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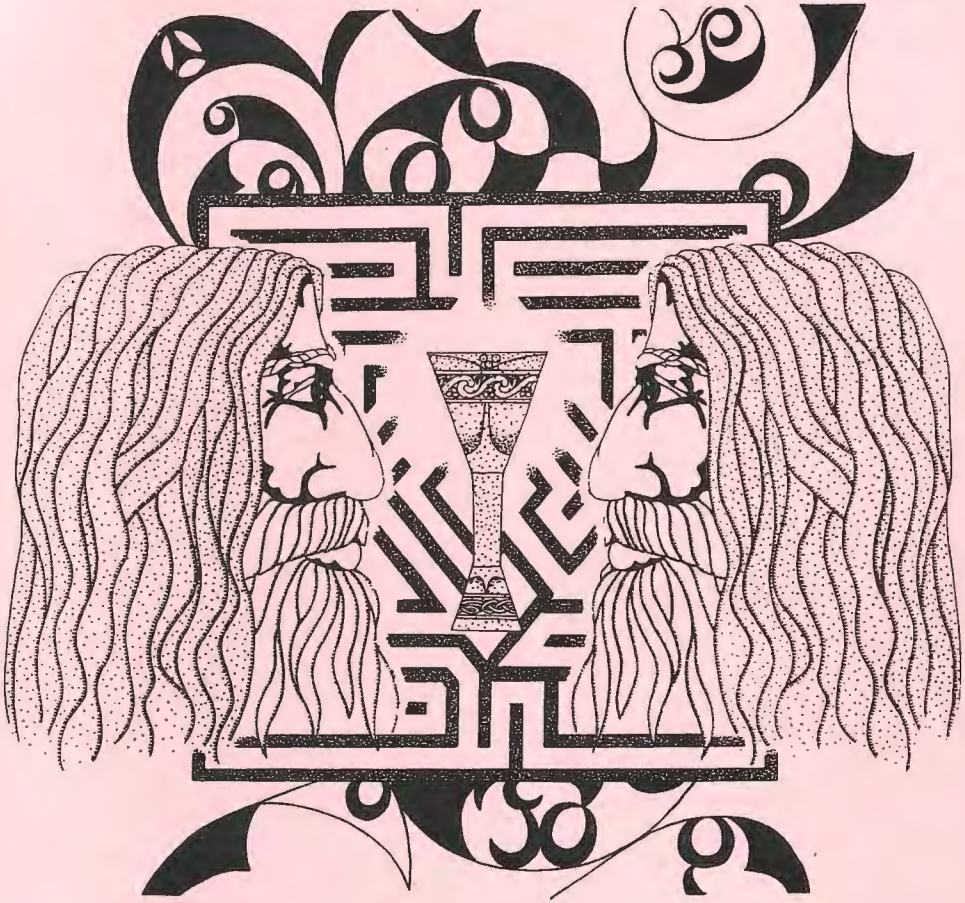
Journal of
The Pendragon Society



Perceval

XXXI *No 1* *Autumn 2003*

editorial

The theme of this issue is **Perceval**, and covers various aspects of this character and the object of his quest, the Grail. Some relevant material has had to be held over, so to accommodate this the theme after next is proposed as **the Grail Castle**. This means that the next theme remains **Arthur and the UK**, and we already have a cornucopia of submissions that fit under this heading.

It was agreed at the Caerleon AGM that we would return journal frequency to four issues a year, so *Arthur and the UK* will be the winter issue and *Grail Castle* will appear in the spring. From responses to the questionnaire, broad areas of interest seem to be *specific sites* on the map (*eg* Baschurch, Camlan, holy wells), extracts and reviews of *primary sources* and great *literature*, Arthurian *art* (especially the PRB), traditional *stories and legends* (*eg* French or Breton), specific *characters* (*eg* Gawain, Maelgwn, Merlin, Bors, Sagramore) or Arthurian ladies and Grail knights, Arthur in the *21st century* (revival or a better future), and finally *magic* (mythical beasts and enchanted artefacts) ... Over to you!

The Fisher King

The way to the Fisher King is simple enough,
No need for plane or car.
You can reach him in the quiet of your garden
Or sitting in your chair.

His kingdom lies within you,
You carry it with you wherever you go.
You may try to disown it or throw it away.
Vainly seek for its shadow in your latest X-ray.
But it's there in your heart,
And always shall be.

And he is there too,
Patient in the stable of your mind,
Cradled in the manger of your love.
He is your life.
He pulses through your senses,
Delighting in colour and the play of light.
And fishing for you constantly.
Fishing for your understanding,
Fishing for you.
Not for the one drunk on small ambitions,
But the one made in the image of God.
You know in your heart this is really your life;
The power and the glory,
The shame and the suffering,
The pity and the love.
He is fishing within you
And you can be his Bethlehem.

Forrester Roberts

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PenDragon Letters

A SCOTTISH CAMELOT?

I'd like to add to your list of possible sites for Camelot, concentrating on what is now Scotland.[1] One contender for Kelliwic may be **Kilwinning**, so named since the 6th century and an Early Christian site. On its outskirts is Montgreenan or Greenan Hill Estate. As it is situated on the Ayrshire there are wonderful views over to The Sleeping Warrior mountain range of the island of **Arran** which itself has long been suggested as Avalon, the Isle of Apples. I think the view of The Warrior is at its clearest from this particular point of the coastline.

Another Ayrshire site with a popular claim is **Culzean Castle** outside Girvan, certainly a stunning situation for a castle. Set beside it is an area called The Maidens: in Scotland often the Arthur sites are close to Maiden sites. President Eisenhower had an apartment at Culzean, making it his World War II British command centre. Quite a number of military sites in Scotland are close by or upon ancient sacred sites.

Further south on the west coast is **Caerlaverock Castle**, maybe popular because of its relative proximity to Arthuret, which battle was supposedly fought over a lark's nest. Up here though, Arthuret is pronounced differently and legend gives us Airdrie with its close neighbours Motherwell, Ladywell and Larkhall.

A rather mysterious contender is the 'palace in Pictland' that contained stones sculpted with scenes of all Arthur's battles. This was referred to in 1120 CE by Lambert de Stromer of Brittany as an aside in a letter written to an English bishop. The Pictland to which he referred probably lay in what is south-west and north-east Scotland. Personally, I lean towards one of King Macbeth's castle sites, perhaps Spynie or Dunsinane. The sculpted stones are long scattered but possibilities exist, though the dates are somewhat disputed. Modern scientific dating techniques are expensive, so too would be translating Scots Gaelic MSS: only around a third have been translated, the same with Irish MSS. Who knows how much of the history of Britain is contained in them and therefore remains unknown?

Stirling Castle rock was anciently known as Snau Dun: in its immense flat parkland lies Arthur's Table, a large platform area rather more of a 'tabled rotunda' which I understand is the literal translation of Monmouth's term. It is large enough to gather together a group of war leaders and their aides. Strategically, Stirling has always been a highly important site, known as the Brooch of Britain; whoever controlled it controlled the main inland gateway between north and south. In the 6th century it was the place where the lands of the main tribes met and consequently a battle area. Stirling rock is in the most breathtakingly beautiful location, particularly when the mountains behind it are covered in snow.

Close by are Camelon, Bannock Burn (Benoic?), Fallin Insch or Isle (pronounced by a native Gaelic speaker as Avalin) and Dunblane. Dunblane takes its name from Blane or Blaan who was the son of 6th century Aedan of Dalriada, and half-brother to Artur. Interestingly, in the north-east borders of their family's lands we [have] Badandun (Hill). *Dun* of course means fort.

The most obvious contender though is Arthur's Castle site beside **Dumbarton Rock**, the Fort of the Britons on the River Clyde. King David II referred to it as Castrum Arthuri in a MS dated 1376 CE and on old OS maps it kept that name until very recently; now it is Castle Hill. It is believed to be the castle site in Cardross Parish that Robert the Bruce occupied towards the end of his life. It's a green knoll within a rundown housing scheme, with masonry remains on the site which, amazingly, has not been excavated and appears to have lain untouched since the 13th century. Local

[1] *Pendragon XXX* No 3, *passim*

youth take their disputes up to 'the monny' for a fair go (fisticuffs)! Echoes of an old justiciary site perhaps.

I've read that Dumbarton translates in old Norman French as Astollat, or Shallot: **Ben Arthur** lies to the north-west, to the south is the old sculpted standing stone called **Arthur's Cross** at Arthurlie in Barrhead (supposedly Arthur's Boot Camp), to the east is Bearsden with its suburbs of Milngavie (Gawain's Mill), and Mugdock (Urien's son Owain's castle site) ... the list goes on.

