

pendragon



No XXV/2

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EDITORIAL

Two souls, alas, within my breast abide.
The one to quit the other ever burning.
This, in a lusty passion of delight,
Cleaves to the world with organs tightly clinging;
Fain from the dust would the other wing its flight
To realms of loftier sires.

(Goethe: Faust)

Editng *PENDRAGON* is an unpredictable and intriguing process. You start optimistically by suggesting the next theme then watch helplessly as it all begins to go its own way. Several articles arrive with no obvious relationship then, unexpectedly and excitingly, things begin to fall into place. A pattern emerges and from that point it seems that contributions are shaping themselves to fit the jigsaw.

At first Charles Evans-Günther's study of the Nazis' fascination with pseudo-Arthurian mystical ideas seemed incompatible with Chris Lovegrove's investigation of the Christian vision of the Virgin and Child, witnessed by Arthur at the chapel of Beckery.

No, wait, that's it! Polar opposites, of course - Saints and Sinners! Now serendipity gathers momentum and the theme begins to organise itself.

A sheaf of scholarly notes arrives from Tristan Gray Hulse who is editor of *SOURCE*, in response to Chris's Icon article. David Pykitt rings up and offers a chart of sources to back his claim for Athrwys/Adras whom he identifies with St Arthmael in his book *Journey to Avalon*.

Now we are really under way. A phone call to Nigel Pennick brings generous permission to print his account of the Nazi search for the Holy Grail at Montségur Castle: this balances up the sinners again. My own summary of the 'true story' of Artorius in the Otherworld reveals that he is allowed to rub shoulders with the saints and to keep his Virgin and Child shield in reward for clobbering the sinners when he was alive.

Just in time, Ronan Coghlan honours his promise to serialise for us his Mold Library lecture on the Irish Connection. Ronan's Irish Merlin (Sweeney) meets sinners and saints aplenty in the Emerald Isle, including St Ronan himself. And there's more of this golden-tongued Celtic story-telling to look forward to in future issues.

What else? Oh, yes, John Matthews has managed to find time to write us some book reviews (he has some interesting ones of his own on the stocks). A wealth of information, news items and opinions have come in, enabling us to talk our heads off, print our letters pages and tell you what to look for in the bookshops: special thanks to John Ford, Alexandra Clark, Susan Gaitley, Tim Harris and Steve Sneyd for their contributions in this area.

One favourite feature is unfortunately missing: Tavas yn Gruth. Eddie Tooke has been unwell for some time and is not able to entertain us with his wit and wordplay for a while; what a feast he would have made of this theme! I know all our readers will wish to join us in sending Eddie our heartfelt wishes for a speedy recovery.

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The messiah And His High Priest Charles Evans-Günther



ARTHURIAN CONNECTIONS WITH THE NAZIS

Since the end of the Second World War there have been many hundreds of books and countless articles on Adolf Hitler and the Nazis. What was it that made them into mass murderers? A number of publications have also tried to explain the Nazis by looking at their occult back-ground. Unfortunately, most of these are full of inaccuracies and often the mistakes of earlier books have turned up in later ones. That occultism and mysticism played a part in the development of the National Socialist Party cannot be doubted. What can be doubted is that the Nazis took any of this seriously.

One of the earliest books on this subject in the English language was the translated *Le Matins Des Mages* by Louis Paulwels and Jacques Bergier, published in Britain as *The Dawn of Magic* in 1963. Their sources were never given and much of what they wrote can either be proven to be incorrect or misunderstandings. In the 1970s there followed a bevy of such publications, but the one that still has considerable influence on this type of book is *The Spear of Destiny* by Trevor Ravenscroft, published in 1974. Though this book does contain a lot of information about the occult background to the Nazis it is highly flawed. Ravenscroft wove the information around a story which is primarily fiction. Unfortunately, he used, in general, the names of real people. His main characters are Walter Johannes Stein and Adolf Hitler. We are introduced to Hitler's fascination with the Holy Lance kept in the Schatzkammer of the Hofburg Palace in Vienna and how Stein meets him as an impoverished artist in 1912. A number of aspects of this are blatantly untrue. It can be proved that Stein did not meet Hitler until



the 1930s and that the link between Stein and Hitler, the owner of a bookshop - Ernst Pretzsche - did not exist (Viennese records show that there was no such person resident in the city between 1890 and 1920).

The Spear of Destiny is still quoted as if it were fact. However, there is some truth that Hitler wanted the Holy Lance, though not for occult reasons. The Lance was among the treasures of the Hapsburgs and it was those that Hitler coveted. Having said this, Heinrich Himmler, head of the SS, is known to have had a great interest in things mystical and may have believed in the legends that surrounded the Lance. Hitler read widely and had books on astrology, mysticism, Eastern philosophy and mythology but there is no evidence that he was an occultist, black magician or possessed by Satan. He certainly used aspects of mysticism to help create a state that would consider him as their saviour. Hitler saw himself as a latter day Lohengrin, Siegfried or Parsifal. What is interesting is that both Hitler and Himmler used and spoke in terms of things Arthurian. This short article will look briefly at this aspect and what the sources of the Nazi-Arthurian connection were. Anyone interested in the occult background of the Nazis should read *The Occult Roots of Nazism* by Nicholas Goorick-Clarke, published in 1985.

THE MESSIAH: ADOLF HITLER
Hitler constantly spoke about setting up a 'New Order' which he likened to the Teutonic Knights or Templars of the Middle Ages. On one occasion, while discussing

Wagner with Herman Rauschnung a Danzig gauleiter, Hitler stated:

The problem is this: how can we arrest racial decay? Must what Count Gobineau says come true? We have acted politically on it - no equality, no democracy! But are we to allow the masses to go their own way or should we stop them? Shall we form simply a select company of the real initiated? An order, the brotherhood of Templars around the holy grail of pure blood?

Another time when a close confidant, Otto Wagener - a face often seen near to Hitler in the 1930s - was parting company, he said:

During so many nights we have discussed so many things, and I have revealed to you my innermost thoughts and my fundamental ideas, as I have done perhaps to no one else. Please keep this knowledge to yourself, and thus become the guardian of the grail, whose innermost truth can be disclosed to only the few.

Here we can see that Hitler liked to use terms of an Arthurian nature. It is more than likely that he was not speaking of anything mystical or believed in holy grails but he certainly used such language. And though most of his followers knew what Hitler meant - that he was speaking metaphorically - others like Himmler took his führer literally. Later we will see what Himmler made from his master's words, but first what were the sources of Hitler's flowery rhetoric?

Much of what we are to become is moulded when we are children. This is, of course, true of Adolf Hitler. In his *"Mein Kampf"* important references to his childhood indicate the beginnings of the process that were to influence him and affect him in later life.

"To 'learn' history means to seek and find the forces which are the causes leading to those effects which we subsequently perceive as historical events..."

This old gentleman's manner (Hitler is here talking of his history teacher Dr. Leopold Pötsch) was as kind as he was determined, his dazzling eloquence not only held us spellbound but actually carried us away. Even today I think back with gentle emotion on this grey-haired man who, by the fire of his narratives, sometimes made us forget the present; who, as if by enchantment, carried us into past times and, out of the millennial veils of mist, moulded dry historical memories into living reality..."

A few pages further on he states:

"The provincial capital of Upper Austria (Linz) had at that time a theatre which was relatively speaking, not bad. Pretty much of everything was produced. At the age of twelve I saw Wilhelm Tell for the first time, and a few months later my first opera, Lohengrin. I was captivated at once. My youthful enthusiasm for

the master of Bayreuth knew no bounds. Again and again I was drawn to his works, and it still seems to me especially fortunate that the modest provincial performance left me open to an intensified experience later on..."

Hitler once told an American correspondent in the 1930s:

"For me, Wagner is something Godly and his music is my religion. I go to his concerts as others go to church."

Here are the clues to the Arthurian connection. Hitler was obsessed with history and highly influenced by the works of Richard Wagner. Hitler loved all of Wagner's work but he was drawn particularly to five: *Rienzi*, *Die Meistersinger*, *Tristan and Isolde*, *Lohengrin* and *Parsifal*.

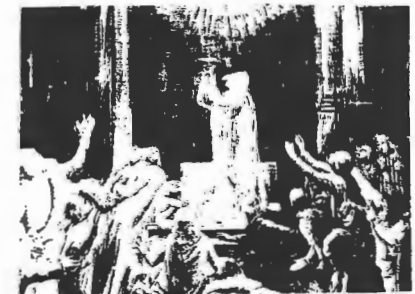
In 1936 Hitler said:

"I have built up my religion out of Parsifal. Divine worship in solemn form...without pretence of humility...One can serve God only in the garb of the hero."

Despite what some writers have said about Hitler he certainly knew his Wagner and often would hum or whistle whole passages from operas. In fact Ernst Hanfstaengl, while discussing Hitler's obsession with Wagner, stated:

I came to see that there was a direct parallel between the construction of the Meistersinger prelude and that of his speeches. The whole interweaving of leitmotifs, of embellishments, of counter-point and musical contrasts and arguments, were exactly mirrored in the pattern of his speeches, which were symphonic in construction and ended in a great climax, like the blare of Wagner's trombones."

But Hitler went further, he also read a lot of Wagner's written works - many of which were anti-semitic. Here we have a basis for the way Hitler would use language that was almost medieval in nature. Both operas *Lohengrin* and *Parsifal* were about the Holy Grail, and to both Wagner and Hitler the Grail was something connected with Aryanism and the purity of Aryan blood. (It is interesting to learn that the term Aryan was created by Friedrich Max Müller. However, he was shocked by the way





Thule-Gesellschaft

Above The banner of the Thule Bund

it was used and stated in 1888: "I have declared again and again that if I say Aryans, I neither mean blood or bones, nor hair nor skull: I mean simply those who speak an Aryan language." Parsifal and Lohengrin owe their origins to Wagner's readings of Wolfram von Eschenbach's *Parsifal* and the composer had his own ideas about the meaning behind *Parsifal* (if there actually is one). *Parsifal* is an enactment of the Aryan's fight, a struggle, and hope for redemption," Wagner wrote in his article *Herodom and Christianity* (1881). To Wagner and many of his day the importance of belonging to an ancient and superior race - the Aryans - was becoming very important. Hitler, over fifty years later, continued this belief when he said:

"If we strip away *Parsifal* of every poetic element we learn from it that selection and renewal are possible amidst the continuous tension of a lasting struggle".

Amongst Wagner influences were Arthur Comte de Gobineau (note Hitler's mention of him above) and his son-in-law Houston Stewart Chamberlain. Wagner was an anti-semitic but unlike Hitler could live with Jews without exterminating them. In fact, Wagner employed a number of Jews on his opera *Parsifal* - Paul von Joukowsky on scenery, Karl Brandt as stage manager, Joseph Rubenstein worked on the piano score and Hermann Levi conducted the orchestra.

Nevertheless, Wagner's idea of *Parsifal* was that it was about a sort of Aryan Christ, and Klingsor, a secondary character in Wolfram von Eschenbach's work, represented not only the tainted blood of the Jew but also the

Jesuits. In an article in the *Bayreuther Blätter*, November-December 1882, he explained that in this opera 'The Kingship of the Brotherhood' was the elite of the race, "a race chosen to protect the Grail." To both Wagner and Hitler the Grail held the ancient blood, not of Christ, but of the Aryan. Hitler was obsessed by the purity of Aryan blood and this fear was put into practice first by campaigns for 'Racial Hygiene' and later by the 'Final Solution'. Throughout his career, in his speeches and conversations, he would often mention "the Holy Grail of German Blood." Hitler also had a fear that his father was the illegitimate son of a Jew, in whose house his grandmother had worked.

However, it was not only from Wagner that Hitler had inherited the talk of holy grails, orders of elite and Aryan supremacy. In the latter part of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th, as if a reaction to the growth of modern industrialism, there grew up in Germany and Austria mystical societies which looked to the past for answers to life. Unfortunately, they were often fanatic nationalists and anti-semites. Amongst them were 'The Order of the New Templars', 'Germanenorden' and the 'Thule Society'. They were utterly obsessed with the past (fact and fictional), the uses of runes, the purity of Aryan blood and the belief in the unity of all German peoples. Leader of the 'New Templars' was Jörg Lanz von Liebenfels who believed that the Aryan people were being polluted by the blood of 'beasts' and that these 'sub-humans' should be sterilised, forced into slave labour, sent to camps in Madagascar or exterminated. But he was also fascinated by the Holy Grail:

"...a new priesthood will arise in the land of



Ostara, 'Library of the Blondes'.

the Electron and the Holy Grail...Great princes, doughty warriors, inspired priests, eloquent bards and visionary sages will arise from the ancient soil of Germany and enchain the apes of Sodom, establish the Church of the Holy Spirit and transform the Earth into the 'Isles of the Blessed'."

Up till May 1913 Liebenfels published around 65 issues of his magazine *Ostara*, which put over his pseudo-mystical, nationalistic and anti-Semitic philosophy. In 1909 he was visited by a young impoverished artist who wanted to buy back-issues to complete his collection of *Ostara*. That young man was Adolf Hitler and it is known from colleagues of his when he lived in a hostel in Vienna that he had a collection of some 50 issues of Liebenfels' magazine.

In 1907 Liebenfels had decided that the 'Templars' were in reality the 'Guardians of the Grail' and in 1913 he published a study in which he described the Grail as "an electrical symbol pertaining to the 'pan psychic' powers of the pure-blooded Aryan race" and went on to state that the 'Templemen of the Grail' of Wolfram von Eschenbach were a metaphor for the strict eugenic practices of the Templar knights, designed to breed god-men." He also wrote of "The Holy Grail of German Blood that must be defended by the new Brotherhood of Templars". This last statement is almost paraphrased by Hitler when talking to Herman Rauschning in the 1930s.

The 'Germanen orden' were of a similar nature to Liebenfels' 'Templars' but looked to all accounts like Freemasons. They were certainly influenced by Liebenfels and Guido von List, another mystic of this period. Amongst their initiation ceremonies there were knights wearing white robes, helmets and carrying swords, there was the sacred spear of Wotan and a part of the hall known as the 'Grove of the Grail'. During initiation Wagner's *Tannhäuser* was played and music from *Lohengrin* when the initiate was taken into the 'Grove of the Grail'. Established in Northern Germany, an offshoot was later set up in Munich by Rudolf von Sebottendorff and named the 'Thule Society'. Like the previous societies it was fanatical, nationalistic and anti-semitic. Connected with 'Thule' was Anton Drexler, head of the German Workers' Party. In 1919 this little group recruited its 55th member (actually the membership card had the number 555, but only to give the impression that the Party had a greater number of members). His name was Adolf Hitler and he soon took over from Drexler and changed the GWP into the National Socialist Party (Nazis). Other members of 'Thule' included Dietrich Eckart, Rudolf Hess and Alfred Rosenberg, who were all later influential in the Nazi party



An illustration based on Lanzinger's 'Hitler in Knight's Armour'

Whether Hitler actually believed in holy grails we will never know. We do know he was impressed by Wagner's operas and writings and that he certainly had read *Ostara*, but did he believe in all this mumbo-jumbo or was he able to see that the German people were ready for such beliefs. In 1938, at the height of his power, Hitler chose one portrait out of hundreds to be exhibited in Munich. This was "Hitler in Knight's Armour" painted by the Tyrolean artist, Lanzinger. Here we have Hitler, the knight in shining armour, leading the Aryan people to world domination under the symbol of the swastika. Seven years later Hitler played out one more story from Germanic myth and Wagner's operas - *Parsifal* met his *Götterdämmerung* amongst the ruins of the Führerbunker at 3.30 on April 30th, 1945.

THE HIGH PRIEST: HEINRICH HIMMLER

Though Hitler may have used Arthurian ideas for effect and may have never really believed in them, the head of the SS, Heinrich Himmler, by all accounts did. From childhood Himmler was obsessed by history together with Germanic and heroic mythology. Himmler, a Bavarian born in Munich, was the son of a professor of philology. His father was interested in old German coins and German antiquities. This most certainly rubbed off on young Heinrich for when he was 10 he could reel off the dates of famous battles, while the Sagas of the Nibelungs and medieval wars fuelled his imagination in the same way other boys loved tales of Red Indians. (From Hitler's own words we know he loved history but, unlike Himmler he read a lot of Karl May's 'Old Shatterhand' books and played at being a cowboy). By the time Himmler went to high school he knew more about German history than his teachers. Himmler was born in 1900 so he was too young to join the army when the First World War started. When old enough he did volunteer, though he never



'Save the East' poster, 1922. A Knight threatened by a Pole and a Socialist.

saw combat. Meanwhile, Hitler served on various fronts, was wounded twice and awarded the first and second class Iron Cross. Following the War, Bavaria was a powder keg of revolution and Himmler joined the 'Freikorps Lantshut' and the Reserve Company of the 'Freikorps Oberland', an organisation supported by the 'Thule Society'.

A few years later Himmler became mixed up with the Nazi Party and took part in the Munich Putsch. Despite its failure Himmler later joined the Nazi party and in 1929 became Reichsführer of the SS. From then on his power grew and grew until he became leader of a state within a state and was responsible for the mass extermination of not only millions of Jews but also Russians, Gypsies and what the Nazis called deviants, including homosexuals. Most people know about this side of Himmler and the SS but hidden from sight was a pseudo-mystical society that used the works of Wagner, Chamberlain, Rosenberg, Liebenfels, List and other writers. He was fascinated by symbolism and created a whole set of insignia based on the Runes. All members of the SS were obliged to learn about Runes, mythology and German history.

Himmler took what Hitler said to be gospel and when the budding Führer discussed his ideas for a 'New Order', blood purity of the Holy Grail and a race of god-men, Himmler took it all in and made it his business to see them become a reality. Himmler, interested in the past and under the influence of Walter Darré, whom he had met in 1924 when both were members of the 'Artamans' (a society promoting a back-to-the-land policy) set up

the 'Race and Resettlement Office' in 1931. This was to look at Germany's past, to help in the selection of members of the SS - making sure their ancestry was free of pollution (Jews were usually meant by this) and to discuss the possibilities of setting up an SS State in the East.

Already the SS were becoming like Templars or Teutonic Knights, but a great boost to Himmler's vision of Hitler's rhetoric came in early 1933 when he met Karl Maria Wiligut. Here was the man who would make the SS into a mystical order, with rituals and symbols beyond what Himmler had originally envisaged. Wiligut joined the SS under the name Weisthor and set to work designing insignia and rituals. Though virtually unknown to most writers on the SS and Himmler, Wiligut was responsible for the famous SS ring and for convincing Himmler into setting up a ritual SS centre. In fact, it was Wiligut who helped make up Himmler's mind to pick Schloss Wewelsburg, near Paderborn in Westphalia, as the spiritual centre of the Black Order.

