on which nine priestesses worshipped their gods. Two small menhirs near the church are with another monument not far from Tro-ar-C'he all that remain of prehistoric times. There used to be many more such stones. To the north of the village, the stones of Kador (The Chair), possibly the Chair of Taliesin, are said to have provided refuge for a group of Druidesses, who pronounced their oracles from an excavated hole in the ground. This corresponds well with the description of Annwn in Taliesin's 'Preiddiau Annwn' and also the painting 'The Descent into Annwn' inspired by the poem, but rules out the identification of Annwn with Glastonbury Tor which one ascends. William of

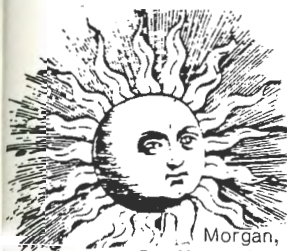
Malmesbury, in his 'De Antiquitate Glastoniensis Ecclesiae' (c.1125), relates how Avallach ruled over an island kingdom inhabited by his daughters, but he wrongly identifies this island with Glastonbury.

In the 'Livre de Caradog', which appears in the 'Conte du Graal' (c.1182) contained in the first continuation of Chretien de Troyes' 'Perceval', Caradog Freichfras (of the Strong Arm), a king ruling at Vannes in Brittany, is lured by his wicked mother Morgan to fetch her mirror from her coffer whence two serpents issue to fling their coils round his arms, and from which at long last a magic charm delivers his tightly bound limbs. The name Morgan corresponds with the Irish Muirgen, meaning 'sea-born'. Therefore, Morgan is none other than the Celtic mermaid goddess with her mirror and cauldron. It is Chretien de Troyes who first establishes Morgan as Arthur's half sister, and this relationship is reproduced by Sir Thomas Malory in 'Le Morte d' Arthur' (1485)

To recapitulate, Morgan Le Fay was the Lady of the Lake, the Guardian of the Sacred Cauldron, and the mistress of King Arthur.

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MORGAN LE FAY AND THE DEATH OF ARTHUR

Paddy Stone

Morgan, which probably means 'born of the sea', is first referred to by Geoffrey of Monmouth (12th c AD) in his 'Vita Merlini' as the chief of nine 'fays' living in the otherworldly realm of Avalon. In Layamon's 'Brut' she appears as Avalon's Queen (M) Argante and as King Arthur lies dying arrives in a boat and carries him away to her supernatural Queendom. In later romances she is presented as a fierce Witch queen as a result of Christian hostility, and there were terrible penalties for heresy (free thinking) in medieval Europe. In the romances Morgan is Arthur's half sister, educated in a convent where she perversely spent her time studying the powers of evil. The ambivalent 'Lady of the Lake' is another version of the same figure.

"When King Arthur mortally wounded at the battle of Camlann arrived on the sea shore, accompanied by the knight Girflet he asked to be left alone. A violent storm broke out, then a ship full of Ladies appeared of whom the fairy Morgan, the King's (half) sister called to him. He went straight to the ship which sailed away, and so it was said, went straight to the Isle of Avalon, where King Arthur still lives lying on a golden bed". (La Morte du roi Arthur)

So where and what is Avalon to which Arthurs Soul (psyche) and spirit was taken by Morgan le Fay? The ancient Indo-European word "Abol" (apple) gave us our word, Breton and Welsh "Aval", the word also gave rise to the German "Abend", evening and therefore "Abendlandes" (evening lands) the west. A number of names for paradise are similarly derived "Avolnus", "Avalon", "Avernus" and "Avala" while others 'Elysium', Alyschamp are thought to derive from 'Alisier' Greek for the sorb apple.

Avalon, thus means "appleland" and is often pictured as an orchard.

"This island in the midst of the ocean was not affected by any sickness. There were no thieves or criminals, no snow, fog or extreme heat. Eternal peace reigned. There were always flowers and fruits under the foliage. The inhabitants were without fault and always young. A royal Virgin fairer than the fairest gover ned that island". (Guillaume de Rennes Gesta Regum Britanniae²)

The Celtic paradise or heaven remained outside the sphere of influence of the patriarchal society, that with just a few exceptions shaped Celtic Society. The "Isle of Avalon" or its Gaelic equivalent "Emain Ablach" was ruled by women in matriarchal organisations this island heavenly paradise being outside the time and space of the living world.

The connection of the apple tree with immortality is ancient and wide spread in Europe. Why should it have been given so much mythic importance? The clue is to be found in the legend of Cuoreis Soul (psyche) that was hidden in an apple, when the apple was cut across by Cuchulains' Sword, night fell upon Cuorec. For if an apple is halved crosswise each half shows a five pointed star in the centre, containing the seeds, the symbol of immortality, which represents the Goddess in Her Five Stations from birth to death and back to birth again³. This also represents the planet Venus, as Hesperus, the evening star.



The apple tree represents the "Tree of Life" or wholeness of the Cosmos, and as such is found throughout the World, the Mistress of the orchard, the poetic image of the Mother Goddess extends Her sphere of influence over the whole universe of which, the orchard is a microcosm. As the Cosmic or World tree it represents the three worlds of the Cosmos the roots symbolize the lower world or Hell the trunk the material realm or earth, and the branches the spiritual realm or paradise. The tree can also be identified with the tree bearing the Golden Apples of Immortality which stands at the heart of Avala.

The Genesis account of the male god denying the fruit of the "Tree of Life" to humanity, signifies the patriarchal denial of the immortality of the Soul. The old Testament has no conception of life after death and the Hebrews were typical of early masculist religions, either denying the afterlife entirely or reducing it to the half-life of twilitering Shadows in Sheol.

The philosopher Pythagoras believed in metempsychosis or the transmigration of the immortal soul (psyche). Greek science really began with the Pythagoreans, and it was this movement that brought women into the mainstream of developing natural philosophy, mathematics, and speculations on Cosmic harmony. There were at least twenty eight women teachers and students at the school. The speculations and discoveries were the common property of the membership and kept within the order as mystical secrets. Pythagoras (c.582-500BC) had travelled throughout the Mediterranean world studying with many teachers.

According to Greek philosopher Aristoxenus he obtained most of his doctrines from Themus to Clea a Delphic priestess. Some say Pythagoras acquired his doctrine of metempsychoses from another early teacher Pherecydic, there are references to it in Celtic mythology. In this regard it is interesting to note that Diogenes Haertius biographer of the Greek philosopher's Writing mathematics in the 3rd c AD say Pythagoras studied under the Druid priests of the Celts. The noted mathematician who made a distinction between secular and Sacred mathematics, like the Roman Emperor Julian (4th c AD) believed in the Sun as the central flame, fire, and felt that energy emanated from all living things and from all patterns, forms and organisations existing in Nature. Pythagoras regarded the seven planets as a heavenly lyre and allotted to each one of the seven notes of the musical scale according to it's distance from Earth.