Both Clan Arthur and Clan Campbell genealogies give common descent from the British 'King' Arthur through his son Smervie or Moroie Mor, born at the red tower at Dumbarton Rock, and his son Feradach, a prominent Churchman and signatory to Adomnan's Law of the Innocents, 696 CE. The Chief of Clan Arthur's arms are three gold antique crowns on a blue background, the Clan plant badge is wild mountain thyme, known in Scots Gaelic as the 'plant of the son of the king of the Britons'.

I do hope you find these notes interesting: I've newly taken out a subscription to *Pendragon*, so I don't know how much has been written about the Scottish story! You may also find the website **www.clannarthur.com** useful (not the American clanarthur.com which has a number of historical inaccuracies).

Eileen Buchanan

• *Arthurian Scotland has had a raw deal in recent issues, but no more! In the pipeline are articles by Eileen, by Charles Evans-Günther (on Clan Arthur) and by Professor Russell (on Macbeth).*

OXFORD ARTHURIANS

As you can tell from our revised and relocated site the Oxford Arthurian Society has not been very active in the past year, although I gather some people closer to student age than myself may be planning a revival in the next academic year. When the university closed down our e-mail account and our webspace we migrated to this server, which belongs to Russ Shannon, a former president ...

We don't have any officers as such at the moment and I haven't been in touch with Andrew Smith, whom we appointed administrator after most of us chose to retire from running the society, for some time.

I'll be speaking on the eighteenth-century King Arthur at a conference in Winchester next year – their website is www.akac.ac.uk/arthur – and some of the paper abstracts are already up. Perhaps this is something that Pendragon members might like to be directed to?

Matthew Kilburn, arthsoc@dmuss.net

• (Re) Creating Arthur *is an interdisciplinary international conference hosted by King Alfred's College, Winchester, in collaboration with the International Medieval Congress, University of Leeds and* Studies in Medievalism. *This exciting event will take place 4th–6th August 2004. More details from Dr Phil Cardew, School of Cultural Studies, King Alfred's College, Winchester SO22 4NR or Philip.Cardew@wkac.ac.uk www.dmuss.net/aforum worth investigating!*

FROM AVALON TO BABYLON

In relation to *Babylon 5* [*XXX* 3, 40], there were two episodes with strong Arthurian content that I recall:

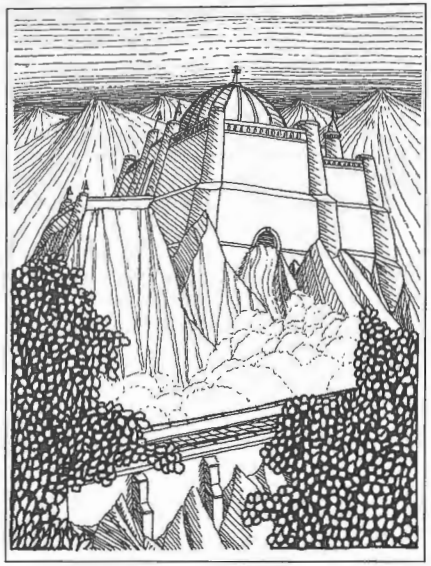
- one where someone turned up on the space station seeking information on the whereabouts of the Holy Grail (where the seeker was really hunting for this mystical artefact, but died before the end of the episode, and passed his quest on to the next seeker),
- the other where a traumatised space-fighter pilot believed he was Arthur (which would have been more interesting had it really been Arthur returning, I thought!).

Alastair McBeath via e-mail

Aspects of an Archetype

Preparing to read *Parzival*

Beryl Mercer



Leonardo Olschki made a study of Chrétien de Troyes' hero, Perceval, "who is not incorrigibly foolish but, quite simply, an innocent soul at grips with the realities of life, his own destiny, and the mystery that surrounds man ... This pure fool, without guile or experience, appears as the victim not only of his mother's well-intentioned advice, which he had not understood, but also of a blind fatality that drives him towards adventure and sin" (Olschki 1966, 6–7).

Later, Olschki declares (13–14), "The explicit Christianization of the objects borne in procession in the Fisher King's castle is to be found for the first time in the fragmentary *Roman de l'Estoire dou Graal* by Robert de Boron, who came shortly after, and was perhaps a rival of, Chrétien. Neither, however, offers the slightest indication of the function of (this) lance, or gives any clue to the understanding of the symbolic value of the scene as a whole."

In their Introduction to *The Mabinogion* Gwyn Jones and Thomas Jones write that "The connexion between the three Welsh prose romances and the *Yvain*, *Perceval* (*Conte del Graal*), and *Erec* of Chrétien de Troyes has been long and severely debated ... There seems little room for doubt ... that Chrétien's sources, little though we know of them, were derived from Welsh originals."

However, "of the relationship between the three Welsh romances and Chrétien's poems, it may be said that the romances are *not* translations of the *Yvain*, *Perceval* and *Erec*." As regards *Peredur, Son of Efrawg*, this is quite obvious; the story carries no mention of a Grail, and the blood-dripping head of a man is carried by a (male) cousin of Peredur, who tells him (Peredur) that the head belonged to another cousin.

It therefore seems likely that the 'split' between Celtic legendary and the religious versions presented by the several later mediaeval scribes began with Robert de Boron's introduction of a Holy Grail into his "explicit Christianization". But from where did he get the Grail idea? Did he find it in some earlier writing, now lost? Or was it an invention of a fertile imagination? Whatever its provenance, he could never have realized the enormous influence that would be exerted in ever-widening ripples upon the minds and hearts of humankind throughout future centuries.

Names and facets

Matthews and Green (1986, 23–25) suggest that "overall the story of Peredur is far more savage and unpredictable than that of his later aspect, Perceval, but there is no lack of subtlety about it, and beneath the surface gleams the complex and colourful world of the older Celtic heroes ..."

They remind us (71–2) that Perceval is later "ousted from the place he once held by the rise of Galahad. In all the earlier versions it is he who ... becomes the

outright Grail winner, while in the later more detailed texts he becomes largely secondary to his younger luminary."

"Yet his role," they point out, "was always subtly different to Galahad's: it was never his part ot expire in spiritual glory: rather, he takes up the burden of Grail Guardian after the healing and freeing of the Maimed King and the Waste Land. In most versions it is implicitly understood that he will return to the Grail Castle and take up his duties ..."

Matthews and Green tell us that Perceval's title is 'the Perfect Fool' and that "this links him with the Fool in the Tarot as well as with the idea of God's Holy Fools, the saints ... He is above all, the archetypal seeker, the innocent abroad in a strange land where anything may happen that only intuition will help him to understand."

So many names – Peredur, Perlesvaus, Parsifal / Parzival, Perceval – and so many personality facets – Fool, Holy Innocent, Hero, Knight, Warrior. Perhaps Matthews and Green give the most apt definition of this strange, chameleon-like character (64): "Perceval, Galahad, Gawain, Lancelot, Merlin and Bors – these are archetypes. Like the god-forms of higher mysteries, they can be worked with directly, their personalities put on and taken off like cloaks ... They are, we repeat, archetypes, not aspects of the seeker's own personality – though they may well draw on that personality to add flesh to the impalpable stuff of inner reality."

Personality

Which personality would one choose to assume? I find Peredur of *The Mabinogion* oddly appealing, being not bound by any Grail quest – even though he appears to slay hundreds of men, and falls in love with scores of women! On the other hand, of the author of *Parzival* (in which the Grail is not a Cup but a Stone), C de Hoghton states: "Wolfram is a realist with a vivid imagination, almost, you could say, a Christian humanist." (Rather a paradox, but – being a *non*-Christian Humanist myself – I find the suggestion intriguing.) "Warm human relationships and the love of man and woman join with knightly perfection and the spiritual maturity of the love of God to achieve a sane and happy balance of the claims of this world and the next."

And this is exactly the sort of presentation I would like to read. We learn that, in *Parzival*, the hero's half-brother marries the Grail Maiden, and their son is Prester John, while Parzival's own son turns out to be Lohengrin, the Swan Knight ... De Hoghton describes the work as "the monumental poem ... written between 1200 and 1212 by Wolfram ... a poor Bavarian knight of very individual outlook and mode of expression." Monumental it may be, but I'd still like to read it in English – hoping that it wouldn't take me twelve years to do so!

References

C De Hoghton "Parsifal" in *Man, Myth and Magic*

Gwyn Jones & Thomas Jones *transl* (1949) *The Mabinogion* (J M Dent, Everyman's Library, 1966 ed)

John Matthews and Marian Green (1986) *The Grail Seeker's Companion* (Aquarian Press)

Leonardo Olschki (1966) *The Grail Castle and its Mysteries* (J A Scott *transl*, Manchester University Press)

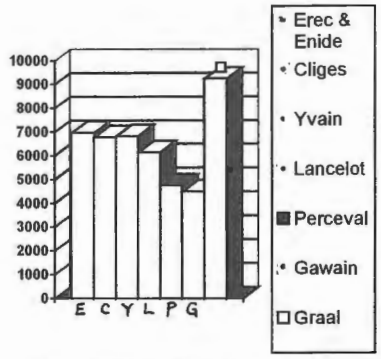
Perceval's Journey

Chris Lovegrove

Now there was a big lad that lived once-over at the top of the dale, maybe at Lunds or Fleet Moss, or again it may be Langstrothdale. However, it was a far out spot, and no wonder he grew up a yonderly lad.