In November 1933, accompanied by Wiligut, Himmler went to Wewelsburg and admitted that he was enthralled by the castle and its surroundings. Wiligut had told Himmler that this was a place of prophecy, the site where the hordes from the East would be defeated. Himmler rented the castle from the District of Büren for 1 Reichsmark and then spent over thirteen million marks on repairing it. At first Himmler talked about the castle as being a school for SS recruits but under the influence of Wiligut he changed his ideas. In 1934 he told a gathering of SS-Führers:

Never forget we are a knightly Order, from which one cannot withdraw, to which one is recruited by blood and within which one remains with body and soul so long as one lives on this earth.

Now Schloss Wewelsburg was to be his place for the coming together of his warrior-leaders, the Obergruppenführers.

Padfield describes, in his book on Himmler: 'As plans developed the castle became - in his eyes - what Camelot had been to King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table, Montsalvat to Perceval and the Knights of the Holy Grail, a mystical seat hidden from the gaze of the uninitiated, the towered sanctum of the higher order of SS chivalry.'

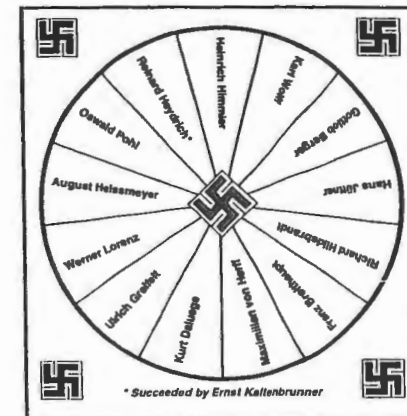
The SS became a mixture of the Knights Templar, Teutonic Knights, Jesuits, Knights of the Holy Grail and the Knights of the Round Table. Every year, and well into the Second World War, Himmler gathered his 12 Obergruppenführers at Wewelsburg around a great oaken table in the 100 foot by 145 foot dining room. Each 'knight' had his own high-backed chair carrying his name inscribed on a

small silver plate. The walls were adorned with coats of arms, most of which had been created especially for Himmler and his 'knights' by Professor Karl Diebitsch. Each time the 'knights' visited Wewelsburg they had to sleep in a different room named after various heroes, including Otto the Great, Henry the Lion, Frederick of Hohenstaufen, Philip of Swabia, Conrad IV, Albrecht the Bear, Widukind, King Arthur and Christopher Columbus! A number of rooms were named after concepts such as 'Blood and Soil' and 'Revenge and Right', while the 'Grail' room was kept for special guests. Himmler's own quarters were named after Heinrich the Fowler - whom some say Himmler believed he was linked to by reincarnation - and one special room dedicated to Frederick Barbarossa was to be used only by Adolf Hitler. (There is no evidence that Hitler ever visited Wewelsburg and though he often talked of his 'loyal Heinrich', he thought Himmler was a bit of a crank. He allowed him his eccentricities as long as he did a good job: Himmler did do a good job!).

Leading from the dining room and in the cellar of the great north tower was the 'Realm of the Dead' - the holy of holies of the SS Order. Here there was a place to burn the arms of fallen knights and 12 pedestals to put the ashes. Only one of Himmler's knights had his coat of arms burned and placed on a pedestal - Reinhard Heydrich, who was assassinated in Prague, Czechoslovakia on May 27th, 1942. The smoke from the burnt arms went out through a special chimney, reminiscent of the Vatican ceremony on the election of a new pope.

Himmler had great plans for Wewelsburg. It was to become the cult centre of the SS empire, which would stretch to the east. There were produced a number of plans and models of Himmler's future Vatican of the SS Order to be completed by the 1960s. The plans show an amazing sight! It is as if it was designed specially to look, from the air, like a great round shield with a war spear coming from the south - its point being the castle itself. What is quite interesting is that in the 1941 plan the spearhead bears an incredible resemblance to the Holy Lance, which had been part of the Habsburg treasures and was by then being kept by Hitler at Nuremberg.

The mystical leader of the SS never saw his dream fulfilled. though he did change the face of Europe. Wewelsburg proved not to be a place of prophecy and was destroyed on Himmler's orders by a demolition team under Hauptsturmführer Heinz Macher. This same Macher accompanied Himmler when he tried to escape the clutches of the allies. Though captured, Himmler never got to stand trial for



genocide (a word that had to be invented to describe his crimes) because he committed suicide while under arrest.

Is this all just rubbish or was there some strange connection between these two leaders of Nazidom and the Arthurian legends. Hitler and Himmler were deeply immersed in the history of the Germanic peoples and yet both used aspects of the Arthurian tales in their attempts to create a 'new order'. To Hitler this order was to encompass all the people - it was an order of pure Aryan blood and it was the quest of all good Aryans to find that Grail. Himmler went further because he wanted to create a special elite order - the SS Order of Knights of the Holy Grail of pure Aryan blood. And he saw that his order should carry out the quest to cleanse the world of polluted blood so that each good Aryan would find the Grail.

POSTSCRIPT

During my research for this article I came across some of Richard Wagner's writings which may well be worth quoting verbatim. It is from *Die Wibelungen: Weltgeschichte aus der Sage* (The Wibelungen: World History as told in Saga), 1848, *Prose Works*, Vol. vii.

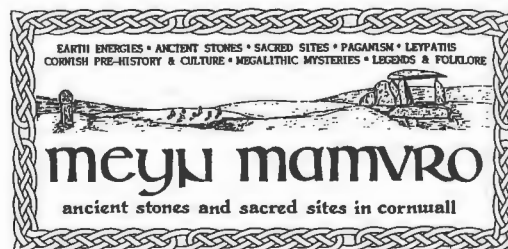
"...Wondrous legends had he heard of a lordly country deep in Asia, in farthest India, of an ur-divine priest-king who governed there a pure and happy people, immortal through the nature of a wonder-working relic called 'the Holy Grail'.

"The legend went that once the Keeper of the Grail had really brought the holy relic to the Occident; great wonders had he here performed: in the Netherlands...a Knight of the Grail had appeared, but vanished when asked forbidden tidings of his origins; then was the Grail conducted back by its old guardian to the distant morning-land; in a castle on a lofty mound in India it was now kept once more.

"It is of first importance that its Keeper was priest and King alike, that is, a Master

(oberhaupt) of all spiritual Knighthood, such as was introduced from the Orient in the twelfth century...The Quest of the Grail henceforth replaces the struggle of the Nibelungen-Hoard, and as the Occidental world, unsatisfied within, reach out past Rome and Pope to find its place of healing in the tomb of the Redeemer at Jerusalem, as unsatisfied even there, it casts its yearning gaze, half spiritual, half physical, still farther towards the East to find the primal shrine of manhood, so the Grail was said to have withdrawn from out the ribald West to the pure, chaste, reachless birthland of all nations." This fascinating piece of text brings to mind the traditions of the Old Believers and Buddhists. To the Old Believers of Russia there is a magical White Land to the south, while to the Tibetan Buddhists to the north is Shambhalla. During the Middle Ages a strange story spread throughout Europe of the Land of Prester John, who was Christian emperor ruling in the East. Descriptions of the city of Prester John, Shambhalla and the Grail Castle are all remarkably similar. Wolfram von Eschenbach made Prester John the nephew of Parsifal and keeper of the Holy Grail.

(Editor: Charles has prepared A comprehensive list of books on this subject, please send a stamped addressed envelope for a copy.



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The miracle at Beckery Tristan Gray Hulse

'Chris Lovegrove's fascinating article 'The King and Icons', in *Pendragon* XXV/1, prompts me to offer some notes which might help to elucidate the miracle at Beckery'.

At first sight, John of Glastonbury's tale of the miracle or vision in the Beckery chapel seems incomprehensible, made not less so if the only analogues one recognises are those found in the medieval Grail literature. Yet in fact, apart from the figure of Arthur, all its elements are commonplaces of the religious tradition of medieval Europe. The tale makes sense (relatively!) if one recognises that its principal referent is not the once and future king, but the motif of the miraculous eucharist.

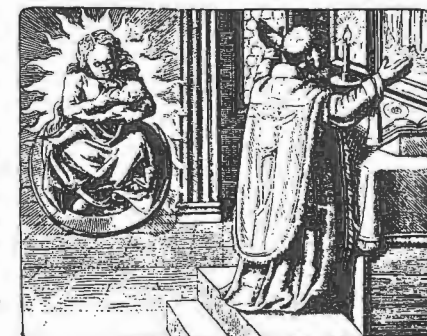
Eucharistic miracles of exactly this type, whose object was always to witness to the doctrine of the Real Presence, have been common throughout most of Christian history. The earliest known to me is one reported in the *Apophthegmata patrum* or 'Sayings of the Fathers', a huge collection of sayings attributed to the early monastic fathers of Egypt and Palestine. The story is therefore sixth-century at the latest and arguably up to 200 years older.

The lives and teachings of the Desert Fathers quickly became widely known in the West, and remained a potent influence on monasticism throughout the middle ages. Eucharistic miracles also occurred in the West, and were recorded by writers such as Gregory the Great and Gregory of Tours. They were known and reported in Britain as well. In a *Life of St Oswald of York*, written c.1000 by a monk of Ramsey who had known the saint, mention is made of a miracle which happened once when Oswald's uncle, St Odo of Canterbury (d.958) was saying Mass. As he picked up the consecrated Host, blood dripped from it. In honour of the miracle, Odo caused a great banquet to be served to the poor of Canterbury. Miracles of this type are commonplace in medieval hagiography, and in the huge collections of miracles and *exempla* made at that time. Of these, the most important and comprehensive (as well as the most entertaining!) is the *Dialogus Miraculorum* of Caesarius of Heisterbach, compiled between 1220 and 1235. The whole of Book 9 of the *Dialogues* is concerned with eucharistic miracles, more than 60 in all, almost all told to Caesarius by acquaintances, as personal reminiscences—thus amply illustrating, if not the objective truth of the miracles themselves, then the mental climate of the age which later produced the account of the Beckery miracle. Chapter 3 tells of Adolph, a priest of Dieveren, who, when he came to break the Host,

saw the Virgin in the host itself, sitting upon a throne and holding the infant to her breast. Wishing to know what was on the other side, as soon as he turned the host he saw a lamb in it and when he again turned it, he saw in it, as if through a glass, Christ hanging on the cross with bent head...he completed the mass (and) went up into the pulpit and told the people the vision with many tears and that very hour fifty men took the cross at his hands (i.e. joined the crusades). (1)

Thus, 100 years before John of Glastonbury wrote his account of the miracle at Beckery, most of the elements of the story could already be found in the tales of two German monks, in a collection of miracles which achieved celebrity status throughout Europe. Much nearer home, it is potentially relevant to note the occurrence of a eucharistic miracle among the traditions attached to the Somerset saint, Wulfric of Haselbury (c.1080-1154). Born near Bristol, in 1125 he settled as a hermit at Haselbury Plucknett, some 18 miles south of Glastonbury, near Yeovil. In his *Chronicle* (s.a.1154) Matthew Paris tells us that he exorcised a possessed man in his hermitage:

When he had regained his strength, Wulfric showed him the Lord's Body in the appearance of bread,



and asked him if he believed. 'I do believe', answered the man, 'for...I see the Body and Blood of my Lord in thy hands in the appearance of flesh. (Quoted in Bridgett, *op.cit*, ii, 188).

The phenomenon of seeing apparitions of Christ in the consecrated Host has persisted to the present day, either to individuals or to groups of people. A U.S. visionary observed Christ in the Host numbers of times in the 1890's. Apparitions of this type were seen by large groups of people at Bordeaux in 182, and at Dubna, in Poland, in 1867.

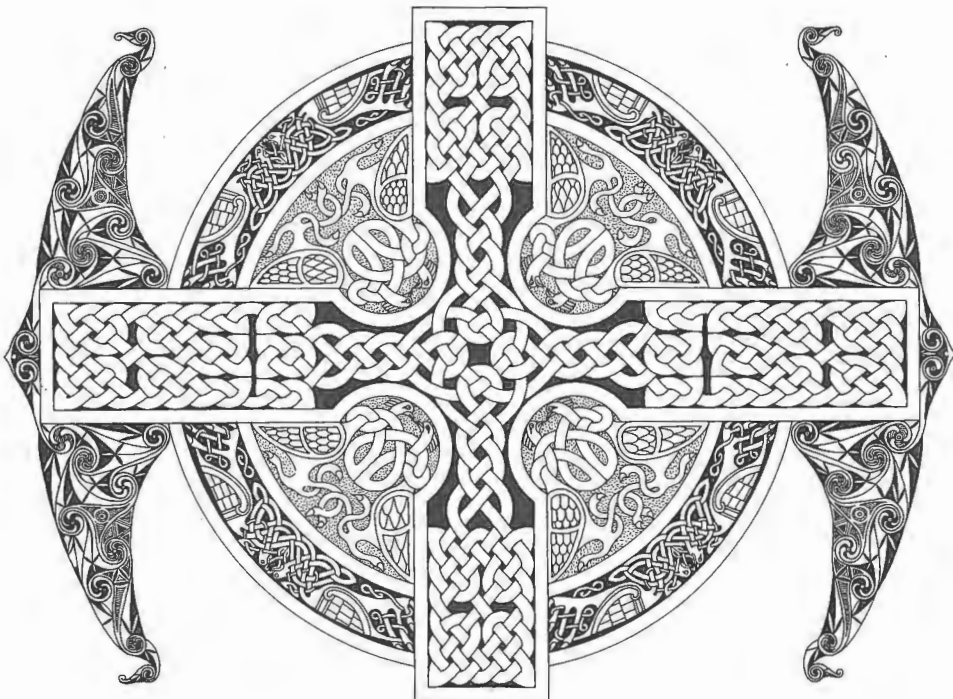
John of Glastonbury's peculiar tale of the miracle at the Beckery chapel, as also told in the thirteenth-century *Perlesvaus*, are to be fitted somehow into this long series of analogous eucharistic miracles. The reasons for the incorporation of the eucharistic miracle into the *Perlesvaus* almost certainly have no relevance to the reasons for its incorporation into John's account.

With specific regard to the Beckery legend, perhaps it began with the miracle of the Somerset saint Wulfic. Later, "improved" by details taken from some *miracula* or *exempla* collection such as that of Caesarius. It could have become attached to the crystal cross preserved at Glastonbury (which sounds like a reliquary - perhaps for a relic of the True Cross?). Other renowned relics of the Cross were reported to have first appeared miraculously during Mass, for example, the Cross of Caravaca, which was carried by angels from Jerusalem to Murcia in Spain. Later still, and possibly influenced by the grail literature, there would have remained to John of Glastonbury the simple matter of attaching the legend to the abbey's coat of arms, absorbing the whole into the Arthurian corpus at a time when Glastonbury was obsessed with its supposed connections with Arthur.

References

1. Caesarius, trans. H von E Scott & C C Swinton Bland, *The Dialogue on Miracles*, vol.2. London 1929, 108-111.

General. T E Bridgett, *History of the Holy Eucharist in Great Britain*, London 1881, vol.1.



The mountain of The Graig • Nigel pennick



St Benedict has been called the father of monasticism, for he was the founder of the immensely successful and powerful Benedictine Order of monks. St Benedict lived at the time of King Arthur during the sixth century of the Christian Era, and, according to the French occultist Alfred Weysen, originally bore the Hebrew name Baruch, the name attributed to Zarathustra, Persian founder of the Aryan Mazdean religion. Whatever the connections, Benedict travelled around Europe founding monasteries upon sites of ancient Pagan sanctity. His most famous foundation was the mountaintop monastery of Monte Cassino, one of the holy mountains in Europe's geomantic energy system. Benedict died in the year 544, seven hundred years before the Cathar disaster at Montségur and 1400 years before the fanatical defence of Monte Cassino by the German army. We will return to the '700 year rule' later.

After Benedict's death, the order continued to expand. Benedictine houses were founded all over Europe, almost invariably upon the most powerful shrines of earlier Christians or Pagans. By 1100, most of the key national shrines of Europe were administered by Benedictines. The two most important English religious houses, for example, the Abbeys at Glastonbury and Westminster, were Benedictine.

The conquest and conversion of Bohemia by Germans of the First Reich was accomplished with the assistance of Benedictine monks, and it is here that we can see their methods. During the German occupation of Czechoslovakia, 1936-44, Kurt Gerlach made a detailed study of the dates of foundation and positioning of these Benedictine houses. He found that politically significant points were also geometrically related: before building began a geomantic survey was carried out. In the Belin district, important places were positioned with relation to the capital Staditz (Stadice). To the west of Prague, 66 kilometres away, was the town of Saaz, 44km from Staditz. Cech, founder of the Czech nation, was buried atop St George's Hill (a holy mountain) at Rip (Raudenice). St George's Hill is 33 km from Prague. Gerlach thought that this landscape geometry was German in origin, using the quarter-Raste of 11 kilometres.

This measurement, related to the old German league of 440 metres, was also shown to be related to the wavelength of the W-force studied by Himmler's dowsers, Wüst and Wimmer, which they found travels at 44 metres per second. Gerlach's findings affirm that the Benedictines were controlling the telluric lines of force. Their magical technology gave them power over those territories where they held

the holy mountains and other key geomantic sites. In England, they have connections with the mysterious turf mazes which dowsers have shown to be powerful sites of earth energy, and from the eighteenth century onwards, Benedictine monks or ex-members of the Order have appeared in the shadows of many occult societies, including the Masonic Lodge of Frederick the Great of Prussia. Hitler himself attended a Benedictine boys' school, and the greatest modern architect, Le Corbusier, was influenced by the ideas of sacred geometers at Beuron monastery, a Benedictine house.

The Benedictines, then, were involved with sacred geography as a means of psychic control of subject nations. This involved the manipulation of subtle energies which are allegorically known as the Holy Grail, symbolised or concentrated in a cup or stone. The legend appears in the various Arthurian romances and their offshoots, and was a favourite theme for the troubadours of the middle ages. Parsifal and the Quest for the Grail held a special importance for the Nazis. Richard Wagner's operatic interpretation of the tale had given it a peculiarly German twist and his genius had produced an immortal work of art which made a deep impression on mystical nationalists. It was one such mystical nationalist, Otto Rahn, who, fired by the tale of

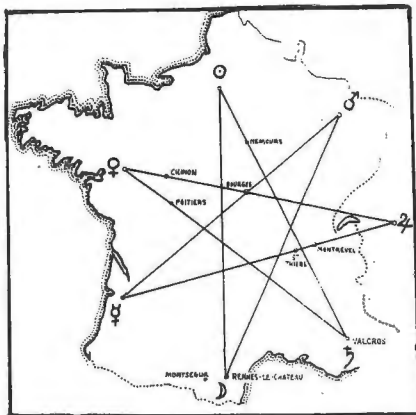


Brutality & Murder of the Albigensian Crusade

Parsifal, set out on a modern quest for the Grail.