Plato (427-347 BC) also influenced the west regarding the immortality of the Soul (psyche) through Eleusian Mysteries. A reason given for exclusion from the mysteries of Demeter and Kore (Persephone) at Eleusis is given in Plato's statement "(She) He who not being inspired and having no touch of madness in (her) his soul come to the door, and thinks she (he) will get into the Temple by the help of art, (she) he I say and (her) his poetry are not admitted", ONLY THE WISE COULD BE INITIATED INTO THE SECRET ELEUSIAN MYSTERIES, disclosure of them was punishable by death, AND WISDOM, THEN AS NOW TRANSCENDED BOTH CLASS AND COUNTRY.

The mysteries of Eleusis where the Divine Daughter was resurrected to her Mother Demeter, were barred to barbarians, murders, immoral women and magicians.

Despite all the secrecy of the Eleusian mysteries it has been suggested they represent an initiation drama, in which Kore (Persephone) the Corn (grain) maiden is the divine being and Sacrifice who dies and goes beneath

the earth to come back again bearing life for humanity, she becomes a symbol of humanity's resurrection and every candidate to Her mystery is told this, "This is what you have to do to save the tribe and at last you will die and remember this that death is not the end" It has also been suggested that Demeter represents the intellect (original meaning the faculty of spiritual seeing or knowing). Kore (Persephone) the soul (psyche) and Pluto the material nature with which the former must fuse. There is the great sun of pagan myth the spiritual sun, the Mother, that only shines for the initiated.. Mother Goddess religions are usually dismissed as fertility Cults hence their dismissal by scholars. There is no suggestion here that Demeter is a fertility Goddess (Last two paragraphs).

The season of Yule is originally from 'ioelos' a form of carol in honour of Demeter; Demeter and her daughter Persophone provided the central Mother and child image in ancient Hellenic and pre-Hellenic religion.

The Hon Olivia Roberson Writing in 'the Call of Isis' says "The Greater Eleusian Mysteries was, I believe manifested at Fatima (1917). Here we have people seeing a Golden Disc bringing from the sky the apparition of a Woman robed in white. The visions were seen by three children and occurred on the thirteenth of the month from May to October, so including the ancient dates of the Mysteries of the Goddesses. At the culmination in October 700,000 onlookers saw the sun disc revolve, and spectroscopic change, they called it the "dancing Sun".

The Lesser Mysteries was shown at Lourdes in the form of a beautiful young maiden appearing in a grotto. The young girl who witnessed the visions drew forth a stream of healing water from the mud. The lesser Mysteries at Lourdes, therefore, portrayed Persephone, Queen of Day and Night, the perfect embodiment of a Divine idea". She adds "When a mystery is performed upon the earth before an earthly audience the New Age is upon us".

As Jean Markale points out in Women of the Celts, it is important to note the Solar nature of the Mistress of the orchard, the Sun being inseparable from Her, whoever She is.

"First of all Iseult appears (in myth) with hair as fair as gold or as the Sun - The Queen of the Isle of Fairies lives in a Crystal palace or has a crystal chamber or a chamber a glass in which the rays of the Sun converge. When landing on the island there is a striking impression of LIGHT which seems to rise from the very landscape. So the orchard which is in the isle of apple trees must be a temple to the Sun, where the Sun lives. The name "Grainne", comes from the Irish "green" which means "Sun"

In the Celtic and Germanic languages the Sun is feminine, in Japanese mythology there is a Sun Goddess Amaterasu. There is a Sun Goddess, another European Source, from the Baltic Sea area, Luthuanie. Saule.

Well, without the Sun there is no life on Earth, and the apple will not ripen without sunlight.

Here is the story of Saule- She and Her Daughter live in a castle beyond the hill of the sky "dausos", or at the far end of the sea. "Dausos" being a mysterious realm of the dead, it is not simply heaven or paradise but a realm of that kind. It lies beyond the high hill of the sky which the dead

have to climb, therefore they need strong fingernails, or animal claws to grip the slippery slopes. The journey is very long and spirits also travel by horseback or in the smoke of fires or by the "Birds Way"-the Galaxy or Milky Way, or by boat like the Sun travelling in the darkness.

The Sun Goddess Saule rides across the hill in the sky in a copper wheeled chariot, drawn by the tireless horses. As evening approaches she stops and washes Her steeds in the sea and then sits down on the hills summit or drives down to Her apple orchard in nine chariots drawn by a hundred horses. Sometimes she is spoken of as sailing the sea in a golden boat. The setting sun is a red apple falling from Saules orchard into the sea. The Sun is also spoken of as a kind of jug or spoon from which light is poured every evening. Saule's Daughters rinse it in the sea.

As Jean Markale, also, points out in "Women of the Celts" The fate of the Sun Goddess was inextricably bound up with the rebellion of man against woman, which led to power being invested in a male dominated rather than a gynaeocratic society. There was a total reversal of religious values, the original feminine divinities being replaced by masculine divinities adapted to the new social order of whom the paradigm is Apollo

So the end of the story is this, - Arthur died and he was taken to heavenly paradise by the wicked fairy, "born of the Sea". She was named, Morgan Le Fay. Modern Times: In January 1988 at the time of the annual "wassailing" ceremony of the apple trees in Somerset, a clergyman appeared, who was up in arms, he declared, it should be stopped, "it's Pagan". (reported HTV News, Wales and the West of England.

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ROMANTICS AND MORALISTS: pre-raphaelite responses to the arthurian legend. David Jones, part ii (The painting referred to appears at the end)

In 1853 Edward Burne-Jones advised his friend Cornell Price "Learn (Tennyson's) Sir Galahad by heart. He is to be the patron of our order". (13) Two years later, in the late Summer of 1855, Burne-Jones and Morris' discovered 'Soutney's edition of Malory, and his life-long fascination with the Arthurian legends was confirmed. As David Cecil points out, the legends attracted the young artist for three reasons: they had been adapted to Christian theology and thus provided a suitable vehicle for the expression of moral ideas; a pervasive theme was that of passionate love; and, above all, they possessed a quality of mystery that classical myth lacked. In ancient Greek and Roman myth almost everything is explained in 'rational' terms - usually as the result of the intervention of a god. In Arthurian legend, events occur frequently without explanation, and for Burne-Jones such mystery was an essential quality of the beauty which he constantly sought.

'The Beguiling of Merlin', though dated 1874, was begun in 1872, and completed in 1877, when it was shown in the first exhibition at the Grosvenor Gallery. It was originally commissioned by Frederick Leyland for the interior decoration at 49 Prince's gate. Burne-Jones had long been fascinated with the tale of Merlin's seduction and imprisonment by Nimue, a Lady of the Lake. He chose it for his Oxford Union mural of 1857: 'Merlin being imprisoned beneath a Stone by the Damsel of the Lake', and also treated the subject in a gouache of 1861: 'Merlin and Nimue'. The story is related by Malory, though it seems to have originated in the so-called Vulgate Cycle of Arthurian romances of c. 1215-40. Nimue was brought to Arthur's Court by King

Pellinore. Here Merlin 'fel in a dotage' on her and was made to reveal his magical skills. Having learned all she wished to know, Nimue left Camelot, her besotted lover following. Tiring of his attentions, she weaved a spell to make him "goe undir a stone....but she wrought so for hym that he come never oute for all the craufte he could do..." (14)

The tale combines two ancient themes of folk-lore and legend: that of the enchantress who lures a mortal to her otherworld home and holds him prisoner there; and that of the supposedly wise man who succumbs to the sexual enticements of a woman. Tennyson had also treated the subject in 'Merlin and Vivien', one of the 'Idylls of the King', 1859.