(Mayne "Sir Perceval" 1970, 76–90)

There are myriads of books about the mysterious object that makes its first appearance in Chrétien's *Perceval ou Le Conte du Graal* ("Perceval, or The Tale of the Grail". Equally fascinating is the first appearance of the story's eponymous hero, Perceval, and his quest for answers to questions matches the aim of this article.



Line lengths of Chrétien's poems

Romance

Chrétien de Troyes began, but did not finish, the poem we know as the *Le Conte du Graal* in the late 12th century, and dedicated it to Count Philip of Flanders, who died in 1191. Its surviving 9234 lines already outdo his other Arthurian romances (*Eric and Enide* 6958, *Cligés* 6784, *Yvain* 6818, and *Lancelot* 6132 lines). The very plausible suggestion is that the incomplete *Conte du Graal* was cobbled together out of two separate but unfinished poems, *Perceval* and *Gawain*, with Perceval's tale suspended at line 4741 (Owen 1987, 524).

How are we to make sense of the Perceval section of *Le Conte du Graal* with its serial episodes, a feature familiar from many other medieval romances? Luckily, expert minds have already addressed this. Eugene Dorfman, for example, in 1969 looked at narrative structures in medieval literature, and identified common patterns in Chrétien's Arthurian romances. He did this by isolating what he called *narremes* (analogous to the linguistic concept of *morphemes*, the building blocks of words).

Medieval narratives were composed of a series of *incidents*, the sum total of which Dorfman called the *superstructure*. However, he considered that some incidents can be omitted as marginal to the plot, leaving some episodes – narremes – to form the *substructure*.

Narremes then are the functional units in the substructure of medieval romances and epics. Linked organically with each other, any narreme's omission destroys the storyline; each narreme is the consequence of the preceding narreme and is also the effective cause of the following narreme.

Dorfman analysed the basic structure – the main plot or substructure – of Chrétien's completed Arthurian romances into four narremes, which formed what he called the *Romance Plot-Type*:

1. A lovers' quarrel (sometimes involving a pair of lovers, sometimes a love triangle)
2. An insult.
3. Acts of prowess.
4. Reward.

Dorfman's narremic main plot could be and would be expanded by the addition of prologues and epilogues, themselves made up of narreme-like episodes such as insults, quests, tests and rewards.

How does this work with the Perceval section of *Le Conte du Graal*? Sadly, Dorfman declined to analyse this on the grounds that Chrétien's last romance was not completed, but with a little critical judgement we can still use his template to outline Perceval's story. It is a complex exercise which assumes at least some slight familiarity with the story, and not a little patience and perseverance!

Narremic structure of *Perceval*

Prologue

a. *Insult.* Arthur's knights initially make fun of a simpleton in the woods.

b. *Quest.* This simple son of the widowed lady searches for King Arthur's court so as to be made a knight there.

c. *Test.* This uncouth widow's son mishandles his first encounter with the lover of a Proud Knight, a damsel in the tent.

d. *Reward.* He steals a ring and kisses from the damsel, and consumes food and drink.

Main Plot

1. *Quarrel/Conflict.* This situation conforms to Dorfman's narreme type R2a, the Courtly Lovers' Triangle, between Perceval, the Red Knight and Arthur's unnamed queen, here probably representing Sovereignty. (Perceval's rival for Sovereignty is the Red Knight, not Arthur, as the latter treats the youth as a son, not as a potential rival.)

2. *Insult.* The Red Knight steals the queen's cup and spills wine over her. King Arthur is silent, and his knights inactive. Compare the medieval Welsh *Laws of the Court*: "In three ways is [insult] done to the Queen. One is to break her protection. Another is to strike a blow upon her. A third is to snatch something from her hand" (Cichon 2000, 30. See also Matthews 1989, 197ff).

3. *Acts of prowess.*

i. The widow's son defeats the Red Knight and takes his armour, sending the cup back to court. He is then made a knight, not by Arthur but by the nobleman Gorneman.

ii. The new knight defeats Clamadeus and his seneschal who are besieging a lady Blancheflor at the castle of Beaurepaire.

4. *Reward.* The knight wins Blancheflor, sovereign lady of the castle of Beaurepaire.

Epilogue

e. *Quest.* The youth leaves Blancheflor to look for his mother.

f. *Test.* A ritualised test at the house of the Fisher King, with the unasked questions.

g. *Reward.* Sword given by the Fisher King.

h. *Acts of Prowess.* These follow the knight's failure to ask questions at Fisher King's house and his abandoning of his mother – and after divining his name.

i. Defeat of the Proud Knight for killing and beheading Perceval's cousin's lover and mistreating the damsel in the tent.

ii. Defeat of Sagremor and Kay during Perceval's reverie over remembrance of Blancheflor (blood-on-the-snow episode recalling *Snow White*).

j. *Reward.* Recognition of Perceval's prowess by Arthur at Caerleon.

The last two episodes are not in the incomplete poem but are surmised:

[k. *Final test.* After further upbraiding by Loathly Damsel Perceval achieves his quest at the house of the Fisher King.

l. *Final reward(s).*

i. Recognition of paternity.

ii. Marriage to Blancheflor.]

Dorfman's *schema* has at its core four narremes (quarrel, insult, acts, reward) which, in concert, produce the classic one-two of all narrative arts (music, drama, dance and story-telling): tension followed by release; or conflict followed by resolution. What was new was Dorfman's claim that 12th-century Arthurian romances followed this core system, preceded by a scene-setting prologue and followed by an epilogue tying up loose ends into a more harmonious whole.

But, to continue the musical analogy, identifying the four movements of a symphony doesn't necessarily help with appreciating their constituent themes – notice for example how little significance is given to the *graal* in this analysis. Alternative analyses might yield more understanding of the plot and the parts played the characters.

Magical plots

Anne Wilson began her 1988 study of Arthurian romance by asking why it was that so many medieval romances show *moral ambiguities*. In *Perceval* we can see this when the hero follows his mother's or a nobleman's advice, only to find that he has transgressed somebody else's rules. Wilson's answer was that "this kind of moral contradiction is found in works where the author is making use of a plot of traditional origin," where a character's behaviour is often inconsistent with their behaviour

elsewhere and so fits badly with their characterisation by the author.

Wilson's solution is that a traditional plot is often a *magical* plot, consisting of a series of mental rituals. These mental rituals allow participants (the audience, readers *etc*) to
1. bring about desires or wishes (such as the attainment of kingdoms); and
2. dispel fear or guilt.
She further proposes that in magical plots
3. 'inexplicable' or irrational decisions by characters are magical; and
4. the participating hero/ine uses all characters as figures in their mental rituals.

Having dealt with character 'motivation' with this attractive hypothesis, she then delineates what she calls *moves*. Wilson's 'moves'
1. are steps in the magical plot structure;
2. are related very closely to each other;
3. use 'repeat' characters;
4. are related to form rather than meaning;
5. are concerned with how details are related to each other;
6. are similar to dream/reverie material; and
7. successfully remove guilt feelings (through punishment, penance or exorcism).

In the Perceval section of *Le Conte du Graal*, Wilson identifies nine or ten 'moves' – each given their own section in Bryant's (1982) translation – individually designed to deal ritually with the hero's (*ie* the participant's) worries and concerns. In each move we find *advice*, *praise* or *prophecies* included as well as acts or deeds. Now, the virtue of Wilson's analysis is that is gives each episode or move equal weighting.

The Magical Plot of *Perceval*

1. *The Wild Forest*

It is spring. A simpleton, called only Dear Son by his mother, decides after meeting some of King Arthur's knights for the first time to become one of them. When she can't dissuade him (his brothers were killed, his father wounded through the thigh and his lands devastated, all because of the allure of knighthood), his mother gives him *advice* on relationships with women, men and God. When he leaves, ill-prepared, she collapses in a dead faint.

2. *The Proud Knight's Lover's Tent*

The gauche young man steals kisses, ring, food and drink from a damsel in a tent. She *predicts* that she will suffer as a result of his outrage, and when her lover returns he promises to punish her for alleged unfaithfulness until he gets his revenge on the young man.