Rahn believed that he had found the location of the Holy Grail Mountain, the Montsalvat of legend, in the mountain fortress of Montségur in the French Pyrenees. In 1931, Rahn travelled to France in search of the Grail. He made his way to Montségur, where in 1244 the heretical Cathars had made their last heroic stand against the Catholic crusade which finally triumphed in their destruction. Here, tradition affirms that on the night before the final assault, three Cathars carrying the sacred relics of the faith slipped unnoticed over the wall. They carried away the magical regalia of the Merovingian King Dagobert II and a cup reputed to be the Holy Grail.

Possession of the Grail has always been the dream of chivalric orders. The Knights of King Arthur's Round Table, the Templars, even the Teutonic Knights have sought the mystic vessel. But Otto Rahn believed that he could triumph where centuries of questing had failed. He had studied the sacred geometry of Montségur, its sunrise orientations and its relationships with other sacred places, and had discovered secret underground passages where he felt the treasure must be concealed. In 1933, he published a book on his finds. Titled *The Crusade for the Grail*, Rahn's book identified Montségur with Montsalvat, the Grail Mountain. In a follow-up book *The Heart of Lucifer*, he expanded his views on the political connections of Catharism. In 1937 Rahn sent a consignment of his 'finds' from Montségur to Germany. The recipient of this package was Heinrich Himmler. In his book *Hitler y la Tradición Católica (Hitler and the Cathar Tradition)*, Jean-Michel Angebert claims that this package contained nothing less than the Holy Grail, or at least something Rahn believed was the True Grail. Angebert reports that the vessel was taken to Schloss Wewels-



-burg where it was placed on a marble pedestal in the *Realms of the Dead* beneath the Great Hall.

According to some reports, Rahn was rewarded for his efforts by imprisonment in a concentration camp, where he was murdered in 1943. Other sources assert that Rahn committed ritual suicide by taking cyanide. It was March 1939. A bizarre element to this self-immolation is provided by the location; on top of the Kufstein mountain in Germany, one of the sacred peaks of the Old Religion. In the manner of the Cathar heretics, Rahn voluntarily left a world he saw disintegrating. Perhaps he had come to realize that the object of great power he had found had fallen into the clutches of evil, and would henceforth be employed for destructive purposes.

Rahn had used landscape geometry to find the location of the 'True Grail'. It had been placed at a significant point on the geomantic pattern of the Pyrenees at a point where it could do most good. There is a long tradition of sacred geography in France which is generally held to be the work of the Druids and later the Templars. The Cathars, too, must have had access to this knowledge if we are to believe Rahn. One of the most significant figures in the landscape geometry of France is the 'Hermetic Star of the Templars', a vast seven-pointed figure overlying the whole of France. The points of the star mark important sacred places, each place being sacred to one of the seven astrological 'planets'. Another major figure is the 'Sacred Rectangle of the Gauls', esoterically stated to be one of the 'three tables of the Grail'. This massive figure links key geomantic sites in Britain, France, Germany and the Netherlands. In their book *Le Secret des Druides (The Secret of the Druids)* published in Brussels in 1970, Willy and Marcel Brou describe this vast array of ley lines. They link the shrines at Trier in Germany (also on Gerlach's line Toul-Oldenburg), Avebury and Stonehenge in Britain, the holy islands of Ouessant in France and Walcheren in Holland, St Nazaire, Carnac and Liseux, all centres of Pagan and Christian religious devotion. These vast geometries are linked with telluric forces which energise these places recognised as sacred.

Whether or not these vast patterns actually exist on the ground, and whether their geometry is precise and accurate, in occult terms they can still function. Control of visualisation is a fundamental skill of occultism which must be acquired by every aspirant. Many schools of magic teach methods of attaining this ability, but whatever the system employed, visualisation is the tool for magically influencing events. Grids and networks linking key sites in the landscape provide a conceptual

framework for visualisation. Even if they are no more than mere figments of the imagination, they will still function. Their connexion with detectable earth energies, however, makes them doubly potent, for the adept is then dealing with real forces.

In the Montségur district, the geometry forms a pentagram linked to a midsummer-sunrise line, and this was studied by the geomants whom Himmler sent to the south of France shortly after France's capitulation in 1940. They also started excavations. In June 1943, a major expedition was mounted by the Ahnenerbe. A large group of Nazi scientists descended on the area and began frantic excavations at Montségur. Various things were found, crated up and despatched to the now-shrinking Reich.

Hitler had asserted that the turning-points of history occurred every seven hundred years. An old German legend states that a hidden treasure rises from the ground every seven centuries and Himmler linked this with the Grail. In spiritual history, significant events had occurred in AD 544 and AD 1244. St Benedict, convertor of holy mountains, had died in 544, which was also the reputed year of the death of King Arthur. In 1244, the Cathars at Montségur had been exterminated. Both King Arthur and the Cathars were reputed to have possessed the Grail.

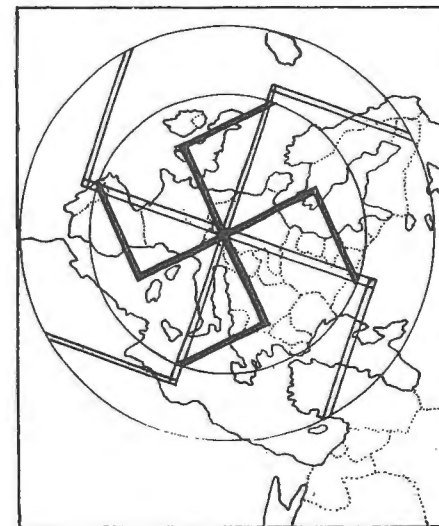
In world history 1944, too, was a turning point. The Third Reich was well and truly doomed, and the atomic bomb, that demonic product of the New Alchemy, was imminent. In that year, the key battle to rid Italy of the Germans was fought on a Benedictine holy mountain, for on January 17, 1944 began the legendary Battle of Monte Cassino. Founded by St Benedict himself, the monastery of Monte Cassino was constructed on top of one of the holy mountains in the energy-system of Europe, and as such had a double importance: it was strategically vital in both the orthodox military and in the occult sense.

The orders received by General von Vietinghoff were unequivocal: he must hold the holy mountain at all costs. The battle was to reflect this last-ditch order. The allies at first threw in one armoured and six infantry divisions, but as the battle dragged on, this was increased to thirteen infantry and three armoured divisions. On the German side, five infantry and four panzer divisions defended Monte Cassino. After four months' fighting, and with the loss of eight divisions' strength, the Allies finally took the holy mountain. But before this happened, half a square mile of the mountain was reduced to dust.

On March 14, 1944, 500 Allied bombers dropped over 1000 tons of bombs in three and a half hours, after which six hundred heavy field guns kept up a barrage. Meanwhile, a few

hundred miles away at Montségur, a strange sight could be seen. On March 16, the 700th anniversary of the Cathar holocaust, Nazi officials including, it is said, Alfred Rosenberg, made a flying visit. A Fieseler Storch light aircraft flew over the site making smoke. It described the form of a vast sunwheel and then flew off in the direction of Toulouse. Hanging over the holy mountain of the Cathars was a vast Celtic Cross. On a vast scale, the Nazi earth magicians had carried out one of the traditional rituals for magical protection - the rite of the Rose Cross.

This magical act somehow paid off. Fighting raged for three days in the ruins of Monte Cassino monastery, but the fanatical resistance of the German First Parachute Division forced back the Allies. Two more months of bombardment were to continue before a veritable united nations of troops assaulted the stronghold for the last time. British, Polish, Moroccan, New Zealand and United States troops pounded the remains of the monastery until final resistance crumbled and on the morning of May 18, 1944, the Polish flag was raised over the rubble that was Benedict's monastery. Eighteen days later, the Allies landed in Normandy, medieval stronghold of the Benedictines. The days of the Third Reich were numbered.



The expanding spiral of Nazi domination as expounded by Haushofer's geo-politics.

This article is Chapter 19 of Nigel Pennick's book *Hitler's Secret Sciences*, Neville Spearman Ltd, Sudbury, Suffolk, 1981. Our thanks to Nigel for giving permission to reproduce it.

The mother of God

Chris Lovegrove

Part 2 of The King and Icons

In the medieval period it was widely believed that King Arthur carried an icon of the Virgin Mary, Mother of God, into battle. The perception of how he did this, however, shows signs of confusion (1). What did icons actually look like before and during the late 5th-century, the period when Arthur is believed to have flourished?

Portraits

Religious images can be broadly separated into three categories, those that purport to be portraits, those that provide a narrative, and those that serve as symbols. Of course many images can function in two or even three categories, but it is the portrait that most concerns us now.

Portraits of Christians appear in frescoes in the Roman catacombs, and in low relief on sarcophagi. They are often recognisably individual, but appear with their arms raised in what is called an *orans* or praying position. The type is conventionally called the *anima in pace* ("soul in peace") and represents a portrait of a recently departed believer. After Christians ceased to be persecuted such *orans* portraits tended to disappear, replaced by more confident and conventional representations on sarcophagi, the bases of vessels, painted panels and gilded glass medallions.

Two catacomb frescoes straddle the transition from times of persecution to official acceptance. The first dates from the third century and is found in the Catacomb of Priscilla (fig 1). A woman, bare-headed and dark haired, is seated at an angle to the viewer. Her hands hold a naked child in her lap, as though nursing it, but her gaze is turned away towards an *anima in pace* figure.

The other portrait is early fourth century and appears in the Coemeterium Maius (fig 2). The top half of a woman's body is painted with a lunette. Her dark hair is barely concealed by a transparent veil, and she wears a heavy necklace, perhaps as evidence of her wealth. She gazes frankly at the viewer, and she has her hands clearly in an outstretched praying position. She is evidently not standing, for the head of a child who must surely be seated in her lap, just appears above an area of damaged plaster.

These depictions may well be ultimately derived from pagan images such as those of Isis and Horus (just as the *pieta* image relates to Isis and the dead Osiris). Combined with the long tradition evidenced by funerary portraits painted on wood panels attached to Egyptian mummy

cases, such examples from the Middle East clearly influenced early Christians perceptions. But these antecedents are not at issue here. The point of describing these portraits is to show that there was an independent early Christian practice of producing mother and child images, and that this already displays features we have seen recur in the later medieval period.

After the Edict of Toleration by Constantine the Great in 313, portraits of Christ, his mother and the apostles were allowed. No longer did Jesus, for example, have to be shown in an allusive way, most commonly as the Good Shepherd or as a seated philosopher. Now the figure of the more familiar bearded Jewish teacher began to become common (2). The crucial date for the development of portraits of Mary came a century later, at the Council of Ephesus in 431.

Incarnation

Those familiar with the Gospel of St John will recall those, at first sight, rather curious opening sentences: *In the beginning was the Word...and the Word was made Flesh*. With those phrases, St John sought to overturn a concept that had differentiated the Jewish god, Jahweh, from all others. This was a supreme being of whom there were no images but whose presence was represented by tablets of stone with engraved words. Once the pagan idea that an immortal god could father a son on a mortal woman (as the Greek god Zeus did all the time) was introduced and accepted, then the ancient prohibition against graven images could be nullified. If the Word could be made Flesh, and God made in image (as Man had been made in God's image), then the replication of God's image could be regarded as sanctioned by divine example (3).



early as the late fourth century on a Milanese reliquary showing the Theotokos frontally enthroned, holding a squirming child in her lap (fig 4).

The third type, Blachernitissa, is derived from the church of the Blachernae palace in Constantinople. It was here that the relic of the *maphorion*, a dark blue veil claimed to be Mary's, was kept from around the mid-fifth century. The image was of the *orans* type, often with Jesus in a medallion over her breast, and is reminiscent of the fourth century fresco in the Coemeterium Maius, noted above (fig 2).

So, we have three image types existing from the fourth-century at the latest. Could Arthur (who if he existed seems likely to be late fifth century) have carried one of these, or one like them, on his shield? The table below tries to draw together some common threads.

However, statues and other three-dimensional images still smacked of idolatry and pagan Emperor worship. In this matter, Christianity has shown the same degree of puritanism as the other two major monotheistic religions, Judaism and Islam. In all three there appears to be an implied hierarchy, from base matter to absolute good:

absolute good
the spoken word
the written word
signs and symbols
two-dimensional images
three-dimensional images
base matter

If this model is correct, we can see that the two-dimensional images are more acceptable to strict monotheists than idols. (But only just!) This model might explain why representations of Christ in frescoes, mosaics, repoussé metalwork and low relief sculpture became common in the first few centuries AD, rather than the sculptures more familiar to us from the High Middle Ages.

At the Council of Ephesus this doctrine of the Incarnation, plus the need to give Mary's role official recognition, resulted in her being given the title *Theotokos*, or Bearer of God. To visualise this Mother of God Christians already had an exemplar of a powerful and important woman, the Empress. And so the image of Mary as *domina* or Queen of Heaven, wearing the purple *palla*, a white veil and ear pendants, seated on a throne or with attendants became accepted.

Within a decade Santa Maria Maggiore, the first church in Rome to be dedicated to Mary, was completed.

Within a few more years the Empress Eudocia, wife of Theodosius II, discovered what was to be the first of many "true" portraits of Mary and Jesus. Like a fresco in Mellieha, Malta and the Icon of the Black Madonna of Czestochowa, Poland, this was soon said to have been originally painted by St Luke. In 450, after the death of Theodosius, it joined the imperial collection of holy relics in Constantinople. The development of what is contemptuously called Mariolatry was well underway.

Early Icons

Because of iconoclast excesses, few authentic portable images exist before the ninth century. However, three closely related types emerge from that dark period. In these the image of Mary is identified as Hodegetria, Nikopoia and Blachernitissa (4).

Hodegetria literally means "She who points the way" from the gesture made by Mary's free hand. In this image her left arm and hand form a throne for her son, while her right hand with open palm indicates Jesus to the viewer. Jesus is often depicted as a miniature adult, with a scroll or book in his left hand and his right hand raised in blessing. Mary stands or sits, though often she is only depicted from the waist up and so it is difficult to tell. Prototypes exist, such as that in an illuminated chronicle from fifth-century Alexandria (fig 3), and though the Hodegetria type is alleged to derive ultimately from Luke's original, a fourth-century icon is noted as existing in the harbour pilots' quarter of Constantinople, *ton hodegon*.

Nikopoia (meaning "Bringer of Victory") exhibits Mary frontally enthroned, with the child held rigidly on her knees. The peculiarity of this type is that Jesus often appears in an oval shape, rather like a shield, or is held in such a way as to suggest a shield. This type appears as



Hodegetria bust	Nikopoia enthroned	Blaschernitissa bust	Nennius information lacking	14th century enthroned
three- quarters	frontal	frontal	information lacking	three- quarters
child in arm	child on knee or medallion	child on medallion	no child mentioned	child in arm
hand"points the way"	holds child image as shield	hands praying ("orans")	information lacking	hand across body or holds bouquet or sceptre

We can clearly see that there is a lacuna caused by Nennius' inadequate description. Obviously he did not feel the need to give details, such as whether the child Jesus was included. However, icon portraiture is conservative, and the three types exist to this day with little change. Nennius was too early however to witness later innovations, such as the twelfth-century trend to greater intimacy, with the face of Jesus pressed against Mary's cheek, or his hand reaching to her cheek (*Eleusa*, or Our Lady of Tenderness).

The evidence from the seals of Glastonbury abbots suggests that, prior to the fourteenth century, the image of Mary was not enthroned but standing. But this may be due to medieval sculptural influences. And so, despite the eight century gap, the icon closest to the later medieval version is the Hodegetria type. But would we not expect a soldier to chose the Nikopoia type as a defence against a pagan enemy? Before we attempt to solve this apparently insoluble problem, the question we now confront is this: why would fifth-century warriors have carried icons such as this into battle?

Notes and references

1. See 'The King and Icons' Pendragon XXV/1, Spring 1995. Part 3 ("A trusty shield") follows. I am indebted to Tristan Gray Hulse, editor of the holy wells journal *Source*, for his detailed comments and scholarly references. Luckily, they mostly confirm my general argument! However, differences of emphasis (and of course errors) are mine alone.
2. F. van der Meer & Christine Mohrmann (1959) *Atlas of the Early Christian World* (Nelson). Numerous publications in various fields, from art history to devotional aids, discuss the evolution and meaning of icons.
3. Ewa Kuryluk (1991) *Veronica & her cloth* (Basil Blackwell) has stimulating discussion.
4. Several spellings exist, due to transliteration from the Greek or modification via Latin.
5. Illustrations: Fig.1. Detail of Mother & Child, fresco from Catacomb of Priscilla, Rome, mid-thirteenth century. Fig.2. Detail of Mother & Child, fourth-century fresco from Coemeterium Maius, Rome. Her arms (not shown) are in the *orans* position. Fig. 3. Chronicle of Alexandria, illuminated mss. of fifth century date (detail). Fig.4. Detail of silver reliquary, Milan. End of fourth century.

BOB DICKSON

It is with deep regret that we have to inform members that Bob Dickson, a long standing member, died on St Valentine's Day. Bob lived in Midland, Michigan, and we send his widow, Mildred, and her family our condolences in their sad loss.

LETTERS



AVE ATQUE VALE

♦ From: Nicholas Gold, Helmsley, York.

I am sorry that I have allowed my subscription to lapse silently. Sadly we must part company financially as Pendragon and I have parted philosophically. I remain convinced that King Arthur was real and tried to remove the accretions. Pendragon's authors seem more concerned to put them back.

Dr Gold joined us in October 1991 after I had recommended his self-published book The Queen and the Cauldron to our members; since then he has received 12 journals and renewed his subs. promptly. So where did we go wrong? Sadly, Dr Gold has never shared his research into the historical Arthur with our readers.

The verb accrete may be used in two senses: 1. 'an extraneous addition', 2. 'to grow together, to unite'. Our aim in pursuing Arthurian studies is to achieve the second meaning, to look at all sides of this 1,500 year-old phenomenon which interests and inspires so many people worldwide. This has always been made clear to our members.