Burne-Jones apparently objected to Tennyson's poem on the grounds that what seems originally to be two characters in the legends - The Lady of the Lake and befriender of the Round Table, and the evil sorceress who brought Merlin (and thus, indirectly, King Arthur) to destruction, had been compounded. He met Tennyson at Little Holland House in 1858 and persuaded him to change the name 'Nimue' to Vivien. The question of the identity of these two figures is too complex to be discussed further here; and we do not know whether Burne-Jones was aware that in some versions of the tale (for example in the 'Suite de Merlin', c. 1230-40), the evil sorceress took over Merlin's role as helper of King Arthur. His treatment of Nimue certainly does not suggest condemnation, as I mention further, below.

'The Beguiling of Merlin' depicts the point at which Nimue is starting to intone her spells of enchantment, reading from her book of magic. Merlin looks on helplessly: his foreknowledge of his fate is of no avail to him. Nimue appears equally helpless: there is no vindictiveness in the look she casts at the magician, only sadness.

Both are playing predestined roles. In this respect Burne-Jones adheres closely to the spirit of the legends, which are pervaded by a sense of inevitability and the uselessness of struggling against one's fate. It appears that here he has not followed, as he did in his previous works on this theme, the story of Merlin's imprisonment as related by Malory. Instead he has followed an earlier French version the Vulgate 'Merlin', in which Nimue lulls the magician to sleep beneath a Hawthorn tree in the enchanted forest of Broceliande. Burne-Jones probably knew this version through the English 15th. century translation of the 'Romance of Merlin', published by the Early English Text Society in 1865-9. However, Tennyson had also followed the earlier version in 'Merlin and Vivien', and it seems likely that this poem was a prime inspiration of Burne-Jones's painting. For example, Nimue's hair is entwined with serpents and although this detail connects her with the sorceress of classical myth, such as the Medusa, (the subject of Burne-Jones's 'The Baleful Head', 1886-7,) Tennyson also wrote of "a snake of gold" (15) in her hair. The artist probably decided to follow this account of Merlin's enchantment because being lulled to sleep in a forest was a more poetic end than being made to go "undir a stone". And although the linear rhythms and sinuous interweaving patterns were by now an established characteristic of his mature style, it is possible that Burne-Jones's conception of his subject was influenced by Tennyson's lines:

"Then, in one moment, she put forth the charm
Of woven paces and of weaving hands." (16)

The figure of Merlin the Magician has traditionally been represented as an elderly bearded man, though he is not described physically in most early versions of the legend. Burne-Jones has considerable difficulties in finding a suitable model and eventually painted the head from the American journalist W. J. Stillman. The apparent youthfulness of Merlin was much criticised at the Grosvenor Gallery exhibition. He is beardless and, although grey, obviously in early middle age. Critics have explained the apparent departure from tradition by stressing Burne-Jones's wish to make all his figures, male and female, as beautiful as possible by refining them of their more obvious sexual characteristics. On this reading Merlin has been brought as close as Burne-Jones dared to the girlish, self-preoccupied sleepwalkers who inhabit most of his paintings. This interpretation is almost certainly correct, but two points must be noted in addition.

Firstly, it was only tradition which linked Merlin with the archetypal wise old man of folklore, and Burne-Jones's youthful magician is not incompatible with the original legends. Secondly, Merlin is not a human male, but an androgyne, half human female and half demonic male. Whether or not Burne-Jones appreciated this fact we do not know. However, to have shown a beautiful young woman enticing an obviously elderly man would have both offended his sense of decorum and obtruded upon the decorative qualities of the painting.

The elongated figure of Nimue was stylistically influenced by Michaelangelo's sculpture, and the folds of her robe recall the pedimental figures of the Parthenon. That the artist's intentions

were largely decorative is suggested by the many sketches and studies he produced in the early 1870's for the two figures. A sketchbook of 1875 (17) contains several pages in which Burne-Jones explored the effects of different folds of drapery, including the use of wet drapery on the model to obtain the close clinging effect characteristic of classical sculpture. His sketches resemble closely Albert Moore's standing figures.

The model for Nimue was Maria Zambaco, with whom Burne-Jones had an affair between 1867 and 1870. Andrea Rose suggests that his 'Phyllis and Demophoon', painted in 1870 when the affair was coming to an end, contains a private allusion to the relationship, since Demophoon appears to be trying to escape his former lover. (18) The 'Beguiling of Merlin', though commenced four years later, lends itself to a similar interpretation. Merlin is powerless, and enchained by a love he has neither sought nor wants. The writhing patterns of the surrounding foliage are a metaphor of his feelings of entrapment. Like Rossetti in 'Arthur's Tomb', Burne-Jones has painted a scene of confrontation between the sexes, but the roles of male and female have been reversed. Nimue stands in a posture which is implicitly active and threatening; Merlin lies passively in a horizontal position. The cross shape which results from this juxtaposition adds a dynamic and dramatic element to what would otherwise be a static composition. the picture lacks any sense of depth or distance: each part is of equal importance in the decorative pattern.

Mark Girouard is probably correct when he links Burne-Jones with

an interest in the 'decadent' elements in the Arthurian legend: guilty love, and sorcery and enchantment. (19) The artist was, like Rossetti, attracted to the figures of sirens and sorceresses throughout his career. There is little doubt of Tennyson's attitude to Nimue: she is described on several occasions with the imagery of snakes. His phrase "stiff as a frozen viper" also suggests raw sexual desire. Burne-Jones, on the other hand, is favourably disposed towards the enchantress and she is depicted as being nearly as melancholy as is her lover.