3. *King Arthur's Castle, Cardoeil (Carlisle)*

Following directions given by a charcoal-burner, the young man arrives at Arthur's Castle just as the Red Knight is leaving, and covets his crimson armour. The Red Knight has taken a cup from the Queen, spilling wine on her. According to Arthur, this Red Knight is his "greatest enemy" and has "contested my land"; he is so distracted that it is not until the young man accidentally knocks the king's hat off that Arthur awakes from his thoughts. A *prophecy* concerning a serving-maid laughing only when she sees the "greatest of all knights" is fulfilled. Kay treats her badly, though. The young man kills the Red Knight, sends the cup back to the king and, with the help of a squire, Yvonnet, dons the Red Knight's armour.

4. *The sea. Gorneman de Gorhaut's castle*

A nobleman trains and knights the boy, giving him *advice* and equipping him with new clothes and a sword. The new knight is anxious now to find his mother, and starts to show empathy with her plight.

5. *Beaurepaire, the castle of Blancheflor*

The new knight defends the castle of Beaurepaire against first the army of Engygeron, then of his master Clamadeus, and sends them to the serving-maid at the court of King Arthur, now at Dinasdaron (Dinas Bran?) in Wales. Here, Clamadeus *praises* the new knight as "the most valiant knight" known. The knight has gained the sovereignty of the castle of Beaurepaire, and the love of its ruler Blancheflor, but he is anxious to find his mother and bring her to Beaurepaire before he becomes lord of its lands.

6. *The house of the Fisher King*

Having reached an unfordable river, the knight is directed to a rich fisherman's dwelling. Here he is presented with a sword but seems unsurprised when he is told it was destined for him. Then he witnesses a procession with lance, candlesticks, *graal* and platter. He fails to ask any questions, however, and in the morning, too late, finds no-one around to give answers.

7. *The Forest*

The knight comes across a damsel in the nearby forest, mourning the death of her lover, whose decapitated body she holds beneath a tree. In this 'move', the knight discovers that the damsel's lover was beheaded by the Proud Knight, then divines his own name to be Perceval, and is upbraided for not asking questions at the house of the Fisher King. In addition, he is given *advice* on the sword he has just received and news on the death of his mother.

Wilson suggests that from now on Perceval is occupied with removing the guilt associated with his earlier actions.

8. *Elsewhere in the Forest*

Perceval comes across the wretched lover of the Proud Knight who has treated her badly for her alleged unfaithfulness with Perceval. The Proud Knight is defeated, and the two are sent to King Arthur at Caerleon with the promise that the serving-maid treated badly by Kay will be avenged by Perceval. Arthur *praises* the Red Knight, as Perceval is still known, and resolves to set out to find him – and the court follows.

9. *Near Carlion (Caerleon)*

Perceval, the Red Knight, has gone into a reverie at the sight of blood on freshly-fallen snow, which reminds him of Blancheflor ("White Flower"). First Sagremor and then Kay depart from Arthur's camp to interrogate the meditative knight; when they rudely interrupt him, both are badly discomforted, and Perceval's promise to the serving-maid is tacitly fulfilled. The courteous Gawain persuades the Red Knight, after he has doffed his armour, to meet Arthur. He introduces himself as Perceval the Welshman, and Arthur declares the *prophecies* fulfilled.

10. *Caerleon*

Back at court, a Loathly Damsel arrives on the third day of celebrations to *advise* Perceval of unfinished business at the house of the Fisher King. At this point the story of Perceval stops and Chrétien (or one of his continuators) breaks off to follow the adventures of Gawain. There is little doubt that there would have been at least two more moves, along the following lines.

[11. *House of the Fisher King*

Perceval may have eventually found his way back to the Fisher King's dwelling and asked the two crucial questions, *Why does the lance bleed?* and *Whom does the* graal *serve?* The answers would have lead to the healing of the Fisher King's wounds and the restoration of his land, plus insight into paternity and sovereignty.

12. *Perceval's castle*

The final move may well have lead Perceval to Beaurepaire to marry Blancheflor and on to Perceval's ancestral lands (wherever they were) to take up his kingship. The *graal* may well have been used at their nuptuals.]

In this analysis of the plot, the *graal* does have a "magical" significance (using Wilson's definition). It is clearly a receptacle of some kind, though whether chalice, ciborium or dish is unclear (we're later told it contains a communion host or wafer, not the usual content of a chalice). It is as a means of both individual nourishment and hospitality that the *graal* has significance. When offered as a drink by the master of a house to a guest the cup symbolised his power. Naturally, when Perceval regained the cup stolen by the Red Knight he thus restored the symbol of both Arthur's authority and his sovereignty (Matthews 1989, especially chapter 7).

Wilson's suggestions, that the progression of moves seeks to resolve the conflict between desire and guilt, and that advice, praise and prophecies are used as 'magic' words, seem quite persuasive in this analysis. There is certainly a growing maturity outlined in the young man's rites-of-passage. For example, Perceval starts as a doublet of the Red Knight – he is rude, makes demands, is careless in his actions, and then *becomes* the Red Knight. By the end he is able to show empathy with the plight of others by, for example, asking pertinent, if ritualised, questions that will allow a king's health and lands to be restored.

Wilson also argues that each move is primarily concerned with parent figures, either a 'queen' or a king, and we can speculate further on this. Perceval was told

that his father was wounded through the thigh and his lands laid waste and lost. Although his father then supposedly dies, it is noteworthy that Perceval meets up with a bed-ridden nobleman, the Fisher King, wounded in the same way and whose lands were lost. We might recall, too, that Perceval is the third son of his father when we hear that the sword given to him by the Fisher King was the last of three. Is the Fisher King's life merely a parallel to Perceval's father's, or are we to assume the two are really one and the same? In either case, the roles of Arthur and of Gorneman are certainly those of father-figures.

However, many of the female characters' roles – Perceval's cousin, Blancheflor, the Loathly Damsel, the serving-maid, Arthur's queen – are less obviously uniformly those of mothers, more Jungian *anima*-figures. How then can these be accounted for?

Fairytale

Robert Darnton in 1984 suggested that "Despite the obscurity surrounding the origins of chivalric romances, *chansons de geste*, and *fabliaux*, it seems that a good deal of medieval literature drew on popular oral tradition, rather than vice versa," (in Tatar *ed* 1999, 286). If the plot of *Perceval* was indeed drawn largely from popular tradition – which Wilson's analysis makes most likely – it may be that specialist folklore theories can make more sense of the relatively large cast of characters – male and female – in *Perceval*.

It is certainly possible to take the Perceval stories apart and look at them from a folk narrative point of view. Rather than just recasting them as a folktale (which William Mayne did quite effectively in 1970) we can examine individual motifs that occur in them and relate these to an index of *motifs*. Stith Thompson labelled motifs according to their main subject matter, and many of *Perceval*'s motifs – some specific to the Holy Grail stories – are found in his 1958 Motif-Index. (Yet another way of examining the Perceval tales is by assigning sections of them to one or another Tale Type – defined by the series of episodes that constitute the *full version of the tale* – though *Perceval*, not being a folktale, is not of course represented.)

Typical *Perceval* folktale motifs

1. mythological hero (A500–A599);
2. taboo (*C651 "Percival must ask meaning of stange sights");
3. magic (D1171.6 "the Holy Grail");
4. the dead (E64.5.1 "Resuscitation by Holy Grail");
5. marvels (F991.1 "Bleeding lance flows into cup");
6. tests (H1228 "Quest for vengeance");
7. fools (J1730.1 "Ignorance of his own name");
8. deceptions (K2265 "Treacherous red knight");

and so on.

One can argue that this is like focusing on individual pieces in a jigsaw puzzle while missing the bigger picture – what has been called an "atomising" process (Alan Dundes, cited in Davidson 1978, 30). A different structural approach, which helps the viewer see the whole wood and not just the trees, was initiated by Vladimir Propp in his *Morphology of the Folktale* (Propp 1968; Tatar *ed* 1999). He proposed that fairy tales be studied according to the actions or deeds (*functions*) of its characters. He outlined this by reference to four principles:

1. The functions of characters serve as stable, constant elements in a tale, independent of how and by whom they are fulfilled. They constitute the fundamental components of a tale.