SALVE!

♦ From: Professor William Russell, Reading, Berks.

I much enjoyed your article on the plays. Most of my *Gawain* talk had actually been printed in my first and third Presidential address to the Folklore Society, but the account of the growth of the legend, the extracts from the romance and ballad, and the later production of the Street theatre were all newly present in the talk, and therefore appear in print for the first time in this Pendragon version. I must compliment you again on the beautiful editing - it reads as smoothly as if there had been no cuts at all.

I would certainly like to contribute more to Pendragon (but) it will have to wait awhile. I might expand the page about Mark Twain's *Connecticut Yankee* and/or I might review Markale's *Merlin l'Enchanteur*, which is certainly the most comprehensive book I've read about Merlin.

I've now thoroughly enjoyed three issues of

Pendragon, including your outrageous but very entertaining tame punster, (is he descended from Horn? Perhaps not since he's presumably Welsh and not Irish), so much so that I want more! So I enclose my application form and a cheque and would like to join the Society.

I trust Professor Russell will not mind my quoting from a personal letter but his wide range of Arthurian interests and warm sense of humour symbolise for me the ideal member at whom this magazine is aimed: someone appreciative of other writers' viewpoints and willing to contribute his own expertise to the pool of Arthurian knowledge.

Our punster, Eddie Tooke, is a Londoner of Scandinavian extraction on his father's side; a formidable man to cross words with!

DESERT ISLAND PENDRAGON

♦ From: Nancy Slocum Branch, Honolulu, U.S.A.

The journal gets better and better and more and more interesting as the issues pass. If one is stranded out in the middle of the Pacific, without an Arthurian in sight, the journal comes as a welcome gift indeed.

Thank you for the vote of confidence, Nancy. If only we could get you on to Desert Island Discs you could make your book choice a bound volume of Pendragons and so advertise us to the world.

THE WORDSMITH

From: Steve Sneyd, Huddersfield, W.Yorks.

Had a nice letter from someone in Hawaii saying how pleased she was to know the Morland book is still available, as she'd thought it was long out of print - shows how far copies of *Pendragon* reach. Harold Morland also wrote briefly to say how pleased he was with the review.

Main reason for writing is that the little book on West Yorkshire castles/fortified sites (*Giants In Our Earth*) having to my amazement already sold out, I'm at early stages of considering corrections/amendments/additions infowise - for a reprint. There is one entry where it occurred to me that, in view of the wealth of knowledge in the Arthurian field among *Pendragon* readers, just possibly someone might be able to add to what I have:

HARLOW HILL : SW of Harrogate, N.Yorks (SE 286542) - in the entry as it stands I quote from Grainge's 1882 *History of Harrogate*, including this..."yet tradition murmurs that the army of Uter Pendragon, including this hill, about the year 460 and the humble cottage of a husbandman bore the name of **PENDRAGON'S CASTLE** until quite a recent period".

Any further information on this association of Uther with the Harrogate area would be most welcome.

Steve's book was favourably reviewed in various

exchange magazines; can anyone help?

Professor Russell's article took me back to Guy Ragland Phillips's *Brigantia*. On pages 99-102, he looks in detail at *The Marriage of Sir Gawain* and adduces his evidence for relating it to *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. He suggests that both the Green Knight and the Giant-Knight, who is outwitted by the riddle answer in *The Wedding*, are one and the same. Both are Owain (Ewen), son of King Urien of Carlisle/Rheged, stepson of Morgan le Fay. Phillips also locates the story in very precise geographic terms: at Tarn Wadling, a now drained small lake west of the River Eden near High Hesket, north of Penrith. The Castle of Tarn Wadling is identified with the slight foundations said to be of Castle Hewen, just NE of the site of the lake (OS NY 486463). both locations are in the former Forest of Inglewood.

We have recommended Guy Phillips's splendid *Brigantia* previously. (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1976, ISBN: 0 7100 8316 5). Chapter 7, Most Accursed Kirk, discusses the above theme fully.

MR EXCALIBUR

♦ From: Ronan Coghlan, Bangor, Co Down.
A quick note to thank you for looking after me so well last week and showing me so many interesting sites in North Wales. I had a very enjoyable day. To see so many Arthurian sites 'in the flesh' was very engrossing...last Tuesday was a memorable occasion.

The day after the Mold Library lecture Charles acted as guide and I as chauffeur when all three of us went around the Clwydian sites, ending up at Llangollen browsing books. It was great fun and small reward to Ronan for finding so many elusive books for our members. We are delighted he has agreed to serialise his lecture for us.

♦ From: Chris Lovegrove, Bristol, Avon :
SHE WHO LAUGHS

The relationship between humour and aggression has long been known. Desmond Morris and Arthur Koestler in *The Act of Creation* both wrote at length about it. From slapstick through to riddles and puns, violence to the norm is the order of the day. Many jokes are told at the expense of so-called minorities, like the disabled, Jews, blacks and women, and most are crudely abusive, racist or sexist. And yet there is a great distinction in who tells the joke. All this is prefatory to my reactions to Professor Russell's excellent examination of dramatic and folkloric aspects of the Loathly Lady riddle. Now I wonder whether the premise, "What all women want is their own way," was originally a women's joke, told by women for women? If, as I suspect, it was, then there are interesting questions about how a female in-joke gets transmitted through different cultures down the



ages. Presumably an oral tradition somehow gets transferred to the written medium which, in medieval Europe at least, was male-dominated. Nevertheless, the butt of the joke still remains, clearly, the stupid male, who is manipulated and finally outwitted by the Loathly Lady.

The multiplicity of theories about comedy and the impulse to laugh testify to the complexity of this human activity. Compared with tragedy, it is an academic minefield.

ABSIT INVIDIA

The Pendragon Society was never formed to investigate Arthurian matters "with an unbiased approach". By definition a Society is composed of individuals, all of whom have their own viewpoints, and there is no party line. The magazine, since 1979 at least when I was editor, has always carried an announcement "Opinions stated are those of the writer concerned" (or similar) in recognition of the diversity of these biased approaches. What David seems to want is an acceptance by all of his own Arthmael/Athrwy's bias. No can do.

I offered to arrange a public debate between Chris Lovegrove & Charles, and Chris Barber & David - on the evidence offered in *Journey to Avalon at Glastonbury in September* but this was rejected by David, who wrote:-

RES NON VERBA

♦ From: David Pykitt, Burton on Trent, Staffs.

I thank you for your letter and your kind offer of a debate at (an) A.G.M. Meeting to be held at Glastonbury in September, but I feel that I must decline the invitation. I firmly believe that my research on the origins of the Arthmael/Adras theory should be presented to the complete membership of the Pendragon Society, and not just the members who will be attending the A.G.M. I am therefore submitting "The origins

of the Arthmael/Adras Theory", and I hope that you will be able to find the space for its publication in the next issue of *Pendragon*. I am happy to print David's chart in this issue but I don't see why a public debate at a major *Pendragon* function with a large attendance of the general public would not have been a wonderful opportunity for the two authors to publicise their book (I also suggested a book-signing at Gothic Image on the same day). It would also have been a good opportunity for the two authors to demonstrate that they are members of the Society, a fact they emphasised in their advertising. There would have been opportunity to discuss the book's thesis fully and to answer questions. All this would have received full coverage in our journal and so reached all our members. I hope that David's enclosed article covers all the points raised by our two reviewers.

A PELAGIAN MASS

♦ From: Tom Byrne, Congleton, Cheshire.

I've extended and remixed the first 15 minutes of the mass and included the vocal (spoken) parts. I'm still looking for a singer! I've also been working on the form, philosophy and theology. The enclosed sheets are the libretto for Part.1. I am currently working on a setting of *Badon Hill*, which *Pendragon* published in 1990. I expect to finish this in June and then I can get on with the central part concerning Perceval's development on the Grail quest.

The problem with trying to put together some artistic work is the lack of cross fertilisation or discussion available locally. It would be good to meet one or two like-minded people and talk over embryonic ideas to help them develop. Tom's *Pelagian Mass* is an exciting concept and we appealed for singers at the Cardiff AGM. The difficulty is meeting-up (as always). Please write if you would like to know more about Tom's work and/or you think you could help him.

BERYL OF MERCIA

♦ From: Beryl Mercer, Mount Hawke, Cornwall.

I take your point about the lack of comedy in the Arthurian material - in fact in nearly all the legends of the Matter of Britain. It's the same with religion, of course (except Zen Buddhism, I gather, when the Master clouts a student round the ear and roars with laughter, after the student has called him an old rice bag). Yet the Greeks believed that "the gods made man amid shouts of laughter," and the very first article I ever wrote for *Quest* magazine was entitled *The Gods in Stitches*. I think Sir Pellinore is the only faintly comic character in *Once and Future King* and *Camelot* - but how could one change it? High tragedy is inherent in the story right from

the time of Arthur's begetting, through his unwitting incest with Morgause, and the murder of the babies in an attempt to get rid of Mordred, right through to Guinevere taking Bedivere/ Lancelot as her lover.

Of course, *The Sword in the Stone* is quite funny and made a delightfully amusing full-length cartoon, but that is only Arthur's childhood, with a comical wizard and boyish pranks. When Alan Lerner first began considering the material as a possible musical, Fritz Loewe told him, "You must be crazy; that king was a cuckold. Who the hell cares about a cuckold?" Lerner answered that people had been caring about Arthur for over a thousand years. "Well," said Fritz, with a hopeless sigh, "that's only because you Americans and English are such children". It must be remembered that Fritz is Viennese and in Europe a cuckold is a figure of fun and a play about one is invariably a comedy. Humour is such a subjective commodity!

Amen to that, Beryl!

I had a most peculiar and vivid dream a few weeks ago, set in Wales, and concerning Arthur's incarnations as various animals including the Cornish chough. Merlin has been re-awakened and leads a widowed father and his four children to a druidic grove deep in a forest, where the 'not-wise' grave of Arthur is revealed and the skeleton consists of glowing blue glass bones! His final incarnation is the Yorkshire terrier belonging to the widower's only daughter, Brigid. The dog's name is Madoc and the dream said that he had to die so that Arthur might rise again. There was a lot more, and I'm still dithering as to whether I ought to do anything with it - what do you think?

I have read some of Beryl's creative writing and know she can write with great flair and sensitivity. WRITE the story, Beryl, as a children's book: a picture book, a short story, a novel - but go with it: WRITE IT and, please, let me READ IT!

By the way, talking of Choughs, I saw Watch Out (a wildlife series on tv) in May in which it said there are only 160 pairs of nesting choughs left in the whole country and eleven of these are at South Stack, Anglesey - so you can set all your story in Wales.

PENDRAGON'S BANNER

♦ From: Lynne Drew, Editor, Heinemann Books, London.

I thought you would like to see the proof of Helen's second book, *Pendragon's Banner*. It tells of the troubled times of Arthur's early kingship: winning the crown was the easy part keeping it will be much more difficult. He has the rising power of the Christian church to contend with, the scheming of Winifred, ever-anxious to see her own son supersede

Gwenhwyfar's, and the malevolence of Morgause, now married to Lot and queen of the North. I do hope you enjoy it. Helen's hard at work on book three, which we will publish in 1996. This one will be out in September this year as a paperback. With thanks again for all your support of Helen.

Again, we have arranged a special price reduction offer on Helen's book for Pendragon members: see the advert on the back cover.

AUTHOR!

♦ From: Helen Hollick, Walthamstow, London.

Just a brief letter to say thanks for the phone call. Book Three is a hell to write! I've had a terrible job getting going, and keeping going. I've got to kill Arthur off as this is the last part - I feel like I'm planning a murder! It's also like knowing I have to put an end to what has been a very close, and even intimate, relationship; how do you say goodbye?

Just to make you laugh - a typist's error: in *The Kingmaking*, page 249, 4th paragraph, starting 'Brychan's men approached'...Ceï is 'suddenly before him, smiling, sitting his hose easily...' Hmm, a gardening sequence...I suppose he could always threaten to squirt Brychan with water!

Helen lost a great chunk of book 3 when her computer decided the writing wasn't up to scratch and disposed of it. After recovering from the shock Helen reports that the book began to write itself. Anyone engaged in the creative process will recognise and sympathise with the task of killing-off a beloved character. A group of students and I composed a play together about D.H. Lawrence some years ago and when he died in Frieda's arms at the end, with his poem *The Ship of Death* spoken softly over the scene, the technicians and I backstage used to avoid each other's eyes and inspect our handkerchiefs every performance.

I'm pleased to say Helen has other books in mind when Arthur has finally sailed away to Avalon.

CAPALL BANN

♦ From: Julia Day, Chieveley, Berks. Julia and her husband Jon are publishers whose books appear under the above imprint.

We hope to have an Arthurian book soon. This book sees Arthur as an ambitious young man who uses the ancient system of marrying or seizing a queen in order to rule her lands and then changes his allegiance to Christianity when it proves useful. Things go wrong, not because all the wrong people slept with each other, as in the Christianised version, but because he failed to follow the old ways. The authors are Chris Johnson and Eve Lung. There could well be others too, but they are not signed up yet.

Thanks for the advance information, Julia. The

book is titled *Arthur - The Legend Unveiled* and we'll keep you informed when it becomes available.

FROM THE BRIDGE OF THE ENTERPRISE

♦ From: John Matthews, Oxford. Here is the first of the reviews I promised you. I'll try to do some more as and when I get some space. There are a lot of new Arthurian novels and texts around at the moment and I hope to get around to most of them.

The title is taken from John's headed notepaper: it seems a very apt description of his prolific writing activities. We are very grateful to you for finding time in your busy schedules to keep us up-to-date, John. There is news of the Matthews books in Booknews.

NEWS FROM THE OTHERWORLD

♦ From: Debbie White, Oxford. Debbie is the proprietor of the charming Celtic shop 'Otherworld' at 6a, St. Aldates, Blue Boar Street Oxford - situated right in the centre of the city.

Thank you for the current issue of *Pendragon*, I was astonished at how much goes on, especially at Oxford, under your nose, that you don't know about.

On the 3rd of July she wrote to us from "Standing Room (outside only) North Wales." 'Standing outside a small cinema in the freezing cold wind, that's how I spent one evening in July. The town was Porthmadog in Wales, the cinema was where the premiere of *First Knight* was taking place. Who was I waiting to capture a glimpse of? Richard Gere? Shame, but no. Sean Connery perhaps, no? But...Julia Ormond. Julia arrived to a fairly large crowd, not quite a London première event, but as *First Knight* was filmed close by it seemed quite apt. Julia looked stunning, even in a suede jacket and beret; had she really cut off all her hair? I can't tell you what the film was like as, not being of any importance, I wasn't invited, so like every other mortal soul, I will have to wait until the latest King Arthur movie hits my local cinema.'

I expect you have seen *First Knight* by now, Debbie, like most of our members. Knowing Porthmadog well, I can't imagine it as the venue for the launch of an American star-studded film. The Guardian quotes Miss Ormond on the film: 'I absolutely loved making it. Jerry shook the whole thing and threw it up in the air, it's a feel-good film.' The Guardian reporter: 'Despite her casting as a medieval aerobics teacher she remains a cipher and even her acting ability cannot make the little she is given go very far.' Welcome to the Society, Debbie. See you next time I'm in Oxford.

THE LONDON GROUP

♦ From: John Ford, Watford, Herts.



John has now been successful in assembling a small group of members who meet up from time to time. He would be pleased to hear from others interested. Phone: 01923 440636, answer phone if not in.

I met up with fellow members Dennis Bailey and Tim Harris in London and spent an enjoyable couple of hours looking around the British Museum. Afterwards we went for light refreshment followed by a tour of the book-shops around the backstreets near the Museum, led by Dennis. A most enjoyable day.

My kind of day, too, John. Let me know when you plan to repeat it. Talking of bookshops, what about a meet-up at Hay-on-Wye sometime! On 2nd July John, Alexandra Clark and spouses journeyed to Mountfitchet Castle (Herts) where they attended a day of Arthurian activities.

When we arrived the first thing we saw was Arthur Uther Pendragon standing at the entrance of the castle dressed in his fine robes with the red dragon emblazoned across the chest; and, strapped to his waist, the magnificent Excalibur, glittering in all its glory. We had an interesting 15 minute chat on various subjects, including his experience and subsequent arrest at this year's summer solstice at Stonehenge. He also mentioned that Mr Littlejohn (late Fri. nights tv) had asked him to write a review of *First Knight* for the Sun newspaper. That should be interesting!

Within the fort a sight greeted us that we could not believe: there were 5th/6th-Century Arthurian warriors walking about everywhere. It turned out that we had stumbled across a display from the Arthurian Britannia Society. During the

afternoon they staged various drill/battle manoeuvres and 3 battle scenarios, including a pitched battle with Picts! They also brought along the Medieval Battle Society to give a demonstration of Arthur and the knights of Malory's pen.

I introduced myself as a Pendragon member and had an interesting conversation with the group, who were involved in the making of *The First Knight* and who attacked Robin in *Prince of Thieves*. I have arranged to meet up again soon to do an interview with a couple of their members.

Sounds like a very interesting day, John. We look forward to hearing of your meeting up with these Arthurian enthusiasts again. I wonder if they would agree to let us have news of themselves and of their programmes of events in future. I understand some of them thought we are merely a bunch of eggheads - I hope you will firmly dispel that idea, John. Our members have been known to excavate hillforts and other archaeological sites as well as fly balloons, build mazes, write, paint, act, compose and sing. Presumably they did some these things at Camelot - as well as fight?

A QUEST

♦ From: Alexandra Clark, Hoddesdon, Herts.

I would like to mention the recent get-together organised by fellow-Pendragon, John Ford. I met him, along with my husband Paul and his wife Lyn, at a pub in Watford and found them to be a nice, friendly couple. So much so that we all enjoyed a weekend at Glastonbury - lots of books bought and food consumed. We went to Cadbury Castle and picnicked in the Abbey ruins then shopped till we dropped. We also visited Cheddar and Avebury on the way home. At last I have found other Arthurian nuts! John is keen to organise more outings if only people would get in touch. Maybe we should call this small group *King Arthur's Coffee Table*!

These letters suggest the way forward, I think. We are too spread-out to organise a programme of events that many members can attend, the answer surely lies in local enthusiasts putting themselves forward to act as contacts for others living near enough to meet up. I could inform these agents of events happening in their areas (and vice versa). So, let us have your name and contact number if you would like to act as a Pendragon local organiser. These members have obviously had a lot of pleasure by sharing days out - chasing Arthur over the landscape!