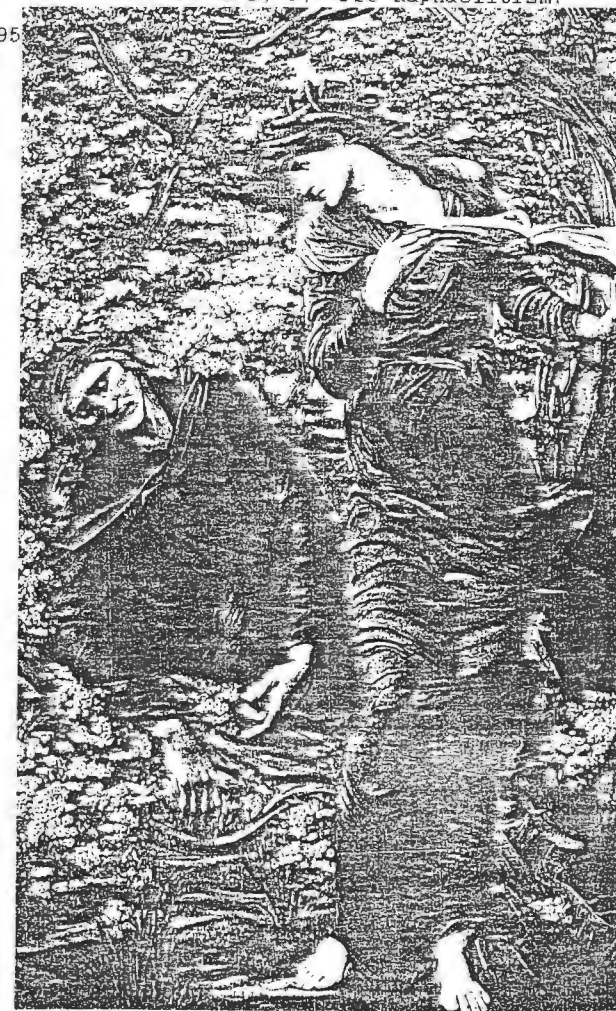
A frequent comment made about Burne-Jones's paintings is that although they purport to illustrate an incident from legend or fairy tale, they are in fact all pictures of the artist's private dream world and bear little, if any, relation, to their alleged subject. Specifically, they are said to lack the particular atmosphere of their literary sources. (20) The 'Beguiling of Merlin' contains no iconographical clues to the subject matter. If it were not for the title, Nimue's posture, her drapery and the snakes entwined in her hair would mislead us into thinking we were looking at some scene from classical myth. It is only fair to say, however, that Burne-Jones cannot be criticised for his lack of concern with the historical accuracy of his costumes since there was no accepted standard of accuracy to go by in the treatment of Arthurian romance. In summary, we may conclude that his intentions in this painting were essentially decorative. An Arthurian topic provided the initial inspiration, and in some important respects Burne-Jones's work is at least not incompatible with his sources. It remains, however, "a beautiful

romantic dream of something that never was, never will be..." (21) which shares the "undifferentiated evenness of tone" (22) of his other work.

To be continued....

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- (13) Quoted in Girouard, Mark, 'The Return of Camelot', London 1982, p. 185.
- (14) Malory, 'Le Morte d'Arthur', Bk. IV, Chap. 1.
- (15) Tennyson, Alfred, 'Merlin and Vivien', Idylls of the King, 1885
- (16) ibid
- (17) In the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge
- (18) Rose, A, 'The Pre-Raphaelites' Oxford, 1981
- (19) Girouard, op cit, p194
- (20) For example, Hilton T, 'The Pre-Raphaelites, London, 1970
- (21) Edward Burne-Jones, quoted in Sambrook, J, 'Pre-Raphaelitism, London 1974
- (22) Hilton, op cit. p195



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TAFFY AND THE MORGAN INDEX
Rick Plewes (this first
appeared in the Cornwall
Edition of Pendragon)

Morgan H.J., Manor
Morgan John, Pipe, K
Morgan John (Boile
Morgan Dr J.E.Drs
Morgan Drs J.H.C.F
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The earliest peoples to arrive in these islands have long been nameless, and it has been one of my aims to try and identify them, their language, habits, culture etc. I would like to be able to believe that my most ancient ancestors were people I should respect if I met them today. I do not believe they were fools or savages, although I do sincerely believe that under the misguidance of such latecomers to these parts as Druidism and Christianity they did fall into the vile and barbarous ways for a while. The Irish Book of Invasions has suggested that the first people to arrive here were from Africa and Spain. The possibilities of the Berbers and the Basques being the direct descendants of those original invaders is one I have been investigating though not without difficulty. I have established certain links in the bloodgrouping and am beginning to have some success with the language. Tor for example can mean pregnant womb, or hill in Basque, so it has passed through certain Celtic languages intact, and from its presence in different parts of the country, and more precisely its absence, you can see where the Basque influence is strong and where not. Certainly one finds it in Spain (Torre Molinos), but most impressively through-out the West Country.

Welsh Mor = The Sea. The Ancient Kingdom of Morgana (if we call it that for lack of better information) has been eroded to a smaller area known as Glamorgan or Morgannwg. However if you take the larger area once occupied by this sea-based people it includes the whole of the Severn Basin with arms extending inland. It corresponds with a certain area grouping of Long Barrows known as the Severn-Cotswold group. South of the Severn these people left their legends in the form of Morgan le Fay at Glastonbury, inextricably wound into the myth of Arthur and Merlin, showing that the sea moors of Somerset were once part of Morgana.

In order to trace this possibility I invented a new form of archaeology known as a telephone-directory dig. To do this, take out all the telephone-directories in the library (not the Yellow Pages) and stack them in piles, and place your pocket calculator ready for use. Then apply the Morgan Index. The Morgan Index is the number of Morgans in the directory as a percentage of the number of total entries in the directory. Rather than counting Morgans I measured columns and divided them into the number of pages each of which has four columns. This gives you the Morgan Index for a particular telephone area.

I know that not everyone's on the phone etc., but it gives an indication. Having then plotted all the results on map you can see for yourself that the Morgan Index for S Wales is 1.42 (for the Swansea area) and 1.13 (Cardiff). North Wales is lower than Bristol. The Outer Hebrides is the lowest in the country being the furthest from Morgansland. The map speaks for itself. I had hoped that Somerset would show a high Morgan Index but this was not to be. However, this telephone dig did confirm that originally Morgans were people who came from Glamorgan. I was originally put onto this possibility by learning of a certain doctor who established that Morgans in Carmarthen were a statistically acceptable ethnic group as shown by their blood groupings. I never did manage to get hold of the original work although I did get other work by Mourant (Blackwells 58) on the world distribution of blood groups among native populations, and this confirmed and

revealed a number of things, notably migrations across the Mediterranean from Asia to Western Britain, via the Basque Country and the Atlas Mountains.

Meanwhile let us return to Gawain and the Green Knight -- essential reading for all Pendragons. Gawain has reached the Green Chapel in his search for the Green Knight, "a fairy mound apparently, a smooth-surface barrow by the side of a stream... It had a hole in each end and on either side... All hollow it was within, only an old cavern..." Gawain meets the Green Knight who then completes the initiation ceremony of the beheading game, in which the magical being reveals himself to be only a shaman in a monster suit and they have a good laugh about that. "I was entirely transformed... through the might of Morgan the Fay... Many of the magical arts of Merlin has she acquired... So 'Morgan the goddess' she accordingly became..." And the Long Barrows were chapels dedicated to her.

The author of Gawain very wisely published anonymously because he was revealing real secrets of the old religion at a time when Christianity had more power than was good for it.