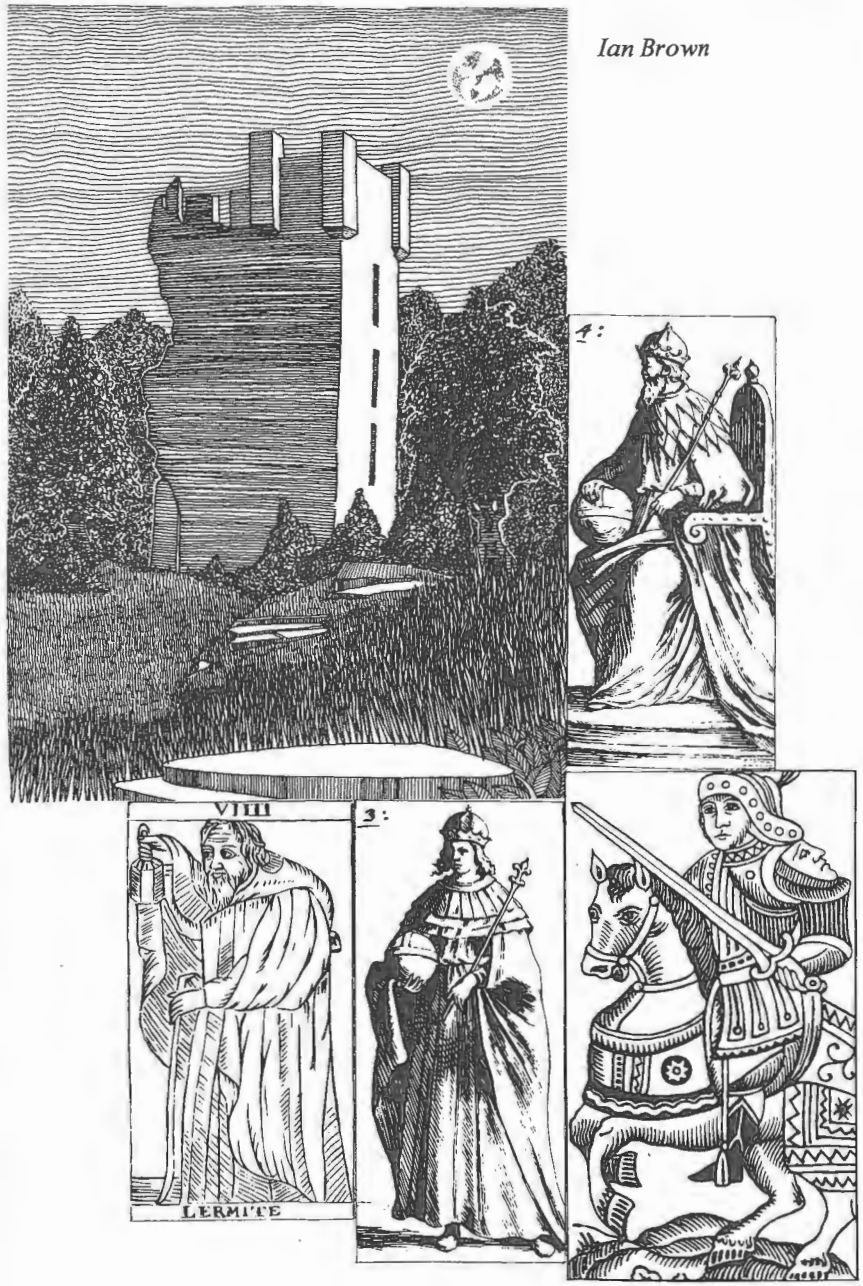
2. The number of functions known to the fairy tale is limited [to thirty-one].

3. The sequence of functions is always identical.

4. All fairy tales are of one type in regard to their structure.

Propp based his approach on analysis of one hundred Russian fairy tales, but the literary *Perceval* can be seen to fit in with this approach without too much difficulty. To begin, Propp's list of seven archetypal characters fit a number of the *dramatis personae* – male and female – of *Perceval*.

Ian Brown



Propp's *Dramatis Personae*

1. Villain (Proud Knight, Red Knight, Engygeron, Clamadeus).
2. Donor/provider (Mother – ring, Arthur – red armour, Proud Knight's Lover – kisses, Gorneman – sword, Fisher-King – sword).
3. Helper (Serving-maid, Yvonnet the squire, Charcoal-burner, Cousin).
4. Princess or sought-for person (Blancheflor) and her father (?).
5. Dispatcher (Loathly Damsel?)
6. Hero (Perceval)
7. False hero (Kay)

Propp defined a *function* as "an act of a character, defined from the point of view of its significance for the course of action." Not all 31 functions will necessarily be found in a tale, but those that do will stay in the given sequence. Here are the functions that seem to apply to *Perceval*:

***Perceval* according to Propp's functions**

1. *Absention.* Perceval's father absents himself from home (Perceval grows up without a father).
2. *Interdiction.* Unknown to him, Perceval is forbidden contact with the world of knights.
3. *Violation.* The interdiction is violated when Perceval resolves to be made a knight by Arthur like the ones he meets.
9. *Connective incident.* Perceval's mother tells him about their family's misfortune and loss of lands, and regretfully lets him leave.
11. *Departure.* Perceval leaves home.
12. *Donor's first function.* Perceval is given permission by Arthur to retrieve the cup and take the Red Knight's armour.
13. *Hero's reaction.* Perceval is taunted by the Red Knight and subsequently kills him.
14. *Receipt of magical agent.* Perceval retrieves Arthur's cup and dons the Red Knight's armour, which leads to him being made a knight by Gorneman.
15. *Spatial transference.* Perceval finds himself relocated to the Fisher King's domain, the Otherworld.
16. *Struggle.* Perceval joins in combat with Clamadeus and his seneschal in defence of Blanchefort.
18. *Victory.* The villains are defeated and Blancheflor's sovereignty restored.
19. *Liquidation.* The initial misfortune or lack is liquidated. Is this where the return visit to the Fisher King's house originally was placed in the sequence of episodes, where Perceval cleared up the mystery of his father's illness and the inheritance of his kingdom?
20. *Return.* The hero returns from the Otherworld (the Fisher King's house, and Beaurepaire).
23. *Unrecognised arrival.* Perceval, unrecognised even in his red armour, ends up outside Arthur's camp.
24. *Unfounded claims.* Sagremor and Kay both insult the pensive Perceval.
25. *Difficult task.* Perceval is challenged by both Sagremor and Kay.
26. *Solution.* Perceval defeats both Sagremor and Kay, repaying Kay's earlier insults and assaults on the laughing serving-maid, and fulfilling the prophecy about him being the greatest knight.
27. *Recognition.* Perceval is recognised by Gawain and then the whole court as the knight sought for by Arthur.
29. *Transfiguration.* Perceval is no longer the simpleton or Red Knight but Perceval the Welshman, who given three whole days of celebration at Caerleon.

[31. *Wedding.* Perceval eventually marries Blancheflor and ascends the throne.]

Now, while this convoluted analysis makes use of twenty of Propp's thirty-one fairy tale functions, the fit is much more artificial, and, in keeping to Propp's strict rule of sequence, much of the action which seemed to have significance in the other analyses has had to be omitted. This may be due in great part to a literary adaptation of a fairy tale – or, more likely, to an inadequate analysis (a more successful Proppian analysis, of *The Knight of the Cart*, occurs in Furtado and Veloso 1996). It also throws up the intriguing idea that Perceval's second visit to the Fisher King's house might, in a folk narrative context, be placed earlier than we might expect.

Myth

In her 1974 essay "Folklore and Literature", Hilda Ellis Davidson commented that Propp's "key will not unlock every door, but it is significant to note that [Propp's analysis] led to a conclusion resembling that of Tolkien: namely that a fairy story, in its

morphological bases, amounts to a myth" (Davidson 1978). She continues, "This may help us towards a better understanding of the persistent life of certain folktales, and exactly why it is that their plots prove suitable for serious works of literature and have so long a life, reappearing in many different social settings and in varying representations."

In its essence the story of Perceval is what Joseph Campbell termed a *monomyth*, the mythological adventure of the hero, the formula of which – separation, initiation, return – was represented in various rites of passage (Campbell 1949). In outline the monomyth told this story:

A hero ventures forth from the world of common day into a region of supernatural wonder: fabulous forces are there encountered and a decisive victory is won: the hero comes back from this mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons on his fellow man.

If our journey has reached any conclusions at all, they might be these. The story of Perceval fits the formula of the monomyth of Everyman, Campbell's Hero with a Thousand Faces who takes part in a Jungian process of individuation (Jung 1964, *esp* Part 3). His particular identity and exploits seem to have taken form in fairy tales (perhaps as Peredur in Wales, or Peronnik in Brittany) before being re-cast in literary form by a French poet in the 12th century (Loomis 1963). At this point, the unfinished tale, with its mysterious loose ends, attracted fresh creative attention.

And the rest is, as they say, history.