A CRY FROM KENT

♦ From: Nicola Stevenson, Broadstairs, Kent. I was most interested in John Ford's letter about a 'get-together'. Unfortunately, he is too far

away from my neck of the woods, so your idea about branches would be excellent. I've often wondered if there are any Pendragons like myself roaming around Kent, searching for like-minded souls.

See what I mean? I am prevented by the Data Protection Act from publishing your addresses in a complete list but if you write to me to say you don't mind my sending your name and address to others who contact me from your area I am willing to do this - in the hope that other local groups may form up.

ELLYLLON KNIGHTS CAMPAIGN

♦ From: Timothy Harris, St. Albans, Herts, The event was held at Stansford Priory, close to Symmonds Yat. The campaign started in the year 500 AD and was set in and around the area we were actually staying. The group consisted of a wide range of player characters, including local Epona-worshippers, Romano-British Christians, Roman Mythrans and even a couple of Mercenary Saxons. The identity of Arthur, when we learnt of it, came as something of a shock, but unfortunately no details about this can be divulged.

The campaign was both enjoyable and memorable and will be continued next year, but may not be at the same location. Contact Gareth Jones (see *Beaumains* in the Exchange Journals section) for more details.

Very intriguing, Tim, when do we get to know who Arthur really is? We haven't heard from Gareth Jones for ages, are you sure he survived the campaign - Ellyllon means Goblin!



PENDRAGON ADVERTISEMENT RATES

Publication date for next issue, December 1st. copy should be submitted by October 31st. Rates: £24 per page and pro rata, minimum ¼ page. Reduced rates for Society members: £12 page and pro rata. These rates are for camera-ready copy at A4 scale for reduction to A5 format.

REPEAT ADVERTS: RATES NEGOTIABLE

MUSIC AND TAPE REVIEWS

THE CELTIC QUEST FOR THE GRAIL

This tape is described as 'Celtic Storytelling' by Anne Maria Clarke - live in Concert! It is one of seven that she and her musical collaborators have made together since she adapted and recorded her first story in 1988 with David Johnson. He has continued to collaborate with her since and they have been joined by other musicians. To date 7 stories have been performed and these include *How Cormac Art went to Fairy*, *Deirdre of the Sorrows*, *The Shepherd of Myddfai* and *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. The last title has been the centre of the group's work recently, and Caroline has written to say that it is set within 'a pre-arranged fragment from the Latin Mass. She has promised to write something for us on this project. The group performed at the Glastonbury Festival this year and are intending to be at Edinburgh shortly. This tape is Caroline's most recent, and most ambitious. The performance style is unusual and she confesses to not having heard other professional storytellers before she started telling these Celtic tales. She adopts quite a stylized, almost hieratic tone, I would like to see her in performance, she would make a good priestess, I think. There is no doubt about her commitment to the material. It is a marked contrast to the style of Robin Williams, who also makes the tales his own, with a sense of wonder and mischief. (See advertisement for this tape on the back cover). Definitely to be sampled.

ARTHUR: THE ONCE & FUTURE KING

Nick Lowe is the inspiration for this tape, he lives in Machynlleth, Wales. He says that he and his wife have been performers for many years but this is his first attempt at composition and hopefully it will be the first of a series of tapes based around the Arthurian myths. My response to this is: go on writing and performing, Nick: I'll buy them.

He writes, 'I have tried to keep a Celtic feel to the music whilst not shying away from computerised technology - the two major instruments are an old Irish wooden flute and a state of the art keyboard (which does your washing as well!)'. He has tried to avoid the direct telling of stories, he says, and written songs and theme music. The music is based on folk singing with a true understanding of the Celtic idiom: I found it quite charming and inspirational and this magazine has been put together to its nonstop accompaniment. Titles of the bands include: *Caledvwlch*, *Journey to Avalon*, *The Crystal Cave*, *Ynys Enlli*, *The Ballad of Taliesin*, *Carnedd Arthur* and *The Battle of the Two Dragons*.

(There is a full page advert. for this tape on the back cover)

Arthurian Quest Fred Stedman-Jones

With reference to our theme Saints and Sinners, how might our hero Arthur be classified if he were alive? Perhaps this article can offer some information to help us make an informed judgement.



Paul Johnstone, an American writer, claimed in the 1960s that there was a real person named Artorius upon whom the legends of King Arthur are based. In an article *Report From Camelot*, published in 1970, he offers some fascinating information about Artorius gained by using a 'dowsing board'. The board was a square of cardboard with the letters of the alphabet printed in a circle and a tiny pendulum held at the end of a piece of string. (Shades of Tom Lethbridge). By means of this apparatus he 'talked' with Artorius in September and October of 1966, asking him questions about his life on earth. Here is a summary of some of the information he received from Artorius. The answers were received 'in a rather bewildering mixture of Latin, archaic Welsh and modern English', in 'clear-cut, soldierly terms that made very good sense.'

The battles described in Nennius were discussed and Artorius stated flatly that Bassas (the 6th battle) took place in Fife. Mount Badon was Bathampton Down, overlooking Bath, and here Arthur fought against a coalition of four armies, three Anglo-Saxon and an Irish contingent led by a chief named Laogaire.

The excavations at Cadbury Hill were taking place at the time of these interviews so Johnstone naturally mentioned this. Arthur's reaction was, *So Carmael is discovered again! It was a fort to hold the border of Dumnonie*. Arthur described his hall at Cadbury as being, *more like a hunting lodge than a palace*. It was built of wood and Moderatus (Medrod) partly burned it while Arthur was at sea in his ship Prituenna. Arthur responded by destroying Moderatus's fort in the North, at Trapgrain Hail (Traprain Law, near Edinburgh - shades of the Triads here!)

Some interesting facts emerged concerning Arthur's burial. He told Johnstone that he, *did not go to Amorica* but was buried *just outside the church, not with my wife, Wenhuivar, nor not in a hollow log as they said, I was buried east of the church: my grave has not yet been found*. He also told Johnstone that he was buried with a gold ring on the middle finger of his left hand. It had no jewel but the Chi-Rho monogram was on the bevel.

In the light of Chris Lovegrove's Icon articles, the following information is particularly interesting. Asked if he really did bear the image of the Virgin on his shield, Arthur/Artorius answered positively that he did, on the front face, and he still had it: God had let him keep it because he had used it in His service! The shield was made at the command of the Abbot Patricius; it was blue and white with a cross of iron in the centre and a bronze icon of Maria and her Son set at the top. He first bore it at the Battle of Celidon Wood where Cai slew two Pictish kings and he slew one.

At Castle Guinnion they routed the Picts and took prisoner the Pictish High King, Drust Gurthinmoch. Arthur befriended these Picts who went South with him to fight the Saxons, and the Picts distinguished themselves particularly well at Caer Legion, which was Caerleon on Usk.

Asked about his weapons, Arthur described his shield as round, about two feet wide and small enough to be useful in parrying blows. His best sword was 'Calet Bulce', which for a time he loaned to his sister's son, Walcc Mai. Some light was thrown on Arthur's family relationships when Arthur

said that he slew Moderatus with this sword at Cambglann and that Moderatus was the son of Laudinus, brother of Gwenhuivar his own wife. Johnstone was quick to work this one out and Arthur agreed that he and his sister had married a brother and sister. His sister's name was Perigrina but it was another sister named Margarita who was the mother of Walcc Mai. Tintagel turns out to have been called Tinnocel and it belonged to his mother, Icorana. They went there to live after the Irish had slain his father, Worgluis son of Constantinus. Asked about Uther Pendragon, Arthur denied that his father had borne that name and said that it was a name the folk used of himself: Uther Pendragon (Terrible Dragon Chief). He left Tinnocel at the time of his mother's remarriage to Wormant, his father's brother, when he was ten and he was fostered in Venedotia (North Wales). His foster-father was Cunor and he lived there in great happiness with his six foster-brothers, Cai being one. He was at Venedotia for six years before accompanying Cai to Sorudun (Old Sarum) as his shield bearer, to join King Ambrosius who had his headquarters there. They fought in many battles for Ambrosius until he died in 488, over thirteen years later. He then fought for Ambrosius's three sons but they quarrelled with each other and ruined the kingdom. He and Cai were thrown into prison at Gloucester but escaped into Powis. He joined King Luidoc on the Sabrina (Severn) at Cair Suess (Caersws). It was Luidoc who gave him his own sword, Calet Bulce, to fight Ritta the Giant. Asked where the renowned sword was now Arthur replied, *it hangs at my side, but strikes no more. I swung it for the Lord Christus*. Wenhuivar, his first wife, was, in fact, a daughter of King Luidoc. Arthur described his first wife very movingly: *she was a golden joy, every day she lived*. Arthur stayed just one year with King Luidoc and then joined the Men of the North with his men.

Returning to the Battle of Cambglann (on the Wall at New Birdoswald) Arthur had besieged Moderatus who tried to cut his way out at dusk. It was time for Arthur to leave his kingship and he bequeathed his titles to his second wife's son, Constantinus. Walcc Mai was better fitted to be king but he had fallen first at Cambalta.

During the interview, Arthur agreed his date of birth with Johnstone: 'You were born in Anno Domini 459?' Answer: *Yes, it is right as I recall it*. Unfortunately Johnstone does not report the date of Arthur's death in this article.

The article has a List of Suggested Reading and this includes:

1. Johnstone, Paul.K. *The Real King Arthur, Gainsayer of Darkness*, New York, Olympic, 1967.
2. Johnstone, Paul.K. *A Consular Chronology of Dark Age Britain: 'Antiquity'*, June 1962, pp.102-109.
3. Johnstone, Paul.K. *Two Interviews with King Arthur*, Two Worlds, February 1967, pp.48-51.
4. Tolstoi, Nikolai, *Nennius* c56. *Bulletin Of Celtic Studies*, May 1961, pp 118-162.
5. Chambers, Sir Edmund K. *Arthur of Britain*, London, Sidgwick & Jackson, 1927.

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TALKING

head



★ STAGE, SCREEN & AIRWAVES

On *Fifteen to One* (BBC Radio 4) 31st May a competitor was asked, "What was the name of the Lady of the Lake in Arthurian Legend". His confident reply was "Lady Godiva" - doesn't it make you feel superior!

The usual repeats have sprinkled the small screen: *Monty Python's Holy Grail* (1975) BBC2. Feb.5th; *Knights of the Round Table* (1953) BBC2. 9th April; Robert Taylor and Ava Gardner in MGM's first Cinemascope movie in this country; *King Arthur was a Gentleman* (1942) Ch.4. 19th June. This old film is a historical document, it makes me feel immortal. The *Radio Times* reported that the Nazis thought they would win the war because Britain's most effective men of action were nitwit comedians: things seem to have worked the other way.

In 1994 we reported that six Hollywood movies were being planned in a revival of the historical romance-epic genre. The first, aptly named *First Knight*, was released on July 7th with Sean Connery as Arthur, Richard Gere as Lancelot and Julia Ormond as Guinevere - the eternal triangle. A politically correct Guinevere is shown as a keen and proficient football player in this version.

Barry Norman said: "derring-do and extra-marital hanky panky"; The *Daily Telegraph*, June 8th: "A tacky fanfare of noble posturing and bad dialogue, the action canters along but it is not redeemed by the self-mockery of *Robin Hood, Prince of Thieves*"; the *Guardian*: "A Hunkorama. To all the crash-bang-wallops and expensive production values in which the past is rendered laundry-fresh blue and grey, character and dialogue play a humbly subservient role". The *Democrat & Chronicle*, Rochester, New York's film critic gave it a rating of 6/10.

The *Sunday Times Culture* supplement carried an article by Peter Millar on July 2nd, *The King Who Cannot Die*, in which he reviewed

the treatment of the Arthurian legend as a 'potent symbol for Britain- and even America'. He dismisses *First Knight* as 'a schmaltz-romance in tin suits, set in a mock-medieval never-never land where Camelot looks like the Mont-Saint-Michel moved to a Welsh lake and developed by Walt Disney.' I'll leave you to make your own minds up.

Millar's article also reports that Bernard Cornwell of *Sharpe's Rifles* fame has written the first Arthurian novel in a trilogy, *The Winter King* due out in late summer. Sharpe's version will be set in its 'authentic Dark Ages setting' (what's new?) and opens with: 'Once upon a time in a land that was called Britain...but which our enemies now called England.' Millar sees this as 'going straight to the heart of the matter' and discusses how the legend is appropriated by other peoples as an inspiration for their ideals of 'nationhood'. He reasons that, "for American audiences, the Arthurian fantasy does not hark back to a shared past recalling the 'moribund special relationship' but is part of their own national folk consciousness, created and preserved not on dusty parchment but celluloid." He adds, "when Cornwell was writing his book an American friend asked him: 'Do the British relate to King Arthur, too?'" This says it all and in the light of this information I must warn you to take your blood pressure tablet before reading on.

Stars set for film

FILM stars Kenneth Branagh, Sir Anthony Hopkins, and Vanessa Redgrave have been approached for a Hollywood blockbuster on the life of King Arthur set to be filmed in Cumbria, the woman behind it has claimed.

Plans are said to be underway to shoot part of the film, based on a book by acclaimed American historian Professor Norma Goodrich, in North Cumbria.

Prof Goodrich believes Arthur is buried beneath St Michael and All Angel Church, Arthuret, Longtown, and that Camelot was in fact at Carlisle.

This clipping is from an unidentified Cumbrian newspaper. Several Pendragon members I have told have all fallen strangely silent at the end of the phone on hearing this news. Surely it's time the British film industry was given the money incentives to make films in this country without the insidious need to bow to American financiers calling the tune.

Are our leading actors unaware that there are Arthurian researchers and creative writers in this country aplenty who could offer them the opportunity to extend their talents to aim for a definitive version of our greatest legendary cycle? The material is tragic in the finest sense and does not need processing into formula



melodrama based on dubious academic theories. If Hollywood has rediscovered the potential of the romantic epic isn't it possible that our artists can teach them that this is the path to the realm of Shakespeare's last great plays, the Romances? But you can't reach such heights using language that is written at the level of historical-papspeak.

Having got that off my chest, I'll move on to a real high note. The *Sun* (23rd May) reported that Michael Crawford is the showbiz sensation in Vegas where he is playing Merlin, Barnum and Houdini in *BFG*, 'a mind blowing musical due to hit us next year: Fire-breathing dragons battle, trees sprout leaves on stage- all in 3 D. Oooh, Betty!'

My favourite play on the sound waves was *A Stone from Heaven* (BBC Radio 4) 15th April. Based on Wolfram von Eschenbach's *Parsifal*, Part 1. *The Wounding*: 'Young Parsifal, the innocent Fool, sets out with high ideals of knighthood, until he encounters a man in a peacock feathered hat fishing on a misty mere'. Part 2: *The Healing*. The Healing: 'The fantastic adventures of Gawain at the Castle of Marvels brings Parsifal closer to the finding of the Grail.'

Isn't radio magical? It always has the best casting, costumes and settings - just like the ones I'd design myself.

Purcell's King Arthur: This highlight of Radio 3's *Fairest Isle* season was broadcast on May 5th. live from Covent Garden, where the production has been much acclaimed; 3 hours 40 minutes Howard Ward as King Arthur, Conductor William Christie. Stimulating!

A semi-staged version of the opera will be performed by the Cavalli Choir and Baroque Ensemble at 8 p.m., Saturday 12th August at West Road Concert Hall, Cambridge.

Pendragon. This colourful musical will be produced at the Lyric Theatre Hammersmith by the National Youth Music Theatre: Tuesday 22nd - Saturday 26th August. Box Office: 0181-741-2311. (See enclosed leaflet)

★ OUT AND ABOUT

1. English Heritage Events:

The Events Diary 1995 lists activities until November 19th. Write: English Heritage, 429 Oxford Street, London, W1R 2HD. Special Events Information Line: 0171-973-3396.

Some of the major events include:

Roma Victrix: Aug 27-28. Romans and Celts, Old Sarum Castle. Displays by warlike Celtic warriors, followed by troops of the mighty Roman Army. Enquiries: 01722-335398.

The Roman Army: Sept.9-10. Lullingstone Roman Villa, Kent.

The Ermine Street Guard: Richborough Castle, Kent.

The Battle of Hastings: Oct 14-15. Battle Abbey, E.Sussex. Inquiries: 01424-773792.

2. Celtworld-Ireland:

Explore the myths and legends of Ireland's Celtic past. Housed in an indoor complex containing Europe's largest moving theatre. 'Stunning special effects take you on a journey back through the ages'. Celtworld, Railway Square, Tramore, Co. Waterford (on the R675 to Tramore). Tel: 00353-51386166.

3. Celtica-Wales:

We announced the opening of this attraction in our last journal: 'Experience the mysterious and magical world of the Celts'. Celtica, Y Plas, Aberystwyth Road, Machynlleth, Montgomeryshire, SY20 8ER. Tel: 01654-702702.

4. Princes of Gwynedd Trail:

The Trail guides you around a selection of sites in North Wales which have connections with the 12th and 13th-Century Princes. There are 5 separate journeys, each giving an insight into Medieval life. and there are individual leaflets for each trail giving opening times, admission charges (if any) and routes. You should first visit the Exhibition at Penrhyn Castle outside Bangor - a dramatic portrayal of the life and times of the Princes.

Leaflets and presentation folders from: N.Wales Tourism Distribution Centre, Unit 10, Tre Marl, Industrial Estate, Llandudno Junction, Gwynedd, LL31 9NX.

5. King Arthur's Footsteps in Brittany:

A new brochure from Brittany Ferries features nine tours based on walking and outdoor activities. In *King Arthur's Footsteps* is a four day walk in the Forest of Pampont taking in legendary sites, with accommodation in 2 star hotels, bed, breakfast, dinner and luggage transport. Brochure: 01705-751833.

Or why not organise your own visit to Brittany? *The Weekend Telegraph*, June 3rd gave details of a 4 hour walk in the Forest of

Huelgoat, the legendary Broceliande where Merlin dallied with Viviane. Detailed instructions included King Arthur's Grotto, the Pool of Wild Boars, King Arthur's Camp, the Barenton Fountain and Viviane's House (a megalith). The Bretons claim the Battle of Badon was fought here and Arthur sleeps with his Knights awaiting the call to arms. Leaflets from local Tourist Offices give local history and legend. (Summary: send us SAE).

6. Butser Ancient Farm:

This Celtic farm is an ongoing archaeological experiment into farming methods, crops, animals and materials that would have been known to Iron Age farmers. For opening hours, details of Summer events, day workshops and residential courses ring 01705-598838 or write to Nexus House, Gravel Hill, Horndean, Hants, PO8 0QE.