We know of the long barrow people and other cultures around that time, the Megalithic people in general, that they had a high regard for the Sun and engineered most of the monuments to pinpoint the sunrise. Most, though not all, long barrows are "oriented" towards the rising sun at a particular date in the year. It is not hard to see how people emerging from an Ice Age would have a healthy regard for warmth. The curious thing is that morning in German is still Morgen. This raises certain problems with language, that if Morgen is in an Indo-European language then the people who were the Morgans can hardly have been Basque, which is renowned for the fact that it is a non-Indo-European language. However, this will take more research. For that matter mor as a word unit is close to French mer, also meaning sea, and so we are left with an assumption that the Morgans were not Basques, but very early Indo-Europeans. Possibly the blond blue-eyed Schloer people of the Atlas Mountains fit the bill. The problem there lies in the fact that the Schloer people share the same blood group with the Basques. Much research remains to be done...

However there seems to be ample evidence to show that the Severn Valley Long Barrow People are responsible for the Morgan the Fay myths and associated Arthurian legends.

I also applied the Morgan Index to the Davies's of Wales and came up with further interesting thoughts which anyone can check out for themselves. The Davis/Davies Index relates to the map of Britain in a similarly convincing manner to the Morgans. Unfortunately the Swansea directory covers the whole of West Wales and so the precise areas of dominance require much more work. But it seems likely to me that the Davies's (who gave rise to the nicknames of all Welshmen as Taffies) originally occupied the area known as Dyfed..Dyfed used to be a principality and is connected with the Underworld of the Mabinogion. Low on long barrows, it is high on peninsular forts. The capital city of Dyfed is St David's. In that region there are rivers named Teifi, Twyi, Tawe, Taff. What has all this got to do with the Matter of Cornwall? you may ask. Well, we may be pushing definitions a bit, but the River Tavy, running through Tavistock and Mary Tavy, does just run

into Cornwall. (For that matter you have a St Mawgan just north of Newquay). So boundaries cross. However if Pembrokeshire is renowned for its peninsular forts, I would simply like to draw attention to the fact that Tintagel, scene of so much, is really originally a typical peninsular fort. For that matter so was Glastonbury for a while. The name Devon itself is not far from Dyfed. Whether the Taf were earlier than the Morgans I'm not prepared to hazard at this point, but I would like to point out the possibility of two very early belts of people, one that occupied peninsular forts and occupied Devon and Dyfed, and one that built long barrows and occupied Glamorgan and Somerset and Gloucester. That the South Welsh so easily lost their Welsh language I suggest is related to the fact that they were never very keen on it the first place, it having been imposed on them very late on when the Cymru arrived from the North. Also, words tend to hold onto the syntactical rules of their original language and it is worth noting that whereas most Welsh names "Ap" very easily (Owen/Bowen, Rees/Price, Howel/Powel) certain names certain names never do; Morgan is one and Davies is another. I suggest that names which don't Ap don't do it because they're not Welsh.* The same rule applies in Scotland where some names don't Mac where most do.

My own thinking on this subject continues and I don't regard it as anything but speculation at this point, but I hope you find it stimulating.

* Even as I write I have learned that there may even be a direct connection in one part of Wales near Llandoverly, between Morgans and red hair, which would be really stimulating. T H White gives Sir Kay red hair I think. Is there any evidence for this?

REVIEW Colin Walls

Taliesin - Stephen Lawhead - Lion Publishing - 1987
ISBN 0 7459 1309 1

This is a tale of the intertwined worlds of dying Atlantis and dying Roman Britain. It is subtitled "Book 1 of the Pendragon Cycle", book 2 is "Merlin", and presumably Arthur, Mordred et al will follow in due course.

It follows the fortunes principally of Taliesin a Welsh prince as well as bard in this incarnation, and Charis an Atlantean princess and bull-dancer. You may begin to feel slightly confused at this point with the mixing of myths from different times and places; and the story is itself somewhat confused.

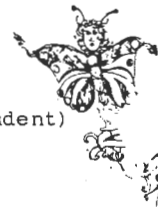
The willing suspension of disbelief unfortunately has limits. Personally I can take Atlantis; I can stretch to Atlanteans still bull-dancing Cretan-fashion in 350 AD. I can even stretch to Atlanteans at Glastonbury in 350 AD. But I can't stretch to Theodosius being unaware of a kingdom being set up by a rival power in Somerset.

"Taliesin" reads like a book derived from other recent books rather than any new insight into original material.

There seems little point in such a rehash of half-digested ideas. Better to re-read Mary Renault or Mary Stewart.

MYTHS - ARE THEY FEMALE MOTHS? Eddie Tooke

(An in-depth study by an out-of-his-depth student)
by Eddie Tooke.



Dion Fortune regarded Morgan le Fay as a priestess of Isis, a view shared by other occultists. Such a view indicates links between Celtic and Egyptian myth, and these are well documented. There are some links, however, known only to a favoured few. Did you realise, for instance, that Richard the Third may have worshipped Egypt's gods? And that President Reagan's name reveals ancient Celtic/Egyptian connections?

And did you further realise that you yourself might be instrumental in calling back Morgan le Fay from her enchanted island of Avilion where she dwells with Arthur and Ogier the Dane? You didn't? Then read on - if you dare ...

As Jack Lindsay relates in Arthur and His Times, St. Patrick sailed from south to north up the Irish coast. Let us eavesdrop on a conversation between him and that veteran voyager, St. Brendan (alias Brons and Bran the Blessed):

'What'll I find up yonder, Bran?'

'The Faroes.'

'I thought they ruled in Egypt?'

'They used to but they jacked it in.'

'Then I'd better see if the Gippos need someone to govern them.

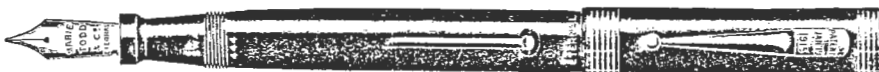
How do I get there?'

'Catch the 7.30 coracle back down the coast and turn left.'

'Right.'

'No, left. Otherwise you'll hit America and I haven't discovered it yet.'

A recently unearthed archive in the ancient Croxley Script relates how Queen Cleopatrik, having made her Mark in Egypt, returned to



Hibernia - only to be bitten by her pet asp (hence 'her-pet-ology', the study of reptiles) while using it to lure the snakes out of the Emerald Isle - a service for which he/she was awarded the Brons medal. (And serves the reptiles right. It's a mathematical error for adders to persist in Dublin.)

For the purist, it may be noted that the 500-year discrepancy between accepted Egyptian history and the Croxley Script is due to sunspot activity affecting the radiocarbon dating of the former. The Croxley has been dendrochronologically checked against the Californian bristlecone pine.

Additionally, sound circumstantial evidence supports the latter. Torgny S ve-S derbergh tells us in 'Pharoahs & Mortals' that the Ptolemaic Queen 'had not a drop of Egyptian blood in her veins.' An even more impeccable source, the Encyclopaedia Britannica (9th edition) mentions that Ptolemy's town, Nagnata, was in Killala Bay, NW Ireland, near Downpatrick Head - one of the Saint's reputed burial places. (A more famous one was Glastonbury, of course.)

Coincidentally, Ptolemy's elegance as a geometrician was praised by a distinguished descendant of the Arthurian enchantress, the great Victorian mathematician De Morgan. (Britannica again - though even they didn't know of the family connection.)