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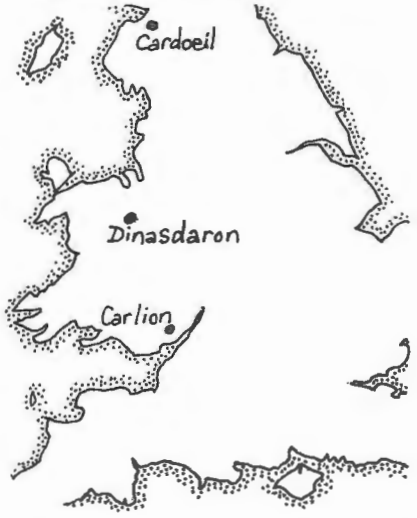


Arthur's court progressed from ***Cardoeil*** *"by the sea" (Carlisle) to Disnadaron or* ***Dinasdaron*** *"in Wales" (probably Dinas Bran) and then to* ***Carlion*** *(Caerleon).*

The Cup and everything that followed

A true Avalon saga (1)

Steve Sneyd

In *The Avalonians*[1] Patrick Benham, long a resident of the Glastonbury area, teases out an intricate sequence of intriguing people and events across a century of connections with Glastonbury. From the 1870s to the 1970s, those concerned – who came to be known as the Avalonians, though they were too disparate and individual to ever be anything as organised as a formal group – did much to create the aura of mystical revival which persists and continues to reinforce the small Somerset town's identification in many minds with Arthurian story's blessed island of undying healing, Avalon.

One of Benham's gifts as chronicler of these episodes is his ability to treat the people involved with respect as human beings: without ignoring their foibles and eccentricities or going overboard in endorsing their belief systems, he forebears from portraying them as mere cranks, one-dimensional eccentrics defined only by their oddities. He also succeeds in drawing from what is clearly a forest of thoroughly researched information an account which is coherent, cogent, enjoyable to read and easy to follow, even when, inevitably, it has on occasion to involve "backstory" or ostensible digression.

Précis the 273 pages of his story of the events and people who created an unbroken, if often nearly severed, thread of connection from late Victorian times to present day Glastonbury-cum-Avalon, and you strip out much of the rich detail of inter-personal interaction which provides so much of its fascination – eat your hearts out, TV soap operas! Nevertheless, I hope this attempt at summary is worthwhile, if only to encourage those who read my reductionist version to seek out the book and discover the full tapestry of a true – yet often "stranger than fiction" – narrative, one that, across the years, interlaces its participants like some intricate Celtic design.

[1] Patrick Benham (1993) *The Avalonians* (Gothic Image Publications, Glastonbury)

The Cup

We begin in 1873, when newly-qualified doctor John Arthur Goodchild decided that treating the ailments of wealthy expatriates wintering by the Mediterranean would give him the time and income to pursue his antiquarian interests.

During winter 1885, in the Italian coastal town of Bordighera, he purchased from their discoverer, a local tailor, two curious glass vessels, a shallow bowl and a platter. Found bricked up in the walls of an old building, they contained within the glass curious metallic patterns, that of the bowl being silver, in floral or leaflike shapes. These, on his summer return to Britain, he locked away safely in his father's house.

Twelve years later, having turned author to convey his developing historico-mystical ideas, he embarked on a major opus, *The Light of the West*. In this, Goodchild expressed his belief that the cult of the sacred High Queen of Ireland, Bride, anticipated Christianity, and that the island's early Celtic Church conjoined her teaching as to the importance of the female element with Christian worship, until the Roman Church intervened; now was the time for Bride, as Foster-Mother of the Christ Child and Man, to regain her place in Western thought.

His book finally completed, Goodchild set off for the winter in Italy. Breaking his journey at Paris, at the Hotel St Petersbourg there he received an apparent revelation, a disembodied voice telling him that his bowl – the voice described it as a cup – had once been carried by Jesus. Soon, this must be revealed to the world, to influence the coming century's thought. The voice told Goodchild that soon it would be his task to

take the cup to Bride's Hill, in the part of Glastonbury known as the Women's Quarter. "Later, a young girl will make a pure offering of herself at the spot where you lay down the cup, and this shall be a sign unto you." A few weeks later, Goodchild heard of his father's death; during the spring of 1898, the cup and platter by now with him in Italy, he gave the latter privately to a member of the Garibaldi family. In August, when he could return to Britain, he went to Glastonbury, and waited there for further "instructions".

Early on a September morning, the unseen voice spoke to him again: he was to go to Bride's Well and lodge the cup securely there. He obeyed, hiding it beneath an underwater stone.

In 1899, back in Italy, Goodchild convinced himself that, in the church of St Pudenziana in Rome, dedicated to a martyred daughter of a Roman senator, Pudens (who had sheltered the early apostles), he had found evidence – a mosaic depiction – that Pudens' wife Claudia was regarded as the Bride of Christ and Mother of the Church in the city, prior even to SS Peter and Paul. Claudia was, he believed, the daughter of the captive British leader Caractacus. Here, he thought, was his link to the matriarchal religious centre or "women's seminary" he hypothesised had existed at Beckery near Glastonbury – location, he was sure, of the very first Christian church in Britain, established by the earliest missionaries in AD 38: she had become a Christian there, and then brought the faith to Rome. (He later believed that Claudia was also the source of the earliest Church hymns at Glastonbury, having sent them to Britain along with the works of her friend, the poet Martial.)

He began corresponding about such ideas with the Celtic Revival writer Fiona MacLeod, unaware that "she" was in fact the pen name / *alter ego* of a Scots male writer already known to him: William Sharp. Sharp, not long before his death, in 1904, accompanied Goodchild to Glastonbury and, in the Abbey ruins, spontaneously wrote an enigmatic three-line verse which, by including the word *joy*, reinforced Goodchild's belief that the cup was indeed one of potential joy and great significance.

Bride's Well shared the old custom found at many wells of having the branches of the nearest tree – in this case a thorn – bedecked with scraps of ribbon, paper *etc*, expressing wishes for healing or luck. Two years later, on his annual pilgrimage to Glastonbury, Goodchild found among them one bearing a name he knew, that of Katherine (Kitty) Tudor Pole, sister of his Bristol acquaintance Wellesley Tudor Pole. He located where she was staying, and on August 6 visited the young woman, and gave her a copy of Sharp's mysterious poem.

In late September, while still in Glastonbury, Goodchild was visited in his hotel by two other young women, sisters Janet and Christine Allen, also friends of the Tudor Poles. They told Goodchild that, following a "psychic intimation" from Wellesley, they had searched in Bride's Well, and found the cup. They had returned it to the well, and now Wellesley had told them to ask Goodchild if he knew anything of what it meant. He told them, and later the Poles, of how and where he had obtained it, and spoke of his belief in a Jesus connection, although not of his visions. After much discussion, on October 2, 1906 Kitty Pole returned alone to the well, removed the cup, and took it home to Bristol.

Oratory

There, at 16 Royal Crescent, it was given a place of honour in an upstairs room. Calling this an oratory, the three young women, as "maiden pilgrims" *cum* guardians of the cup, began holding what in essence were feminised "communion services", the Bride "church" with young female celebrants Goodchild had sought.

Whereas he had carefully described it as the "Jesus cup", the female "triad" started to hint that this was indeed the Holy Grail. During 1907 various academics, consulted about the cup's origin, gave contradictory answers, ranging from ancient Phoenicia to modern times. However, a senior churchman, Archdeacon Basil Wilberforce, deeply impressed, arranged for the cup to

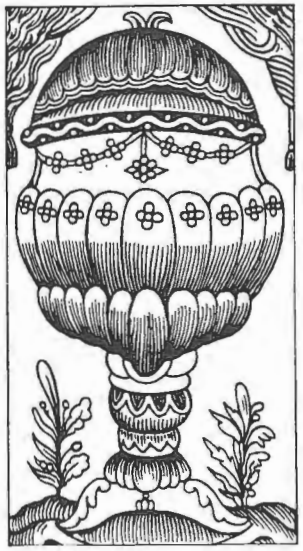
be seen by over forty public figures, including Mark Twain, then visiting London – normally sceptical, the author was convinced he had seen the Grail – the American Ambassador, and writer and educationalist Alice Buckton. News leaked, and was splashed on July 26 by *The Daily Express*.

This press furore caused Wilberforce to begin distancing himself from the matter, and the three guardians to thereafter describe the Grail link as purely symbolic, while Goodchild himself wrote to the *Express* to clarify his view: the oratory rituals were intended to reawaken the slumbering mysteries of the Celtic West, a process begun by placing the Cup of Christ in the sacred well near Bride's Hill, "the site of an ancient shrine dedicated to the cult High Queen of Ireland".

Mediums and psychics like Annie Besant reported visions connected with the cup, while throngs of the curious, as well as spiritual seekers – among the latter Alice Buckton, who met Goodchild at this time – turned up at the Bristol oratory. The difficulties caused by the visitor influx meant that by 1910 the oratory's public work had to be ended, although occasional meetings were still held, and the cup could still be seen by appointment until June 1913 when Kitty Pole removed it to Letchworth, the Garden City to which she had moved with her parents and sisters.