The Upton Romano-British Farm, near Poole, Dorset is to open this year also.

7. Shipwreck Heritage Centre:

Current Archaeology (No.142) reports that in North Western Europe there is now considerable excavated evidence to show what Romano-Celtic ships were like. Apparently ships found in London and Bruges accord with Caesar's description of the ships of the Veneti, and the Celtic ship building tradition is exemplified in 28 native vessels of the Roman period found across Central and Northern Europe. Peter Marsden invites readers to visit the Ship Heritage Centre, Rock-a-Nore Road, Hastings, TN34 3DW to learn more. I can't promise they have Arthur's *Prydwen* there for you to see, I'm afraid.

8. Bede's World Museum:

Bede is the father of English history. 300 years after the Romans left Britain he began his *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*. He pieced together the fragments of history available and wove them into a historical narrative that sheds light on the 'Dark Ages'. (So dark was it that they knew the world was round). The Bede Museum is now open at Jarrow. It tells the story of the monastery, with displays of excavated finds and an audio visual show. For opening times ring: 0191-489-2106. Work is proceeding on an 8th-Century Northumbrian Anglo-Saxon landscape, with fields, animals and timber buildings. This will be situated next to the Museum.

9. West Country Tours:

The Isle of Avalon Foundation offers half-day, 1 day and weekend tours to the Isle of Avalon. Walks to the 'sacred sites' with fellow pilgrims: the Tor, Chalice Well, Wearyall Hill, and the 'holiest erthe' of Glastonbury Abbey. £125 for two nights b&b., Fri. 5 p.m.-Sat. 5 p.m. They also offer a 7 day Pilgrimage to Avalon and

other sites in S.W. Britain. Write: Isle of Avalon Tours, 2-4 High Street, Glastonbury, Somerset, BA6 9DD. Tel: 01458-831590.

The West Country Tourist Board publish very informative leaflets which include *Somerset, Land of Legend, Cadbury Castle, and King Arthur's Country*. Call at the Somerset Visitors' Centre, Sedgemoor Services (M5 south) or write to The Tourist Centre, The Library, Corporation Street, Taunton, Somerset. Tel: 0823-74785.

10. The Green Man:

Cambridge University Board of Continuing Education weekend course at 16th-Century Madingley Hall, just outside Cambridge, 21-23 August. Fee, including all meals and tuition £112, non-residential £56. Tutor: Michael Spittal. 'Why does he haunt our imagination, the Man in the Woods? What links Robin Hood with Jack in the Green, Gawaine's Green Knight or the foliate masks which stare down from high places? Where does Arcadian dream end and nightmare begin?' The Registrar, Cambridge Univ. Board of Continuing Education, Madingley Hall, Madingley, Cambridge, CB3 8AQ. Tel: 01954-210-636.

★ ARTS AND CRAFTS

1. Grail of the Heart Poster:

Readers will remember the full page 'Arthurian Tree' that we printed in XXIV/4, our Winter '94 edition. This has metamorphosed into a beautifully printed coloured poster. It costs £4, post free and sent packed in a solid cardboard tube. Cheques to: A.Clarke at Flat 8, Ryan Court, Station Road, Okehampton, Devon, EX20 1 ED. Highly recommended.

2. Dalriada Celtic Cards:

Celtic Greetings Cards, blank inside, 3½x5ins, printed in black and white on white, pale blue, old gold, yellow or pale green card. £3 a dozen, including envelopes & p&p. You can have 12 of one design or other mixes.



Send for leaflet to: Clan Dalriada Celtic Heritage Society, Dun-Na-Beatha, 2 Brathwic Place, Brodick, Isle of Arran, KA27 8BN.

3. Celtic Crafts - Lindisfarne:

If you visit the beautiful Holy Island of Lindisfarne you will be enchanted by this shop, built in the C18th-Century, with its wide range of carefully selected Celtic goods: pottery, goblets, china, brass, leather and wooden goods, pewter cups, jewellery, tapes, CDs, etc. Mail order service, send for leaflet: Karen Mundy, Celtic Crafts, Front Street, Holy Island, Berwick-Upon-Tweed, TD15 2SJ.

4. Arthurian Paintings:

The Tate Gallery advise me that the only Arthurian painting now on view from their fine collection of Pre-Raphaelites is *The Lady of Shalott* and the new audio-guide does not cover the Arthurian legend paintings. Postcards and small posters may be obtained of *The Lady of Shalott* and blank cards of William Morris's *Queen Guinevere*. Lists from: Tate Gallery Publications Millbank, London, SW1P 4RG. More of the Pre-Raphaelite Arthurian painting and the Holy Grail Tapestries are in the Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery, Ring (0121 253 2834) for information.

5. The Glastonbury Dragon:

At the 25th Glastonbury Festival this year a 70' long water dragon was constructed. Made of rock, crystals and cement, with a stream running through it, this will become a permanent feature on King's Meadow - the highest point of the site - joining earth, wind and fire. I cannot advise about access to it.

6. Chalice Water Sculpture:

William Pye is a name to remember in connection with modern sculptured fountains, which bring the therapeutic value of water into urban settings. If you are in London slip quietly and unnoticed into 123 Buckingham Palace Road and there within a cathedral-like space you will find an enormous suspended bowl from which water descends smoothly over a patinated green bronze apron. It's awe inspiring, you'll think you are in the Castle of the Fisher King. Hollywood directors of Arthurian films could learn much about symbolism in design from this masterpiece. ("Hey, bub, where are the lazers?")

7. Sculpture '95:

The second annual week of tree sculpting was held at Westonbirt Arboretum, 4th-11th June. Using the trunk of a fallen oak, sculptors created otters, a sun god, an eagle, wizard, firebirds and the legend of Camelot (see illustration). The sculptures were auctioned on the last day. Sponsored by *Tree Aid*, the money was raised to tackle poverty in Africa through self-help projects.

★ MUSIC AND TAPES

1. Purcell: King Arthur: Soloists, Les Arts

Florissant, Christie (Erato 4509-98535).

2. Arthur: *The Once and Future King*: Kindeane. Produced by Ian Butler. (see Sound Reviews.)

3. *The Quest for the Grail*: Over the Moon Productions. Caroline Clarke. See advert and Sound Review.)

★ HIGH TECH NEWS

1. Wargaming Figures:

If you are into Arthurian wargaming a wide range of 25mm figures is available from: Wargames, The Foundry, Mount Street, New Bedford, Nottingham, NG7 7HX (Tel: 01602-792002). They have Romans, Saxons, Picts, Franks, Arthurian infantry and cavalry, British civilians, everything you need.

2. Boardgames:

If you have invented the definitive Arthurian board game don't expect to get rich quickly, 8,000 games are received by games manufacturers each year. They now use games agencies to sift out the best. These talent-spotters give inventors good advice and only expect a commission if you are lucky. Try: Seven Towns, 0171-727-566, or Games Talk, 01793-705291.

3. King Arthur's KORT:

This is an American software production which puts you in the role of a Knight of the Round Table. You have to Conquer Britain by competing with 4 other knights to become King Arthur's Champion. John Ford has offered to copy the disk for members (this is permitted). Please contact John for information: 01923-440636.

4. The Internet:

A member tells me that the Internet is 'awash' with Arthurian locations. My attempts to find them have only thrown up two, so please let us know what you know. I hope you understand what the following information means!

i. *King Arthur*: An FTP site; files, pictures, documents, all sorts of information. Address: FTP to sapphire.epcc.ed.ac.uk and use the login of "anonymous". The files can be found in pub/camelot/*
ii. *camelot*: camelot%uk.ac.edinburgh.castle @ edu. mit.athena. (I believe this is our own Chris Thornborrow but he has not responded to my two queries and I'm told the location has been shut down for several weeks. Can you get lost out there in space, I wonder?)

★ CHATTERBOX

1. Arthur Uther Pendragon:

cover of No.132 of the *The Big Issue*, the magazine sold for the homeless in many cities in Britain. Known in his earlier biking years as Mad Dog, Geronimo and King John, this 40 year-old leader of The Arthurian War Band found his true identity in 1987 when a friend recognised him as the reborn Arthur. A prophetic encounter with a bird at Stonehenge

led to his changing his name by deed poll. He made a visit to Glastonbury Tor to pray to the Goddess that he should be reunited with Excalibur and this was fulfilled when a sword used in a film came into his possession shortly afterwards. In his own words, "It isn't the original but it doesn't matter; the spirit of Excalibur has been rebuilt just as the spirit of Arthur has been reborn...I've returned to fight for civil liberties and the environment and I'm not alone, all the knights have been reincarnated". *The Daily Mail*, June 10th, reported that the Druid who calls himself Arthur Pendragon has applied for public funds to go to the European Court of Human Rights in order to seek a judicial review of the four mile exclusion zone imposed around Stonehenge at the Summer Solstice under the Public Order Act. He opposes the ban on religious grounds and as a civil rights issue. Good luck, Arthur.

2. *Refuge in Avalon*: In Pendragon XXV/1 I said that *A Good Read* on BBC.4. had discussed this novel, which was a mistake, of course. The book discussed was *The Mists of Avalon*. *Refuge in Avalon* is the title of a book by my American kinswoman Marguerite Steedman. It is a fine novel about the life of Joseph of Arimathea and it was first published by Macmillan in 1963 & by Pan Books in 1966. Joseph brings the 12 year old Jesus to Britain on an expedition connected with the tin trade. Much of the novel is set in Jerusalem but at the end Joseph returns to Avalon to begin his mission to these islands. It was a happy mistake if it brings attention to a very fine novel - though you'll have to find it in a second-hand bookshop, I'm afraid.

3. *Vellan Druchar*: Last time I quoted Beryl Mercer's letter and a cutting about this mysterious battle in Cornwall between Arthur and the 'Danish'. Cheryl Straffon, editor of *Meyn Mamvro*, an exchange magazine that is indispensable to those who know and love Cornwall, has sent me copies of two articles that she published in her Summer 1991 edition: *Arthur at the lands end* by Craig Weatherhill, and *The Battle of Vellan-Druchar* by Ron Newsome. I do not have room in this edition to summarise this material but I would like to publish a Cornish edition soon and will seek permission for a reprint or revision of the articles from Cheryl and her authors. Thank you Cheryl, for helping us so generously with this query.

4. *Arthur in Japan*: Steve Sneyd sent a cutting from *S.F.Eye* (1992) in which the phenomenon of Arthurian interest in Japan was discussed by authors Takayuki Tatsumi and Larry McCaffery. To paraphrase Tatsumi: You were fascinated by the Arthurian gowns and costumes at Hamacon, the Japanese national convention in Yokohama. Not only are there

Arthurian costume players but pop writers who appropriate the formulas of Arthurian romance. Interestingly, Tatsumi mentions the peculiar Japanese mentality which makes them take over other people's pop culture without understanding the ideological implications. He sees this as an aspect or symptom of 'hyper-capitalism functioning in a post-ideological age' and he contends that in American capitalism 'you try to own the right to own things, but in a hypercapitalist society you wind up owning the right to be owned by others - hence Japan can be called a masochistic society'. One would wish to know much more about these Japanese adoptions of Arthurian material. There has certainly been an infusion at academic level as well as that of pop culture and it would be interesting to know which models and sources are being explored in each of these aspects and how they manifest themselves.

5. *Medieval Fair*: Steve also enclosed a 12 page programme of the 19th annual fair sponsored by the University of Oklahoma. The scale of the events leaves one marvelling at the industry and energy of our transatlantic cousins. Apart from every conceivable kind of medieval activity, there were over 200 exhibiting artists and craftspeople and 43 eating places! Craftworkers included makers of swords and shields, of tabards, stained glass, sculpture, chainmail, armour, jewellery, costumes, talismans, candles, etc



Brought back to life in wood - the legend of Camelot.

A human chess game was presented by the Arthurian Order of Avalon in full costume. The White Side included King Arthur, Guinevere, Merlin, Gawain, Bedivere and Bors; the Black Side was represented by King Lot, Queen Morgause, Morgan le Fey, Sir Mordred, Sir Palamedes and Sir Agravaine.

There were also medieval games such as: Crusader's Crossbow, Dragon Joust, Bump a Monk and Castle Seige. It sounds like a whole lot of fun. Wouldn't it be nice if...!

6. Home Sweet Home: Arthurian names abound, many modern products and firms are called *Camelot*, *Avalon*, etc. Address on an advert. in a recent computer magazine: 43 Tintagel Close, King Arthur's Way, Andover, Hants. It would be interesting to know when this housing development was built. By whom?

★ POST HASTE

Literally last minute news: Beryl Mercer has not been too well just lately but I'm delighted to say she has made a start on her Arthurian book for children; it is set in Carmarthenshire. Our best wishes to you, Beryl. In *Coronation Street*, Derek and Mavis are still receiving foreign postcards from their runaway garden gnome, Arthur, while Guinevere has received flowers from an admirer during the night. The legionary museum at Caerleon was recently broken into and Roman artefacts were stolen. On Saturday, 19th August there will be an event at Caerleon called *CELTIC DREAMS, a fantasy of Dance, Song and Poetry of the power struggle between Merlin and Morgan le Fey at the Court of King Arthur. An exciting mix of Folk, Rock, Rhythm 'n' Blues, New Age music and ballads.* This event will be held at Ffwrwm courtyard (open-air), for 1 night only, starting at 7pm. Admission £3. For information call 01633 422214. A Pip Williams Production.

★ **REVIEWS** From: *Animals and Men*, No.6. "Pendragon: An Arthurian journal Par Excellence. Scholarly, but also witty and manages to avoid new age drivel entirely. I cannot praise this magazine highly enough."

From: *Dalriada Magazine*, 9/3. 'Pendragon: Journal of the Pendragon Society. Informative, scholarly publication, well researched in the field of Arthurian studies'.



Journey to Avalon David Pykitt



Apparently, the Welsh chroniclers and bards of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries referred to Athrwys as Adras ap Meurig.

I have not included the *Book of Llandaff* in my diagram as my article on the subject has already been published in *Pendragon*, but I do have conclusive proof that Athrwys ap Meurig belongs to the sixth and not the seventh century. This fact has been established by J.W. James in an article entitled *Chronology in the Book of Llan Dav 500-900* (The National Library of Wales Journal XVI, 1969/70), an extract of which is enclosed. (Unfortunately, copyright restrictions do not allow us to print this extended paragraph from the National Library of Wales Journal, important though it is to David's argument. Readers may wish to consult the article via the library lending services.)

It is of the utmost significance that Dr Peter Clement Bartrum has a separate entry in his *Welsh Classical Dictionary* (The National Library of Wales, 1993) for an Athrwys ap Meurig, King of Gwent, who flourished in the sixth century. I have also re-read Peter Bartrum's *Early Welsh Genealogical Tracts* (University of Wales Press, 1966), and on page 105 the *Gwehelyth Morganwc* pedigree, taken from the *Achau Brenhinoedd a Thywysogion Cymru* gives Morgan ap Arth (space). The next four letters in the original manuscript are smudged and illegible, but subsequent insertions by later scribes give Arthraws, Athrawes, Athraws, Athues and finally Athrwys. Could it be that Morgan ap Arthmael was originally intended here?

I am convinced the identification of Arthmael with Arthur is correct, but my search for further substantive evidence to support this continues.

David Pykitt

c.530 - The grant of Cadoxton-juxta-Neath by King Arthmael to St. Cadoc.

c.1073-1086 - The 'Vita Cadoci' ('Life of St. Cadoc'), written by Lifris, attached to which are the Llanccarfan Charters. Mention is made of the grant of Cadoxton-juxta-Neath to St. Cadoc by King Arthmael in c.530

The 11th-century stone found buried in the floor of Ogmores Castle mentions a grant of land by King Arthmael to Glywys, Nertat and Bishop Fili, who all belong to the 6th century. The inscription reads "Sciendum est omnibus quot dedit Arthmail agrum do et Gligws et Nertat et Fili epi." - "Be it known to all that Arthmael has given this field to God to Glywys and to Nertat and to Bishop Fili." The particular usage of "Sciendum est quod" is rare elsewhere and it is extremely significant that it can also be found in the charters attached to the "Vita Cadoc" from Llanccarfan.

The 15th-century 'Register of Neath', the cartulary of Neath Abbey, which contains an early history of Morgannwg (Glamorgan) and mentions King Arthur as ruling over the "Land of Morgan" in the 6th century.

c.1560 - Llywelyn ap Rhisiart (Lewys Morgannwg), who flourished 1520-1565, mentions Arthur as the king of the warlike land of Morgan. Lewys Morgannwg had cultural connections with Lleision Tomas, the last abbot of Neath Abbey, which was dissolved in 1539. The chief patron of Neath Abbey was Sir Edward Stradling (1529-1609) of St. Donat's Castle, who was also the first patron of Lewys Morgannwg.

1572-91 - Llywelyn Sion of Llangewydd (1540-1615), in "Llyma Enwau a Hiliogaeth Brenhinoedd Morgannwg" ("These be the names and genealogies of the Kings of Glamorgan"), mentions Morgan succeeding to the twelve hundreds of Gwent Essyllt in the principalities of Arthur. Elsewhere he records that Adras ap Meurig was a very heroic sovereign who frequently put the Saxons to flight.

1578-1584 - Rhys Meurig (1520-1587), in "A Book of Glamorganshire Antiquities", refers directly to the Register of Neath, which was held in the library of St. Donat's Castle, and names Morgan as the son of Adras ap Meurig

1591 - Sir Edward Mansel of Margam, in "Another Account of the Coming in of the Normans", mentions Morgan as a prince who lived in the time of King Arthur and was his son as some would have it.

1673 - Sir William Dugdale, in "Monasticon Anglicanum" Vol.III p.190, mentions Arthur as the son of Meurig.

Ronan Coghlan The Irish Connection



1. THE IRISH MERLIN

Many people do not realise that Merlin has a counterpart in Irish literature. By Merlin I do not mean the sage counsellor of Arthur, but rather the Mad Merlin of Welsh tradition who, having seen some prodigy in the sky at a battle, went insane and lived as a wildman in the forest. The Irish character is King Suibhne (pronounced *sween-yeh*, anglicised Sweeney). He is almost certainly a fictitious personage. His story occurs in *Buile Suibhne Geilt*. Our current full text dates from the 12th Century, but the story was first written three centuries earlier. The word *geilt*, 'madman' used of Suibhne is perhaps derived from (*g*)*wyllt*, the Welsh word which describes Merlin.