Antony's paramour Cleopatra (to use the bowdlerized version of the Queen's name and thereby arbitrarily fix her sex - sex changing being common in mythology) was the last Ptolemy to rule in Egypt. Concerning Cleopatrik's involvement with Mark, Nennius's Short History of the Britains (in the Vatican library) 'is ascribed to a certain Marc who came to the monastery of St. Gall.' Marc, we are told, 'appended the legends of St. Patrick.' (Britannica once more). See how it all hangs together? NOW doubt my word, infidels!

Place-names provide further evidence of a Celto-Egyptian cultural link. John Michell, in The View Over Atlantis, points to the Egyptian god of wisdom and magic, Thoth (the Greek Hermes and

Roman Mercury), as the origin of the numerous 'Tot' or 'Toot' hills in Britain. Surprisingly, this does not include London's Tooting Common, which is named after the golden-masked son-in-law of Queen Nefertiti, as narrated in her best-selling papyrus: Tales My Mummy Ptolemy, (Fibber & Fibber). (translated by Eddie Tooke)

Thoth, of course, was the Herald of the Gods and as such it may be his spirit which moved our own Richard III to improve the status of heralds by incorporating them into a college under the Earl Marshal. Richard, coincidentally, died at Bosworth in 1485 - the very year in which Caxton printed that dossier of Morgan's exploits, Morte d'Arthur.

All this in itself may not confirm a rapport between the English monarch and Ancient Egypt, but his despairing call to Egypt's gods (recorded for us by Sheikh Speer, the Bard of Sidi Barrani, most certainly does: 'A Horus! A Horus! My kingdom for a Horus!.' (Horus, the hawk-headed god, was worshipped by 19th Dynasty Seti I who shared power with his father Rameses and hence invented the two-seater throne which bears his name to this day.)

Seti, of course, ruled in Egypt's old capital, Thebes. The name of the modern capital, Cairo, is said to be derived from the Arabic El-qahirah, 'the victorious.' A likely story! Cleopatrik named it after the Chi Rho, the sacred symbol of Christianity (which some see at the heart of the Cretan maze.) The Chi Rho is almost identical with the equally sacred Ankh (the Tau cross with the hieroglyphic Ru set upon it), the Symbol of Life carried by the gods and the Pharaohs. Ru, incidentally, means 'place of outlet' - surely most appropriate in a maze.

(No, Deirdre of Chipping Sodbury, although Isis was the Corn Goddess, and the tomb of Seti I has a wall-painting showing her with an Ankh or Chi Rho, she was not the founder of Chi-ro-pody. You've got the wrong corn. And she did not invent Corn-ettos either. That was Walls Isis.)

If any alert Pendragon has noticed the intrusion of an occasional pun in the above chronicle, now is the time to assure him or her that there are respectable precedents. Puns were an integral part of both Celtic and Egyptian myth - 'fitting symbols for the unmanifest which is the ground of all being.' (Alwyn and Brinley Rees, Celtic Heritage) The Rees brothers also state that in Egypt 'Theological and cosmological concepts were inescapably bound up with it.' - i.e. punning.

Geoffrey Ashe quotes a play made on the Celtic 'Mair' (Mary) and 'pair' (cauldron) in order to associate the two sources of life and inspiration. (Bran's Cauldron of Renovation brought the dead to life. Ceridwen's cauldron imparted all knowledge.) The pot was a mother-goddess symbol. Cauldrons, like Mary, the Christian mother-goddess, have Grail associations.

An example of verbal juggling well-known to Pendragons is the splitting of the word 'Sangreal' (Holy Dish) into 'Sang Real' - which itself has been given dual interpretations - Real Blood and Royal Blood.

Puns, and indeed all forms of riddles, cryptic rhymes and enigmatic names, were believed to cause among their hearers the confusion and disorientation necessary to destabilize reason and thus open the door of consciousness to a transcendental world. Arthur Koestler regards puns as 'two disparate strings of thought tied together in an acoustic knot.' Substitute 'mystic' or 'ritualistic' for 'acoustic' and this might almost describe how orthodox religion achieves its mind-blowing effect on some of its adherents.

'The brain,' says Gordon Rattray Taylor, 'fights a constant battle against dissociation.' Allegory, paradoxes, recondite dogmatic subtleties - all help to produce the dissociation or mental disorientation which gives rise to 'religious experiences', sometimes imaginary, but by no means exclusively so.

But why the parallels between objects and characters in the myths

of widely separated cultures? The Grail hallows, for example, (the Cup, the Spear, the Sword and the Disc) occur in both Celtic and Egyptian contexts. Morgan le Fay, like Isis, is an enigmatic character with a variety of names and personalities. She has been seen, inter alia, as a witch, a queen and as the Morrigan - the three-in-one Pagan goddess of love and war.

Morgan's counterpart in Teutonic myth, Freyja, occasionally assumed the form of a butterfly. Our own Celtic shape-shifting enchantress no doubt did the same. Hence, of course, 'Earth Moth-er', the status accorded to another avatar of Morgan, the Welsh goddess Modron. The hyphenless economy version, 'Earth Mother' is more common but etymologically (and entomologically) incorrect. (Well, that's my excuse for the title of this article and I'm sticking to it!)

In Scottish folklore a moth was believed to be a departed human soul. And while we're on the hotly-debated subject of Scotland, moths and Egypt, hands up all those who noticed that A MOTH is an anagram of A. THOM, the Scottish Professor of Engineering at Oxford University who discovered the NW European Megalithic Yard of 2.72 feet which is equal to the Royal Egyptian Cubit of 1.72 feet multiplied by the square root of 2.5. Oxford, of course, lies on the River Isis. (Maths as well as moths and myths; and all this for less than the cost of a packet of cigarettes!)

Both Isis and her priestess Morgan are at times benevolent and at others less so, a mixture of loyalty and treachery. Normal exchanges between the two countries, or via an intermediary, obviously account for some parallels but, bearing in mind

physicist Niels Bohr's well-authenticated theory of complementarity (which has now been seen to apply in fields other than physics and which demonstrates the dual character of ALL phenomena) one must look for a complementary causative factor - in this case - probably - a Jungian archetype. Unseen influences appear to operate in widely different times, places and cultures, linking legends - perhaps by morphic resonance (a harmony of form with form) or by meaningful coincidences of the Jung/Kammerer

type, styled by Arthur Koestler: 'the puns of destiny.'

'Myth,' says Joseph Campbell in his definitive work The Hero With a Thousand Faces, 'is the secret opening through which the inexhaustible energies of the cosmos pour into human cultural manifestation.' The Arthurian legends provide such an opening, as does the Glastonbury mythos. 'To bring the images back to life,' states Campbell, 'one has to seek ... hints from the inspired past ... We must go through the myths to the archetypes beyond them.'

Referring to the 'atmosphere' at Glastonbury, Geoffrey Ashe talks of 'some obscure natural cause, such as a relationship between the landscape and the human psyche.' Again: 'In the person of 'Morgen' <Morgan> Avalon has a presiding spirit.' Ashe also brings Osiris into the Arthuriad, linking him with the Grail Keeper.