Her brother Wellesley in turn became its guardian after World War I, keeping it in a tiny attic sanctuary in his London home except when, between the world wars, it was taken to various St Michael centres in the UK and abroad (the church on Glastonbury Tor having been dedicated, as with so many high-placed shrines, to this saint). Then, in 1965, three years before his death, Wellesley, having had a vision of the "three maidens" saying "... our mission still remains to be completed", handed the cup over to the Chalice Well Trust he had established – it can still be seen by arrangement, at the Trust's discretion.

To be concluded



Keeper of the Grail

The Evolution of the Chalice Well

Simon Rouse

The Chalice Well at Glastonbury is a pilgrimage centre that holds a special place in many people's hearts the world over. It has been regarded as an area of particularly sacred space since pre-Christian times, spanning at least three ages: Aries, Pisces and Aquarius. The importance of water as the source of life is fundamental knowledge for all living things and as a natural spring it would have been held in high regard by the original indigenous population, by the succeeding Celtic tribes and the Druid community on the Isle of Avalon.

Legends

One of the local foundation legends surrounding Glastonbury concerns Joseph of Arimathea's numerous visits to the West Country in the pursuance of his business interests in the tin trade. The legend attests to him bringing with him his nephew, Jesus, on one or more of these journeys, to be schooled by the Druids at Avalon. As a regular visitor to these shores Joseph would have been aware of the sanctity of the Isle of Avalon and the repository of knowledge that was held there. How much Druidic knowledge was imparted to Jesus is a matter of conjecture, but it is possible, maybe even probable, that Jesus himself was shown the spring and learnt of its special qualities. Regardless of whether we follow the Christian faith or not, it is certainly a humbling thought that when we visit Chalice Well today, we may literally be standing where Jesus, too, during His 'hidden years' before He took up His ministry, may have paused to look around, reflect and gain a clearer vision of his future path.

Of course, the vale of Avalon would have looked markedly different to the expanding mass of urbanisation that is Glastonbury today. In the Chalice Well Garden there are yew trees, remnants or descendants of an avenue of trees that once flanked the little stream flowing down between the Tor and Chalice Hill. The excavated stumps of other yews that grew here have been dated to *c* 500 BC, suggesting that the Celtic peoples of the area did indeed regard the waters as sacred, landscaping a yew grove to honour the healing spring and the Mother Goddess.

The most famous legend, though, is the return to Glastonbury of Joseph, with twelve disciples of his own, in custody of the Holy Grail, the cup used at the Last Supper. After founding the first Christian church in Britain, Joseph is reputed to have buried the Grail at Chalice Well, although no physical vessel has been discovered there as yet. A bowl of some antiquity was discovered locally in the years between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, but, alas, it was not the Grail. Some believe that the Grail was secretly guarded until the Dissolution of the monasteries, when it was safely removed and quietly relocated to a number of 'safe-houses', among them the Cistercian abbey of Strata Florida, until it reached its final resting place deep inside Wales. The search for the Grail goes on and although the Chalice Well is no longer the keeper of the physical Grail, it remains the spiritual home of the metaphysical Grail.

Two cruets were also brought by Joseph, separately filled with the blood and sweat of Christ, taken from His wounds whilst on the Cross. These, too, were buried at Glastonbury. Legend asserts that they were buried with Joseph within the Old Church he founded, but could they have been buried in a separate location, one at Chalice Well and the other nearby at another spring? The names of both springs give an indication as to which may have been buried where, Chalice Well being known as the blood spring while the other, across what is now Chilkwell Street, is known as the white spring. Now covered by the reservoir building, the white spring was once a little combe and, although not as famous as its neighbouring sister waters, may too have been held in high regard as a natural source of water. Why the white spring was overshadowed by its neighbour is an intriguing question. Does the hiding of the Grail indeed have a basis in truth?

The descriptive names of blood spring and white spring may go back to antiquity, but the properties of the waters at each also explain how they attracted their epithets. The waters at Chalice Well are rich in iron and, over time, leave a red deposit on everything they touch. If you have ever filled a bottle with Chalice Well water and left it for a month or two, the bottom third of the bottle will become stained an orangey-red colour. The source of this water is undetermined – it may originate from the Mendips, or even Wales, a lengthy underground journey. The other spring's waters, with its possible source deep under the Tor, leave limestone deposits, hence its white spring name. On a symbolic note, the blood red waters of Chalice Well may also represent the feminine principle in a Goddess-centred religion or matriarchal society such as the Celts are believed to have had. The analogy of menstrual blood flowing from the womb-like Chalice Hill in a feminine aspected landscape would not be lost on the awareness of our more naturally attuned ancestors.

In the middle of the 2nd century AD, King Lucius sent to Rome for missionaries to come to Britain to convert the populace to Christianity. Geoffrey of Monmouth names the missionaries as Faganus and Duvianus and tells of their success, baptising Lucius and his followers, by a Somerset tradition in the waters of Chalice Well. When Faganus and Duvianus arrived at Glastonbury, they found the huts of the original twelve anchorites of Joseph of Arimathea situated around Chalice Well, at the foot of the Tor. The accepted site of Joseph's ancient wattle building, extinguished in the Abbey fire of 1184, was by tradition on the same site as St Mary's church in the Abbey grounds. Did Joseph build his first church at the waters that held the Grail and later removed to a second location, building a second church, within the precincts of what became the Abbey? Was he trying to safeguard the resting place of the Holy Chalice by diverting attention away from the site of its burial?

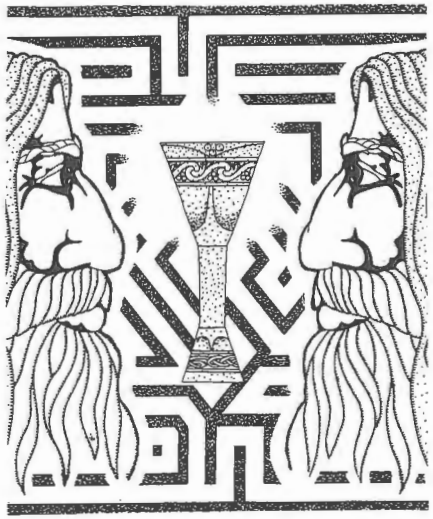
We can see that Chalice Well has been a place of pilgrimage and devotion since time immemorial. Excavations in 1960 indicated prehistoric and Roman occupation. People have been coming to its healing waters seeking cures for all kinds of ailments for hundreds of years. It was in the custody of Glastonbury Abbey for much of this time and was certainly looked after in its own way. Offerings from pilgrims to the well would have brought some income to the Abbey, but the monks had bigger and better relics to care for which generated a larger income. Possibly not as much attention would have been placed on the well as by the pre-Christian inhabitants of Avalon.

Recent history

After the Dissolution, the Abbey was robbed of much of its stone, to be used locally for new buildings, and the well was unregarded, although not forgotten, for a period of time. There was on old inn at the foot of the Tor called 'The Anchor'. It may have been named after the anchorites at the little monastery on the site there or an allusion to the time when the Somerset levels were a network of waterways and lagoons broken up by islands of higher ground, and Glastonbury had harbours. The history of the well goes quiet until in the middle of the 19th century, a gentleman by the name of Matthew Chancellor had a dream about the Chalice Well's healing properties, so he took himself off to the well to drink. Sure enough, he was cured of his ailment, the inn was purchased along with the strip of land that enclosed the well-head, this by persons unknown, and, with a subsequent 'cure-all' plan in place, a bath house was erected. For a while, Glastonbury became a spa town. Unfortunately this wasn't sustained, partly due to the coldness of the waters for bathers and, with the subsequent death of a hopeful pilgrim who drank too much of them, the spa boom faded.

The Abbey had passed through many hands during the centuries following the Dissolution until, early in the twentieth century, its remains, grounds and the Chalice Well came up for auction. In 1913 the well was successfully bought by Miss Alice Buckton, author of *Eagerheart*. The small monastic remains on the site became a guest house for new pilgrims and a

thriving artistic community was born. Music, plays, readings and lectures were held there, followed by the arrival of various craft workers. The beautiful lid that covers the well, based on the *vesica piscis* design bisected by a symbolic spear, originated from this period and was designed by Frederick Bligh Bond, himself no stranger to Glastonbury, in 1919.



Miss Buckton continued to keep the spirit of Chalice Well alive during the ensuing years, until her death in 1944. It is said that the well has never dried up and during the droughts of 1921 and 1922 the town was saved through her good offices, allowing the townsfolk all the water they required. Her hopes and wishes to keep the well available for all to use as a place of healing led to the foundation of The Chalice Well Trust, which continued the guardianship until, in 1949, it was unfortunately forced to sell the well. In 1959, after re-purchasing the well and gardens, The Trust was reinstated by Wellesley Tudor Pole. The house was renovated, the garden developed and lectures were again held there. The Chalice Well Trust remains the custodian of the well today and, over the succeeding years, the gardens have been lovingly cared for and expanded even more. The continuing inspired hard work transforming it to become a place of particular peace and tranquillity, ideal for moments of quiet contemplation and meditation in the calming and uplifting surroundings of a very beautiful piece of Avalon. It continues to be an oasis of calm in the bustle and sensory overload of modern Glastonbury.