The tale says that Suibhne was king of Dal nAraidhe in Ulster and one day he was disturbed by the tintinabulations of the bell of St Ronan, who was in the clericking business. Suibhne rushed out angrily, but his wife grabbed his cloak to restrain him. This came away in her hands, so, naked, he ran to the saint, seized his psalter and flung it into a lake.

He was carrying off the saint when he was summoned to assist his overlord, King Congal, in battle. St Ronan was somewhat piqued at his treatment and cursed Suibhne, so that he would wander through the world naked – and, bearing in mind the rigours of the Irish climate, this was no small punishment. A kindly otter returned the saint's psalter, but there was worse to come. Before the battle, St Ronan turned up to bless King Congal's army by sprinkling it with holy water. Some of this hit Suibhne, so he flung a spear, hitting one of the saint's followers. He threw a second spear at St Ronan, but it broke against the saint's bell. The saint now prayed that Suibhne might fly through the air and die of a spear-cast.

During the ensuing battle, Suibhne looked

skyward and, seeing everything swirling about, went mad and took to the trees. Whether he was actually endowed with wings or flew winglessly like Superman – or even swung like Tarzan, we cannot tell. He came to dwell in Glen Bolcáin, which was probably in Co Antrim, but was later identified with the Madman's Glen in Co Kerry. He heard that his wife, Eorann, had gone to live with another man, so he went and spoke to her, while a throng of onlookers onlooked. At first he upbraided her, but then advised her to stay with her new innamorato. He returned to the woods, but, on learning of the death of his parents and son, he fell from a tree in grief and was tied up by his kinsman Loingseachán, who brought him home.

His sanity restored, he became King of Dal nAraidhe once more. However, a hag, who doesn't seem to have been too stable herself, asked him to jump about as he had done in the forest. When he did so, his madness came back and he and the hag went jumping off into the distance, the hag eventually falling over a cliff.

Suibhne went to Britain for a while, where he did a kind of double act with a Scottish lunatic named Alladhán. The latter drowned himself and Suibhne, returning home, was told by Eorann, that, if he wasn't prepared to settle down and stay with her in the manner expected of husbands, he could push off because the whole business was causing a great deal of embarrassment to her. Off he went again, hither and yon, until his misery restored his sanity. St Ronan prayed that he should not return lest he persecute the church and he was set upon by spectres who sent him reeling off into the distance.

Eventually he settled in Co Laois, where he used to visit St Moling. Moling's cook's wife used to feed Suibhne each day by making a hole in a cowpat and filling it with milk. This made the cook jealous – where would it all lead? He well knew that milk in cowdung today could lead to hanky panky tomorrow, so he speared Suibhne who received the last rites from St Moling before he expired.

The similarities of this tale to the Merlin/Lailoken saga must be clear to all who are familiar with the latter and the evidence would seem to indicate that the Irish story was based upon the Welsh. There has been a modern rendering or rather development of the theme in Flann O'Brien's novel *At Swim - Two-Birds* (1939).

Book



Views

More news of books and booksellers, writers and publishers for Arthurian bookworms

♥ BOOKS FOR THE DECKCHAIR

With an eye to a future researcher in the 21st-Century reading this dusty archive: in 1995 we had a long blazing hot summer, the hottest since 1976. Please pay tribute in your footnotes to the Editor's perseverance and self-sacrifice in staying indoors, chained to his computer, so that the word might go forth on time.

1. *The Celtic Sources for the Arthurian Legend* Jon Coe & Simon Young. Llanerch Press, Pbk.1995. £8.50. ISBN-1897853-83-1. Practically all the early Celtic sources (Welsh, Irish and Latin) with translations, discussion and invaluable biblio. Includes material from Gildas, Nennius, Annales Cambriae, Triads, Genealogies, Spoils of Annwn, Book of Taliesin, Brut y Brenhinedd, Welsh poems. All this in pocket size. Indispensable.

2. *Arthurian Period Sources* General Editor: John Morris. Morris did not live to complete the planned 9 volumes of sources providing evidence for his history of sub-Roman Britain. This has now been achieved by a team of scholars, basing their work on his papers. Published July by Phillimore, Shopwyke Manor Barn, Chichester, West Sussex, PO26 6BG. Send for information leaflet on the nine volumes. The six new volumes are £19.95 each, the 3 earlier volumes (Gildas, Nennius, St. Patrick) are £12 each (the set: £155.70.) The new material includes: Bede, Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, Irish Annals, Land Grants, Saxon archaeology, charters, persons, genealogies, etc., etc. A library of source material for the student of the Dark-Age history of the British Isles. Can you wait for the paperbacks?

3. *Myths & Legends of Cornwall* Craig Weatherhill and Paul Devereux, Sigma Press, March 1994, Pbk. 196pp, £6.95. ISBN:1-85058-317-X. Folklore and legends of giants, faeries, saints, churches, mines, King Arthur, ghosts, demons, witchcraft, lost lands, sacred waters, the sea, megaliths, leys, spirit paths, etc. etc. – by two authors who really do know their Cornwall.

4. *Cornish Place Names & Language* Craig Weatherhill, Sigma Press, July 1995, 180pp, Pbk. £6.95 ISBN:1-85058-462-1. Historian, novelist, Cornish bard, Craig Weatherhill

is a member of the Cornish Language Council. Over 2,000 place names are unlocked in authentic spellings from the Old, Middle and Late periods of the Cornish language. There are excerpts from Cornish history; stories of the people and their language; tales, poems and useful phrases – bringing the past alive in this unique corner of Britain.

(Sigma Press ask that you order their books from local bookshops wherever possible. They can supply direct but add £2 postage charge on one book, free on two or more. Their catalogue contains over 100 titles, mainly regional books, walks, rambles, heritage, folklore. Sigma Press, 1 South Oak Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 6AR. Tel:01625-531035.)

5. *King Arthur's Return* Courtney Davis & Helena Paterson, Blandford Press, 1995. Hbk. 128pp. £14.99. ISBN: 0-7137-2430-7. We mentioned this book last time but hadn't seen a copy then. As always, Courtney Davis's images are a delight, but many seemed familiar. Why? In his acknowledgements Courtney writes: 'First, I have to thank Helena Paterson for her text in this book, and also Ian Forrester Roberts for initially firing my imagination to create these images'. In *3rd Stone*, Midsummer '95, Danny Sullivan writes of this book: 'this is the soft side of the Arthurian story repackaged for a growing neo-Celtic market that is cornering itself a cosy and lucrative niche in the vast New Age publishing market.' Bullseye! The best images in this book were originally part of *Symbols of the Grail Quest*, published as a booklet in 1990 by St Justin Press. Ian Forrester Roberts's text analyses the Grail hero's psychological and spiritual quest with scholarship, sensitivity and insight into the meaning of the Grail legends, and obviously played no small part in inspiring these fine pictures. The text that accompanies them in this book is a synthesis of romantic, neo-mystic 'Celtia'. Gilbert has lost his Sullivan, Rogers his Hammerstein; the biblio. doesn't even mention *Symbols*. Try St Justin Cornwall Ltd, Long Rock Industrial Estate, Penzance, Cornwall, TR20 8HX and see if they still have a copy to sell you. If so, treasure it: 6. *The Quest for King Arthur* David Day,

De Agostini Editions, 176pp, £14.99, ISBN: 1-899883-02-9. We have received a glossy coloured advertiser's prospectus for this forthcoming book, to be published in November. The book will trace the evolution of Arthur, "from the earliest records to the perfect king of a utopian kingdom...in a uniquely accessible way", with a foreword by Terry Jones. The author is described as being published widely in the fields of myth, fantasy, ecology and natural history. The illustrations shown in the brochure line the book up with the style of Element editions of Ronan Coghlan's *Encyclopaedia of Arthurian Legends* and John Matthews's *The Arthurian Tradition*. I don't know how this book can hope to supersede such splendid, beautifully produced, expertly written competitors as these. Perhaps the uniqueness of the treatment may be hinted at in the quotation, "the Greek classics had a far greater effect on Arthurian literature and the mythology behind it than is usually acknowledged". We'll have to wait and see about that! The brochure is distributed by: *Powerhouse*, 26 Westbourne Grove, London, W2 5RH. Tel: 0171-221-3754.

7. *The REAL King Arthur: A History of Post-Roman Britannia AD 410 to AD 593*. P.F.J. Turner, SKS Publishing Company, Anchorage, Alaska, 1993, \$29.95, pbk. This is reviewed in *Military History*, June 94. I'm not sure how one would obtain it but the Harvard-educated historian has "analyzed the Roman historical records, Celtic legends and medieval chronicles to reconstruct a convincing two-volume account of the 'Once and Future King'". Apparently, Arthur was not a native-born Briton but Lucius Artorius Castor, the descendant of a noble Roman family that had lived and fought in the diocese of Britannia since 180 AD. His adoptive nephew, Medrautius Lancaerius did in fact turn against him it seems. Mordred also made off with his second wife, Guinevere of Lugalvalium (his first wife Leonora had died of illness). In fact Camelot and Mordred were actually the same person! The review sums up, "the *REAL King Arthur* provides an unusually substantial account of a period of British history that has been obscured by the very legends that the events inspired." It seems to me that the 'Arthur is fact' folk are as creative a bunch as the 'Once upon a time' folk - if not as modest. How does one order books from Alaska, I wonder...they have bears there, don't they?

8. *First Steps in Old English* Stephen Pollington, Anglo-Saxon Books, Provisional date, November 1995. An easy-to-follow

language course for the beginner. Stephen is preparing a course for a wide range of students who wish to learn Old English (Anglo Saxon). Knowing that some individuals have little aptitude for learning languages and many have difficulty with grammar he has adopted a step-by-step approach which enables students of differing abilities to advance at their own pace. The course will include: coursebook; exercises and Old English texts, audio-tape of the author reading the Old English texts, and a grammar.

9. *Anglo-Saxon Mythology, Migration and Magic* Tony Linsell, Anglo-Saxon Books, 174pp hardback, 31 illustrations, 4 maps, £14.95. ISBN: 1-898281-09-2. The author looks at the early Northern European tribes and their mythology. He traces the migration of some of these tribes to Britain and the creation of the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms. The rich heathen heritage of these people survived parallel with Christianity: heathen laws, festivals, magical practices and folk traditions were assimilated into the Christian way of life. Traces of these attitudes, customs and institutions are still with us. 'This is a book to enjoy very much indeed' (Good Book Guide).

10. *Arthur, High King of Britain* Michael Morpurgo, Pavilion, £12.99. We brought your attention to this book for the over 8's last year. This year it was short-listed for the prestigious Carnegie Medal for an outstanding children's book. Morpurgo breathes new life into the story. In the *Daily Telegraph*, Feb. 4th, Geoffrey Trease wrote, "this frank treatment makes possible a unified and comprehensible story instead of a monotonous succession of hacking-and-hewing episodes, but the battles and the dragon and all our favourite knights are there". The modern opening is gripping. A 12 year old schoolboy swims out of his depth in the sea in the Scilly Islands and is saved from drowning by a rather elderly King Arthur, dwelling in a cave. Arthur tells the story of his life in an enthralling narrative. The characters are flesh and blood, and Morpurgo focuses the story by Arthur's bidding the boy to climb on the round table and choose just three knights from all the names inscribed around its edge: so he tells the stories of Gawain, Tristram and the young Percival. Buy it, it's your best bet of getting the next generation hooked!

11. *Avalon Nights* Sophie Danson, Black Lace, ISBN 0-352-32910-6. £4.99 UK, Australia \$11.95. Now the children are occupied, here's one for Mum and Dad. This

publisher seems to specialise in 'erotic fiction for women'. The blurb reads, 'on a stormy night in Camelot, a shape-shifting sorceress wields a potent spell. In turn each member of the Round Table must tell the tale of his most lustful conquest.' Yes, alright, I'm sorry: a lady member sent me this one, Miss, cross my throat and hope to die! (Sounds more likely it was written by Ted Danson than Sophie!)

12. *The Crippled King* Bernard Cornwell (creator of Sharpe). The first of his sequence of novels about Arthur, to be published by Michael Joseph in October.

♥ EXCALIBUR BOOKS

We would remind our readers that Ronan Coghlan publishes regular lists of Arthurian books, both new and second hand. He has been most successful in obtaining difficult to locate books for members (including Beryl Mercer's Laubenthal replacement!). Excalibur Books, Rivenoak, 1 Hillside Gardens, Bangor, Co. Down, BT19 6SJ.

♥ IMPRINTS

These are Small press publications from other societies and magazines.

1. *Gods of the Celts* Lorraine Macdonald & Sam McSkimming.

2. *Celtic Totem Animals* Lorraine Macdonald.

3. *The Trees of the Celtic Alphabet* Helen McSkimming.

From: Clan Dalriada, 3 Brathwic Place, Brodick, Isle of Arran, Scotland, KA27 8BN, £3 each. These booklets on Celtic folklore & mythology explore the Gaelic pantheon, the totem beasts of the Celts and the trees venerated in Celtic myth and folk tradition. Illustrated. Very interesting.

The Earth Mysteries Guides to

1. *Mid Cornwall & the Lizard*. 2. *Bodmin Moor & North Cornwall*. 3. *Ancient Sites in West Penwith*. All by Cheryl Traffon, Meyn Mamvro Publications, 51 Carn Bosavern, St Just, Penzance, Cornwall, TR19 7QX. These fully illustrated A5 guides are splendid companions to Cornwall's mysteries. If you are into ley hunting, earth alignments, sacred sites, anomalous energies, ritual landscapes, Arthurian sites, holy wells, crosses, standing stones then you need these. There are OS references and info. about accessibility and on your way to the sites you will be intrigued by tales and myths that bring it all alive. £3.30 each, incl. postage.

♥ JOHN & CAITLIN MATTHEWS

It is not our intention to duplicate John & Caitlin's own Newsletter, *Hallowquest* (Subs. £6.00 to BCM Hallowquest, London, WC1N 3XX) but one or two items from their last newsletter are of special interest.

Caitlin's *The Celtic Tradition* is to be reissued in the same colourful format as John's *The Arthurian Tradition* in August at £9.99. John's *King Arthur's Britain* comes out this Winter (Cassell); a picture book guide to Arthurian landscapes. He is also editing a reprint of Sabine-Gould's fascinating *Myths of the Middle Ages*, long out of print. That's enough for now but you'll get special offers on some of their books from time to time if you subscribe to *Hallowquest*.

♥ BOOKCLUBS

It may be worth pointing out that if you belong to the Ancient & Medieval History Book Club you will be offered many Arthurian and Celtic titles cheaper than they can be purchased retail. You will also receive a special offer to begin. Guild House, Farnsby Street, Swindon X, SN99 9XX.

Element Books have a new Club for their mail order customers, with no obligations of any sort. You'll receive their lists, news of new titles and special discount offers. I've just bought £40 worth of Arthurian books for £18, including postage. Write: Element Books, Longmead, Shaftesbury, Dorset, SP7 8PL.

♥ AUDIO BOOKS

Many people listen to novels, poetry, diaries, biographies etc. as audio books; some because they are blind or incapacitated, others while they are busy working or driving. Libraries stock many of these and will order titles they do not hold. You can also join *The Talking Book Club* and choose from over 2000 titles, delivered to your door. Write to The Talking Book Club, Freeport, London, SW64 YZ. or Tel: 071-731-6262 for details.

Either way, it will be cheaper than buying the tapes, unless you feel that you must own them. Two Arthurian titles our scout has discovered are:

1. *The Mary Stewart Trilogy* (*The Crystal Cave*, *The Hollow Hills*, *The Last Enchantment*.) All 3 unabridged, each book on 12 cassettes approx 15 hours long. Read by Steven Thorne who read the Cadfael Cassettes. To buy them each book costs £43!

2. *The Mists of Avalon*, by Marion Zimmer Bradley. Comes in 4 episodes: *Mistress of Magic*, *The High Queen*, *The King Stag*, *The Prisoner in the Oak*. Each episode has 9 cassettes approx 12 hours long. Read by Davina Porter. Around £40 each to buy.

(Special thanks to John Ford for this information. He ordered Mists from his library and parts 2-4 arrived, no part 1.) Hope it has come by now, John.)

BookReviews

A PRINCE AMONG MEN

Warner Books, New York, 1994

A KING BENEATH THE MOUNTAIN

Warner Books, New York, 1995

Both by Robert N. Charette



What would happen if Arthur returned in the 20th or the 21st century? This is a question which has been asked before, notably by Martyn Skinner in his wonderful epic poem *The Return of Arthur* (Secker & Warburg). In these two novels by Robert N. Charette (the first two parts of a projected trilogy) the time is sometime in the not too distant future, when much of the world is a wasteland, and the power struggle is between mega-corporations rather than countries, and the weapons are not only conventional ones but the powers of magic and magecraft. The hero is a young man named John Reddy, who at the beginning is holding down a dead end job as a security guard in a large museum. His life is soon thrown into chaos as he discovers that he is really an Elf, and the son of the Elven king no less. Enter the sorceress Nym (yes, you guessed it, Nimue) bent on waking the sleeping Arthur, whose remains are preserved in a coffin within an exhibit of Arthurian artefacts. Wakened, Arthur (Artos or just Bear as he is called here) soon adjusts to life in the 21st century, swiftly becoming the leader of a street gang and then, with John's help, going in search of the mighty sword Caliburn, which is also sought after by two rival forces: the Sorceress herself and one of the megacorporations who know of the existence of the Sleepers - not just Arthur but several others - and want to gain control of them for purposes of world domination...well, you get the picture.

The books are exciting and well enough written to keep one turning the pages, though the characterisation is rather superficial. The second book is less Arthurian and less interesting, with Artos making only a brief appearance and the focus shifting to another buried Sleeper, Quetzal, clearly based on the Aztec god, but here represented as an evil mage determined on - yes, world domination...The story is set to reach an astounding climax in book 3 (due this autumn). If you like the new breed of techno-magic books the three should make good reading for a wet afternoon.

John Matthews

KING ARTHUR AND THE NARTS

From Scythia to Camelot:

A Radical Reassessment of the Legends of King Arthur, the Knights of the Round Table, and the Holy Grail by C. Scott Littleton and Linda A. MacLor, Garland Publishing Inc, 1994, New York & London.



Here at last is the first of the long-awaited books concerning the possible Sarmatian influence on the Arthurian legends. And very interesting reading it makes. The argument of the authors, in a nutshell, is that through the spread of various tribes of Iranian, Caucasian and Allanic origin into Europe and specifically to Britain between the 2nd and 6th centuries AD a number of themes and characters influenced already existing Romano-Celtic tales concerning Arthur, changing them for all time and stamping them with an oriental tinge which is still detectable by a careful study of the later medieval texts.