Dr. Lyall Watson, in Lifetide, paints a vivid verbal picture of the archetype: 'There are some characteristics that are constant everywhere. The anima has a timeless quality; she looks young but has years of experience behind her. There is a quality of secret wisdom about her. She is often connected with the earth or with water and she may have great power. She is essentially two-sided; one the pure and noble goddess, and the other the seductive witch.' A precise description of Morgan le Fay. 'All the Arthurian archetypes,' says occultist Gareth Knight, 'are double-faced.'

Not everyone believes in archetypes, of course, for the same reason Lord Kelvin gave when he rejected Maxwell's electromagnetic theory of light - one cannot make a mechanical model of them. Modern physics suggested to Jung, however, that a 'connection necessarily exists between the psyche ... and the objective space-time continuum. This implied that archetypes must have a non-psychoic aspect.' (Jung was a firm believer in complementarity). Nobel Prize-winner Wolfgang Pauli, author of the vital 'exclusion principle' in atomic physics, called archetypes 'primary possibilities' of psychic reactions.

'The Grail romance,' says Geoffrey Ashe, 'looks like a fantasia ... which turns metaphors into concrete facts.' This contrasts with quantum mechanics which is certainly a fantasia, and turns 'concrete facts' back into metaphor. Hence Dr. Roger Jones' book Physics as Metaphor.

Jones refers to Prof. David Bohm (physicist) who, like Dr. Rupert Sheldrake (biologist) in A New Science of Life, regards memory as everywhere and not just limited to the brain. On this basis, the 'presiding spirit' could consist - at least in part - of discarnate memories which attach themselves to an environment and may manifest at future times. 'All legends,' says Gareth Knight, 'bear witness to inner conditions that may crystallize about a certain geographical locality.'

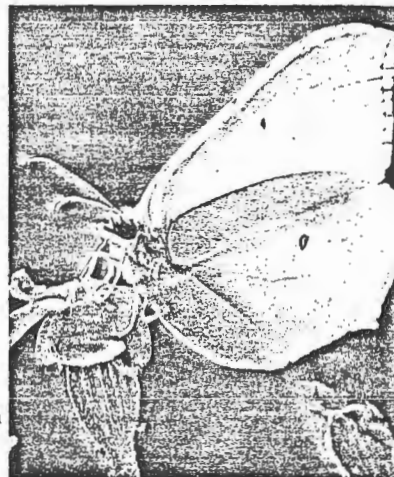
With complementarity still in mind, however, we may suspect another factor to be at work too. The powers of the mind, amplified by consensus and further enhanced by psychological feedback from an evocative environment, may invoke entities which normally occupy an adjacent world-frame. (The 3-world theory of philosopher Sir Karl Popper and the 'parallel-world' interpretation of quantum mechanics seem to sanction this.) Archetypal metaphor then becomes concrete fact.

Acceptance of this off-beat idea may be eased by reference to Dr. Evan Harris Walker's contribution to Mathematical Biosciences in 1970. Walker, an eminent physicist, regards the 'hidden variables' at the heart of physical matter - variables that are beyond Planck's quantum of indeterminacy and, therefore, not strictly part of our space-time continuum - as 'conscious ... entities that are responsible for the detailed working of the universe.'

Dr. Lawrence Le Shan, the well-known psychologist, suggests that sensory reality and clairvoyant reality are equally valid and merge into each other. He is scathing about those who ridicule mysterious forces. They should, he states, study the work and thought of Einstein, Planck, Eddington, Margenau and Heisenberg

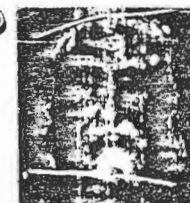
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 Lifetide by Dr. Lyall Watson
 The Tao of Physics by Fritjof Capra
 Mysticism by F.C. Happold
 The Nature of Consciousness by E. Harris Walker (Mathematical Biosciences 7, 1970)
 Parapsychology Review Jan/Feb 1979
 God & the New Physics by Prof. Paul Davies
 The Dancing Wu Li Masters by Gary Zukav
 Cornish For All by R. Morton Nance



THE SHROUD - MORE UPDATE

Kate Pollard



Much of the correspondence which followed the last issue concerned the Shroud (or the Carbon-Dating Ding Dong, as Paul Smith has christened it.)

Paul drew my attention to the 'Newsletter of the British Society for the Turin Shroud'. As he rightly says it is expensive for what it is (five pounds for three issues) but for those who want to be abreast of current developments, related news and associated public lectures (Ian Wilson features prominently as a speaker), here is the contact address as of last April: Gen. Sec. Susan Black, 21 Stanley Gdns. London NW2 4QH. Tel. 01-452- 0634. Occasional papers arrive with the magazine. Naturally the Society is rooting for the Shroud, or they wouldn't have formed themselves.

News items of 'parallel phenomena' interest, e.g. the Liverpool mattress imprint case which received coverage in the Sunday Observer earlier in the year are included, and it is evident that we can expect a rash of death-bed- imprint stories to emerge.

Peter Ratazzi has kindly sent various newspaper articles which come from the other side of the fence. The Telegraph, May 9, relates the activities of a Dr Jo Nichell (described as a teacher, former magician, and member of the Committee for the Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal) who set out to examine the complaint made in 1389 by a French Bishop to Pope Clement VII that an artist in his diocese had wrought a false shroud image of Jesus in the tomb. Dr Nichell is doing this by perpetrating his own forgeries based on techniques similar to brass rubbing in order to achieve the negative image effect. Another team member, an ex- medical examiner, is

unconvinced by the blood stains. Their statement to date is "We.....do not reject the possibility of a miracle.....but insist that before accepting a miracle we must accept the possibility of a forgery".

Ian Wilson, on the other hand, wrote a letter pointing out that tests already carried out have satisfied eminent pathological experts as to colour and constituency of the blood stains: (The game consists of quoting ever- higher experts) As the Telegraph say, nowhere are the carbon dating results more keenly awaited than in Templecombe, whose Church holds the Turin Shroud look-alike painting. (I can vouch for this, having recently attended a Day School on the Templars in Templecombe). The church has become a kind of Mecca for religious historians pondering over the painting's role as possible missing link.

Meanwhile, the samples from the Shroud itself are being tested, along with controls, at Oxford's Archaeological Research Centre, The University of Arizona, and Zurich's Medium-energy Physics Institute. The Pope is expected to announce the results in July. Will we be any wiser by the next issue of Pendragon? Only time will tell. Meanwhile the dings and dongs continue to reverberate so we pass on to some quieter musings on the subject by Peter Ratazzi.

MIRACULOUS PORTRAITS

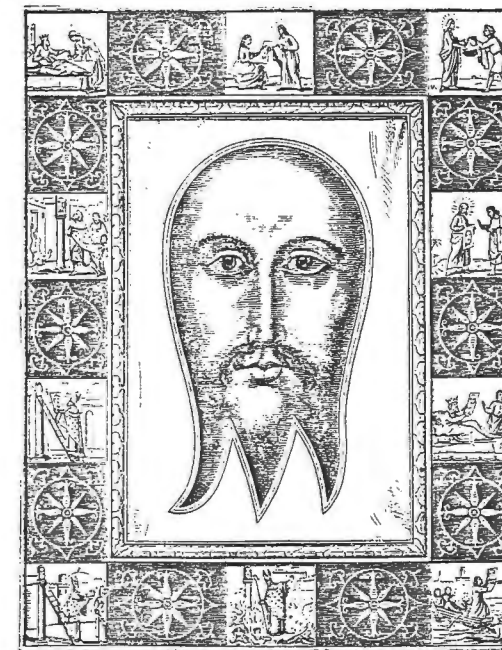
Any miraculous portrait of Christ is referred to as a sudarium, e.g. the kerchief of St. Veronica stamped with the face of Christ, and the napkin about Christ's head. (John XX.6,7.). "Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie, And the napkin, that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself".

A mediaeval legend says that a maiden handed her handkerchief to the Redeemer on his way to Calvary. He wiped the sweat from his brow, returned the cloth to the owner and went on. The handkerchief was found to bear a perfect likeness of the Saviour and was called Vera Icon: the maiden was called St. Veronica. The relic is preserved in St. Peter's, Rome, but seems also associated with Besancon.

A picture of this curiosity appears in the 1869 edition of 'The Book of Days' and a reproduction is shown herewith.

As for the situation in Turin, the Cathedral of San Giovanni Battista, by Pintelli, 1498, immediately behind the Royal Palace is built in the shape of a Latin cross and contains numerous works of art. Behind the high altar one enters the Cappella del Santissimo Sudario, its walls entirely lined with black marble, contrasting singularly with the white marble monuments, the shafts of light from the curiously shaped dome enhancing the effect. In an urn is kept a portion of the shroud in which the body of the Crucified is said to have been wrapped by Joseph of Arimathea after the descent from the cross.

The precious wrapping cloth is believed to have been brought from Jerusalem to Chambery, ancient capital of Savoy, in 1452, and after many vicissitudes, taken to Turin by Emmanuel Philibert in 1578.



Incidentally, the campaign suit of Duke Philibert - regarded as the finest suit of armour in Italy - is part of his equestrian statue on show in Turin's celebrated Royal Armoury.

According to other accounts, the venerated linen in the Cappella del Santissimo Sudario, (designed by Guarini in 1694) was already mentioned in the seventh century. Or, alternatively, known after the Fourth Crusade - the cloth being transported to Besancon in 1205 by Othon de la Roche. Thereafter, the shroud turns up in Lirey. Geoffroy de Charny, seigneur of Lirey, gave it to the local church about 1352. The shroud, measuring 4.10 by 1.40 metres, was described as 'un drap au quel est la figure au representation du Suaire Nostre Seigneur Jesus Christ'.

It is said that an investigation by theologians in 1389 declared that the imprint on the shroud was a painting.

DARK AGE XWORD SOLUTION

ACROSS:

- 1 Galahad (gala plus shadow minus sow)
- 7 Arimathea (anag of 'the aim' and 'arena' - less E. & N. In SW Ephraim)
- 8 Seat (not 'keen' which is suggested by 'fine', 'knee', 'eager' and 'be distressed'. The Seat Perilous could cause distress even though a seat is fine for a bent knee!)
- 9 Anno (in the ear of, in the year of.)
- 11 Itinary (anag of 'Hiram in Tyre' - less 'H.M.')
- 12 Animism ('simian' & 'm', anag.)

DOWN:

- 2 Agitation (a bit of 'wag it at I once')
- 3 Arab ('arable' minus 'le')
- 4 Athenians (Minerva= Athene. anag of 'as in the' and 'an')
- 5 Wassail ('Lias saw' backwards. Wassail means 'be well')
- 6 Malorye (wrote of the Round Table. Rhys gives alternative spelling and says there is no account of the man)
- 10 Helm (for steering a head)7



DARK AGE DELIVERIES Eddie Tooke

It is surprising what gems of information can turn up with just a little research and/or serendipity.

Transportation in the Dark Ages was a hazardous business: a faded manuscript I discovered recently in a musty Salvation Army beer cellar reveals just how hazardous. It concerns Cedric and Cerdic, two 5th-6th century vassals living (if you can call it that) in the Thames Valley. Their main occupation was the carrying of yeast from the French cargo vessels docking at Purfleet to East Saxon bakers in the new towns. (Pliny records that yeast was used in France as early as the 1st century of the Christian era.)

Cedric and Cerdic, however, had a problem. They suffered from frequent attacks of Arthrititis. In other words they were regularly mugged in Epping Forest by the flour of Britain's knighthood, who stole sacks of yeast from the low-bread Saxons because they kneaded the dough. Arthur's men, led by Sir Bredivere and the Seneschal, Kay, (more commonly known as 'Special Kay' because he served the god Bran) also helped themselves, free of charge, to an occasional sack of meal from the new town millers. They developed a formula for working out the amount one saves on meal when one doesn't have to pay for it and consequently called it the 'Buy-no-meal Theorem'.

Sir Kay, tidy minded as a good steward should be, kept concise records of each transaction, thus: 'Buy-no-meal Theorem: 1 sack, New Town'. The theorem survives still in mathematics but it was due to the discovery of one of Sir Kay's records in a venerable pre-British Rail sandwich by an illiterate hack writer some thirteen centuries later that the wrong person was credited with its invention. Sir Kay's note was read as 'Buy-no-meal Theorem: 1 saac New ton.' How simple truths suffer due to scribal errors

(Gratuitous information: The dirty grey bread normally eaten by the peasantry, which caused so many rye faces, resulted in the village baker being known as the Grey Loaf Man - a name stemming from Morgan le Fay (as you will see if you're any good at anagrams.) End of gratuitous information.)

How to avoid Arthur's ambushes? Cedric and Cerdic solved their problem in a novel way. If the woods were full of enemies, why not travel by water? They started transporting the yeast sacks up the Thames on surf-boards towed behind high-speed coracles.

The venture was a great success and the two partners soon dominated the yeast delivery service. To ensure a square deal for all, however, (they were the original Square Deal Serfs) they set up a Board to coordinate everyone's business activities. It was known, of course, as The East Saxon Serf Board (The Yeast Sacks on Surf-board. (THE YEAST SACKS ON - Oh! Never mind ...)

IT SEEMED TOO OBVIOUS TO DEPICT MORGAN'S COVER IMAGE AS AN ENCHANTRESS AND WITCH QUEEN, WITH ALL ITS ASSOCIATIONS WITH THE MORRIGAN, DIVINE HAGS, SHEELAGH -NA-GIGS ETC THEREFORE I CHOSE THE STRENGTH CARD FROM THE TAROT AS ANOTHER 'FACE' OF MORGAN. SOME TAROT WRITERS HAVE MADE 'STRENGTH' AND 'THE ENCHANTRESS' SYNONYMOUS.



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