To this thesis the authors bring an extensive array of scholarly apparatus, footnotes and sources (despite which the book is readable and understandable by those interested in the ideas rather than the proofs). In particular they concentrate on the Sarmatian hero-cycle concerning the Narts, their leader Batraz and the vessel known as the Nartamonga, in which they see echoes of the Round Table Fellowship, Arthur himself, and the Grail.

Certainly there is a formidable amount of overlap between the two sets of stories, with the Narts attaching a good deal of importance to a sword stuck point downward in the earth (no prizes for guessing what this refers to) and to the function of the Narts themselves within the cycles of

stories in which they appear. The authors also find an Allanic origin for Lancelot (ie. Alan of Lot) and Sarmatian parallels for the Lady of the Lake.

Whether or not all this stands up is something that every reader will ultimately have to make up their own minds about. Personally, I remain not entirely convinced, despite the fact that there are very clear parallels between the two sets of tales. There are, in fact, so many similarities between the Sarmatian stories and those of the Celts that I rather wonder whether the former were not influenced by the latter, rather than the other way around. Certainly the descriptions of the feasting of the Narts, whether the Nartamonga chooses the best and bravest among them sounds amazingly like the descriptions of the hero-feasts of the Red Branch Heroes and the receiving of the hero's portion by Cuchulainn. But which came first, the chicken or the egg?

This is a book destined to set the Arthurian world talking, and I suspect there will be arguments both pro and contra for some time to come. Meanwhile we await the publication of Helmut Nickel's forthcoming book on the Sarmatians, in expectation of yet more information on this fascinating side-track (or is it a major road?) of Arthurian tradition.

John Matthews



THE SKYSTONE

by Jack Whyte

Penguin. £4.99.

ISBN 0 14 01 7050 2

The blurb on the back cover describes the book well: 'Publius Varrus is a veteran officer and a maker of swords in the early fifth century amidst the violent struggles between the people of Britain and the invading Saxons, Picts and Scots. He and his former general, Caius Britannicus, forge the government and the military system that will become known as the Round Table and initiate a chain of events that will lead to the coronation of the High King we know as Arthur'.

It is a story of the collapse of the Roman system in Britain and the forging of the Celtic and Roman citizens to make one race, the Britons. Although I have only read this, the first book of a trilogy, I am hooked on Mr Whyte's version of Ambrosius's ancestors who 'wore the purple cloak', his version of the forging of Excalibur, and his different slant on the 'Lady of the Lake'. The book has a distinct 'it could have been like that' feel.

The trilogy is called *ADream of Eagles* and books two and three are *The Singing Sword* and *The Eagle's Brood*.

John Ford

ABSOLUTION FOR MURDER AD 661

SHROUD FOR A BISHOP AD 664

Peter Tremayne

Headline

Peter Tremayne is the fiction pseudonym of a well-known authority on the ancient Celts (Peter Beresford Ellis), who uses his knowledge of the Brehon law system and 7th-Century Irish society to create a new concept in detective fiction.

Mainly the books cover the differences between Celtic and Saxon religion and broadly touch on the merging of the two races. The detective side is in the Cadfael style.

Both books are published by Headline and the first is now out in paperback (they are available by post from Ronan Coghlan at *Excalibur Books*, see advert.), the third is due for release in August.

John Ford



EUSEBIUS THE PHOENICIAN

Christopher Webb

MacDonald, London, 1990

I picked up this intriguing novel second-hand, a very cross-temporal usage: a Phoenician from Tyre becomes involved with Vikings, leads them to Britain in search of a magic cup, meets an aged and discredited Arthur and restores some power to him by the use of the Vikings' fighting prowess. They defeat a people dwelling underground in an Annwn-like setting, then at last find a (small) island of Avalon. The Phoenician has a vision of the Grail from Joseph of Arimathea, and he in turn becomes a hermit. The book is aimed, I would guess, at older teenagers, but it is well and excitingly written and, within the context of the historical liberties he takes, self-consistent and interesting in its use and blending of different traditional and mythical, as well as more conventionally religious, elements.

Steve Sneyd

**IN SEARCH OF THE HOLY GRAIL
& the PRECIOUS BLOOD:**
A Traveller's Guide
by Ean & Deike Begg
Thorsons (Harper Collins), 1995
ISBN 1 85538 293 8
236pp, illustrated Pbk, £7.99.



The Begg's specialise in producing books cataloguing sites of esoteric interest. Ean's gazetteer of Black Madonna shrines, *The Cult of the Black Virgin* (1985) has been an invaluable source book to myself and many other researchers. With Deike, he followed that up with *On the Trail of Merlin*, listing places in Europe linked with the legendary magician.

Their latest book takes as its theme the Holy Blood Cult'. Primarily this covers places which claim (or have claimed in the past) to possess actual drops of Jesus' blood, or objects - most obviously the Holy Grail and the Spear of Longinus - associated with it. This subject involves a great number of linked themes, such as Celtic myths, the Arthurian heroes, and the Magdalen cult, which are all included in the Begg's survey. The idea of the Holy Blood cults may be symbolic, perhaps of the bloodline of Jesus and Mary Magdalen, is also included. Many of these themes are, of course, relevant to our subject.

Undaunted by the scale of their chosen subject, the Begg's have undertaken the task of visitings sites literally throughout the length and breadth of Europe. The result is a catalogue of some 150 sites from Britain to the Czech Republic, ranging from cathedrals and museums to village churches and hidden grottoes. Each site is described together with its history and legends, and cross referenced to other places mentioned in the book. Instructions are given on how to get there, with local map references and details - where applicable - of opening times. France, not surprisingly, has the largest section, with some 50 of the 235 pages devoted to it. (Spain comes next with 40 pages, Britain and Ireland receive about 25). Many of the sites are familiar, such as Rosslyn Chapel, Chartres Cathedral and, of course, Rennes-le-Château, but many will be new even to the most dedicated researcher.

Although they have a firm belief in the existence of an underground and esoteric form of Grail Christianity, the authors do not push any particular theory or set of beliefs, but instead remain alert to all the themes and ideas associated with their subject, which they record for each site visited. For example, any connections with Merovingians, Cathars, Templars, Magdalenism, the Priory of Sion, etc. are noted. Their approach is perfect for a subject in which history and legend are inseparable. As both are psychoanalysts by profession, they recognise the power of myth and symbol and wisely do not seek to explain or evaluate, but simply provide the reader with the information they have collected so painstakingly. That the book is immensely practical and an enjoyable read - is a great achievement. It is an indispensable reference book for researchers into the Rennes mystery, as well as many other subjects.

(This review is reprinted from *The Rennes Observer*, No. 1/7. March 95, with the kind permission of the reviewer Clive Prince and the Editor Gay Roberts.)

Clive Prince

TINTAGEL & THE ARTHURIAN MYTHOS

by Paul Broadhurst,
Pendragon Press, Cornwall
Pbk. 1992, 203pp. £16.95.
ISBN 0-9515183-9-9



This is a handsomely produced paperback edition of the collectors' bound volume which appeared in 1992 (reviewed by Archer Mercer, *Pendragon* XX3/1, Winter 92) and it reproduces the fine photographs by the author and the evocative artwork by Vivienne Shanley. In his review, Colin Wilson wrote, 'but it is more than a collector's item, it is a compelling narrative that is also a kind of detective story. There is no doubt in my mind that it will take its place among the classic works on King Arthur'.

Since this book was written, another volume on Tintagel has appeared, Professor Charles Thomas's *Tintagel, Arthur & Archaeology* (1993). Am I a split personality to keep these books together on my bookshelf? It may be significant that Thomas's book has a photographic aerial view of Tintagel on its cover. Broadhurst's has an evocative watercolour. To me these covers express two visions, two points of view; two ways of looking - are they exclusive?

That Tintagel is a numinous site, a magical place, is revealed in both pictures; visitors feel it, even when they don't believe in Arthur. We all know such places where the earth seems special,

hallowed - Delphi, Chartres, Glastonbury Tor, my own 'special' site is White Horse Hill.

The book's argument is that Tintagel was an important ritual site thousands of years before Arthur and it is one of a network across Cornwall and beyond. These places were determined by celestial events such as solstice alignments, places where rituals of empowerment of the land and the people were held. These events focused around divine Sun Kings who ruled the land and channelled the principle of light upon it. Arthur may have been a title of such kings. The number twelve features because of its zodiacal significance and we are reminded of John Michell's work on twelve as a principle of social organisation: Arthur's 12 knights and 12 battles relate to other contexts where Osiris and Jesus were the god representatives. These ideas relate to Stonehenge as well, and we are reminded of the energy lines at that site, a solstitial line leads to Cerne Abbas, where the sun king strides in glory still. Now newly defined, his power to command is obviously still potent!

The author has been criticised for linguistic evidences put forward for the significant sites around Bodmin Moor, but this does not invalidate his argument that Stowes Hill is a Neolithic ritual centre, the Cheesewring marking a particularly significant site. The dowsing techniques employed in *The Sun and the Serpent* were repeated and Hamish Miller took the double lines - this time called Merlin and Morgan - to Tintagel Head.

What does the archaeologist say? Arthur's Footprint, which Broadhurst interprets as a royal ritual stone is seen as interestingly located by Charles Thomas who agrees that one should question why it is there and not on some inland cairn. He comments on the lack of evidence for prehistoric activity on the island and of Otherworld legends attached to Tintagel and points out that Victorian folklorists first raised Arthur as a symbol of a prehistoric sun god. Fair mindedness, however, he adds, 'we don't know what happened there...it is no bad thing to let the divining-rod take over, give respite to over-dug ancient monuments. It would be a grey world if the thought police outlawed all but academically approved writing about a past we never saw'.

I believe this is true. This book was not written by a sloppy 'new-ager', it is a deeply sensitive work, the work of a visionary who knows and loves his landscape. The approach is one of love for his subject, it is written in a spirit of optimism. As Professor Thomas himself says, all serious studies of Tintagel 'share a vision that many have called Camelot'.

It is interesting to know that Merlin's Cave, under Tintagel Island, was a womb of inspiration for *The Sun and the Serpent*, the start of Paul Broadhurst's continuing search.

(This book may be ordered direct from Pendragon Press, PO Box 888, Launceston, Cornwall, PL15 7YH. Add £1.50 for postage. A few copies of the original finely-produced hardback are available at £35, post free.)

Fred Stedman-Jones

A GUIDE TO BRITAIN'S PAGAN HERITAGE

by David Clarke,
Robert Hale,
Pbk. 224pp, £9.99.
ISBN: 0-7090-5405-X



THE SACRED RING

by Michael Howard
Cappall Bann, 1995,
Pbk. 161pp. £9.95.
ISBN 0-7090-5405-X

These 2 books are complementary and armed with them Britain's pagan heritage can be explored most profitably. Michael Howard warns his readers that his book is not recommended for 'Huttonites of a sensitive disposition.' This refers to Dr Ronald Hutton's talk and subsequent article claiming that folk revivalists are mistaken in claiming that rural folk customs go back to pre-Christian times and are the diluted manifestations of now forgotten fertility rites. Let the argument rage, Mike's book is a fascinating collection of seasonal customs and festivals organised on a calendar basis around the concept of the 'Wheel of the Year'. He describes its origin in the solar and agricultural year and the book celebrates the close relationship between humankind and the fertility of the natural world. Attractively illustrated and full of interesting lore, it will serve nicely as a text book for those following old paths, and aren't we all? Perhaps what we can't prove (or disprove) is best interpreted as probable and just enjoyed for the vigour it lends to life, whatever its origins. Have you ever watched the crowd's faces at the enactment of a folk ritual?

David Clarke has avoided the Huttonite argument by acknowledging that there is such a point of view and saying it would need a book of its own to discuss it adequately. The organisation of his book is new and very attractive. He first defines his terms and provides a time chart to show when the 'pagans' lived. He argues for a cross disciplined approach to unlocking our pagan heritage, calling on archaeology, the written word, mythology, folk tradition and custom. His Introduction is a scholarly and interesting 24 page essay under the headings: Pagan and Christian Anglo-Saxon England, Celtic Christianity, holy places and temples, the goddesses, pagan gods, the festivals, the

pagan year. In this he shows a sound knowledge of current archaeology.

The main text is a guide to 50 places in the British Isles, split into 7 zones. The three Celtic lands are zones and England is divided into 4 zones. Each zone contains nine places to visit, chosen for their retaining an 'atmosphere' of their pagan past. Full map references and access details are given and a full account follows describing what is to be seen and placing it in its historical and geographical context. The sites chosen include: Flag Fen, the Gogmagog Hills, Lindow Moss, Avebury, The White Horse, Cerne Abbas, Iona, Prescelly Mountains, Tara. I really do recommend these books, though the second wins on having 4 'Arthur' references.

Fred Stedman-Jones

TELEVISION REVIEW : EXCALIBUR - THE SEARCH FOR ARTHUR

BBC2, Weds, 31st May & 7th June, 7 p.m.

Originally intended as a three-part exploration of the Arthurian legend, these two 50 minute programmes aimed high. The Arthurian material is dense, even intractable - to attempt to convey this complexity to a general audience on the media is setting oneself a real challenge. Professor Gwyn Williams is not afraid of a challenge, as a fine historian he understands the people of each period and their motives in recasting Arthur in their own image and for their own needs. His text is always vivid, clearly to the point, and he leavens the facts with dry comment, humour and with fine language from the Arthurian poets themselves. His intelligence, honesty and enthusiasm for his subject shines through the programmes.

You will have gathered that I liked and admired these programmes: one caveat- there is so much richness it is necessary to watch them several times to fully appreciate their achievement. In 100 minutes there may be a gallop and a few sword waves too many for some, but the professor is served well by his production team. Their task, to add the pictures and sound to his lecture, is carried out with skill and imagination. Teliesyn have done us all a real service in letting us see 'the greatest legend Europe has ever known' through Gwyn Williams's eyes.

All our Arthurs are there: sky god-kings at Stonehenge, barbaric pagan leader of the *Mabinogion*, 'lecherous old ram' of the Celtic church historians, the Celtic warlord of Nennius, Geoffrey's Arthur, Chretien's Norman king, and so on to T.H.White's portrait of a defeated idealist who hands on the torch to the pageboy Tom - who will grow up to chronicle the king's work in another time of anarchy. J.F.Kennedy's sad riderless horse reminds us of the hope of Camelot and the Eternal Return and the Python plebs challenge Arthur's right to lord it over them when they haven't voted for him (Help! help! I'm being suppressed!). We even see Stonehenge repossessed by Arthur's reincarnation and those who find themselves alienated from the skylords of today. Lancelot is observed too in his various roles as Guinevere's lover: lusty swain, courtly lover and conscience-smitten club member. It's a broad canvas and a testament to human diversity.

The camera is used imaginatively. We tour the land in search of Arthur: Glastonbury, Oxford, Bath, Caerleon, Brittany, Winchester, Salisbury Plain, even the Houses of Parliament, and there is a breathtaking view of Tintagel Island from the air. Close-up shots of apples symbolise the fertility of Avalon, raging torrents convey the magic at Barenton, and the Severn bore where Arthur fought the spectral boar illustrates dramatically the king's heroic feat. There is a very dramatic moment when the Ermine Street Guard appears - to symbolise the Roman occupation. The animations and graphics are particularly effective: the red and white dragons symbolise battle, at Dinas Emrys and at Bosworth Field; the faceless helm of the Dragon King rider; the Norman knight who rides out of the Bayeux tapestry, all invoke far more than they actually portray.

The dramatisation of scenes from the tales vary in effectiveness: castle scenes and knightly tournaments I found less atmospheric than the moorland and lakeland vistas, including ancient combats. I particularly liked the drawing of both swords, from stone and lake, and the barge on the mere with the wounded Arthur, they were like the familiar pictures in my childhood books. Professor Williams captures the sense of loss, the *hiraeth*, splendidly at the end when he relates the Fall of Camelot to his own hope and idealism as a young man, using the words of Tennyson's *Bedivere* to speak for all men:

*Ah, my Lord Arthur, whither shall I go?/ Where shall I hide my forehead and my head?
For now I see the true old times are dead/ When every morning brought a noble chance;
And every chance brought out a noble knight/ But now the whole Round Table is dissolved
Which was an image of the mighty world/ And I, the last, go forth companionless;
And the days darken round me and the years/ Among new men, strange faces, other minds.*

Fred Stedman-Jones

ON THE POINT OF THE FULCRUM

Morganna of Cornwall, half-sister to Arthur, High King over the Island of the Mighty, was indistinguishable, at first glance, from the other nuns who knelt in the chapel in the cold, pre-dawn light. Like them, she wore a simple habit and white veil and bore the weight of a cross upon her breast.

There was a placidity in her eyes that might have been resignation but could also have been watchfulness. Her gaze, at first seen as honest and forthright, could also be interpreted as arrogant; bearing mute testimony to the secret lore of Avalon which seared the soul. Behind the cross the shadow of the Cauldron; behind the outstretched arms of the Christ the Goddess in her triple aspect of Virgin, Mother and Crone.

Morganna stood, poised, between Christ and Celtica, open always, even in the chapel, to the tug of older, wilder ways; of leafmould and running water, of green leaves and woodland dwellers; of the silent spirits of wood and stone and the Forest Lord, the Twelve-Tined Stag, striding as Master through the shrouded groves.

A teasing evil, a shadow half-glimpsed on the periphery of vision clung to Morganna; a remembrance of things past - the lure of the moon shining on the dolmen stones, the white robed druids with their sickle knives and the hot copper scent of shed blood running over the green grass for the health and wholeness of the Land.

Morganna had become, in the apparent fragility of her flesh, a bridge leading to the Old ways which had held sway before the coming of the White Christ; in an age when the boundaries between the Unseen Realms and the world of men were fluid rather than fixed and firelit figures walked the processional way to the summit of the tor for initiation into the Mysteries. A time when the magics of the Merlin brought forth a King out of Legend, bearing an enchanted sword.

Morganna knelt in her place in the chapel, one nun among many, her lips moving in ritual responses; and who could tell whether the touch of holy water had expunged the sigil of the sickle moon?



CAROL BOSTOCK

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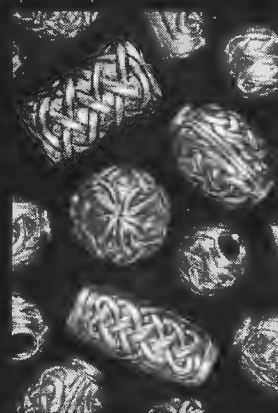
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