Garden

We have been visiting Chalice Well since the mid-1980s and we return at least once each year, often more when circumstances allow. We have seen the garden grow and change over the years and on our last visit, at the time of writing, 2002, the garden had never looked better. It is now commonly known that all living things vibrate at their own varying frequencies and, on that visit, the garden seemed very alive. Its presence and natural energy levels were at a noticeably high level. I feel sure that this is the combined result of years of spiritual energy brought by visitors to Chalice Well and the inherent energy within the garden itself. Dorothy MacLean's pioneering work with plant devas at Findhorn in the early 1960s has surely provided the blueprint for the jubilant expression of co-operation between our two kingdoms that has manifested itself so abundantly at Chalice Well.

On our early visits, the sight that first greeted us was the *vesica piscis* shaped pool, fed from a spout in a wall at its far end, with stone steps to one side leading up into the garden. You may know that the *vesica piscis* is the middle section of two interlocking circles. Extend one end of the vesica and you get a fish design – a sacred geometrical figure and the symbol in Roman times that you were Christian. A few years ago, the water spout and steps were replaced by sympathetic new planting and a Sevenfold Metamorphic Cascade – a series of stone bowls, the result of research and development by John Wilkes of Flow Design Research Group at Emerson College. The water flows round the cavities of the seven flow forms in a figure of eight, alternately to left and right, before being funnelled through a narrow escape channel, thereby inducing "rhythms into the flow to

enhance the 'subtle energy' content of the water". Theodor Schwenk, also, believes that "a body of unadulterated water has infinitely subtle veil-like forms if the water is in harmonic movement". I like that phrase very much. 'Harmonic movement' so eloquently expresses the dance of water here and is reassuringly compelling to watch.

The planting has developed through the years also, each season seeming to attain a more harmonious balance of colours and shapes. The Well area itself has more of a woodland feel to it now, a more natural setting perhaps for such a pure source of water. The spring is capped to ensure its purity, as the water rises through blue leas gravel up a stone shaft thought to be over 800 years old. The waters are cold, an even 52 degrees Fahrenheit with a steady flow of around 25000 gallons per day. Originally the well shaft was above ground, but years of subsidence and landslides have covered this to its present 'ground level'. A single block of stone forms three sides of the well mouth, which Glastonbury resident and mystic Dion Fortune believed had megalithic origins, and was a probable recess for a sacrificial victim in the well's pagan past. A sluice allows the water out to run down to the lower parts of the garden, presumably after the victim had drowned and fulfilled their role as living sacrifice to the Gods; also supplying Joseph with an ideal place to hide the Grail. If Ms Fortune's perception was correct then it is a comforting thought that this place of Druid sacrifice has now become a sanctuary which, in turn, has brought a measure of healing to the land. It is as though the correct question has been asked of the Grail's guardian and the land has become whole once more.

The meadow area of the garden has been cleared and cultivated over the past few seasons, revealing more open spaces and views to the Tor. A balance to the smaller, more densely planted parts of the original garden is now wonderfully in evidence. New seating areas have been erected providing quiet places for reflection and an opportunity to pause for a while and absorb some of the 'holyest erthe in Englande' in a peaceful setting.

Questing

Rather than being required to ask 'Whom does the Grail serve?', we should really now be asking 'How may we serve the Grail?' The question posed before us is, should we continue to search for the Grail within the ever enlarging urbanization of the developed world, or should we now understand that the Grail, or the essence of the Grail, resides within such places as Chalice Well. The Grail Quest for each of us in our own times must surely be the re-greening of our home, the planet, halting the destruction of the natural world and working in co-operation with the natural kingdoms. As the Grail itself provided each person at the Round Table, and in the hall of the Fisher King at Carbonek, with the food and drink they most desired, so, as we achieve the Quest, each person in the world may no longer go hungry or thirsty. Everyone will have their needs met and want for nothing. We have the power to turn aside from our perilous journey towards the Waste Land and return our home to its Edenic state, making it literally a Heaven upon Earth, a global Sarras. The guardians and custodians of these natural sanctuaries are truly today's Grail Knights.

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Tennyson and Arthur (2)

W M S Russell

The early Arthurian poems

By 1842, Arthurian themes had appeared five times in Tennyson's work. A single stanza in 'The Palace of Art' describes a tapestry showing the wounded Arthur 'dozing in the vale of Avalon, And watch'd by weeping queens' – this is merely a little preview of 'Morte d'Arthur'. 'Sir Launcelot and Queen Guinevere' is a pretty but undistinguished little 'fragment' (the subtitle) that any minor poet could have written. In 'Sir Galahad' the Victorian moralist is in full swing. Everyone knows the opening:

My good blade carves the casques of men,
My tough lance thrusteth sure,
My strength is as the strength of ten,
Because my heart is pure.

One is irresistibly reminded of Dr Arnold at Rugby, keeping the boys occupied with sport to take their minds off sex.

But there were also two of the greatest poems ever written, superlative contributions to Arthurian literature.

'The Lady of Shallot' exists in two versions, published, respectively, in 1832 and 1842.[87] The later version is incomparably the better of the two, and is the definitive form of the poem. We have seen that Tennyson was widely read in European literature, and his source for the poem was a collection of stories from medieval Italy.[88] This was *Il Novellino*, also called the *Centro Novelle Antiche* (Hundred Old Tales), of uncertain authorship but probably compiled in Florence in about AD 1300.[89] The tales seem to be based on oral tradition, and 'when, as in the case of the Arthurian stories, they are ultimately dependent upon French texts, the compiler is not so much translating, as retelling the tale in his own words'.[90] The story used by Tennyson is retold from the *Mort Artu*,[91] the last part of the huge French prose romance known as the Vulgate Cycle, written roughly between 1215 and 1235.[92]

The Italian tale is *Come la Damigiella di Scalot morì per amore de Lancialotto del Lac* (How the Damsel of Scalot died for love of Lancelot of the Lake). It tells how the daughter of a great lord loved Lancelot, her love being unrequited because he was the Queen's lover. Dying of love, she ordered that her dead body, richly clad and bejewelled, should be put in a barge without sails or oars and set adrift on the sea, with a letter in her purse telling the story of her love. The barge drifted to Camelot, where King Arthur had the purse opened and the letter read.[93]

Malory substituted Astolat for Scalot, and Westminster for Camelot, and gave the Damsel the name Elaine.[94] But when Tennyson wrote the poem, he states in a note, 'I do not think I had heard of Malory's Elaine'.[95] However, he too sent the barge to its destination by river rather than by sea. In the 1832 version he kept the letter, but changed it to a cryptic message quite unintelligible to Arthur and his court, thus spoiling the ending. In the 1842 version he had the genius to create a wonderful new ending:

But Lancelot mused a little space;
He said, 'She has a lovely face;
God in his mercy lend her grace,
The lady of Shalott'.

The mirror and the tapestry that make this such a wonderful poem are entirely the creations of Tennyson's imagination. A mirror was in fact normally 'set behind the tapestry so that the worker could see the effect from the right side'.[96] Tennyson's own

[87] Lucas (ref 22) 164
[88] *Ibid* 163–4
[89] Whitfield, J H (1980) *A Short History of Italian Literature* (Manchester: Manchester University Press) 57–8
[90] Gardner, E G (1930) *The Arthurian Legend in Italian Literature* (London: Dent) 88
[91] *Ibid* 93
[92] Lacy, N J *ed* (1996) *The New Arthurian Encyclopedia* (London: Garland Publishing) 497
[93] Gardner (ref 90) 93–4
[94] *Ibid* 128–9; Malory 18.20
[95] Lucas (ref 22) 164
[96] Ricks (ref 4) 80

comment on the poem, made to Canon Ainger, was: 'The new-born love for something, for some one in the wide world from which she has been so long secluded, takes her out of the region of shadows into that of realities'.[97] The earlier version of the poem (which already has many of its fine lines) was in his mind when he and Hallam were on the Rhine in 1832. He conjectured that the island of Nonnenwerth 'was a little larger than that occupied by the lady of Shalott, "and the stream is rather more rapid than our old acquaintance that ran down to Camelot"'.[98]

The other great poem is of course *Morte d'Arthur*, begun in October 1833 when Tennyson heard of Arthur Hallam's death, and completed the next year. In 1837–8 he added perhaps the most dreadfully silly of all his frames, and the whole was published in the 1842 collection.[99] The frame describes a Victorian party in which the poem is identified as the eleventh book of an epic by an invented poet, rescued from the hearth when he burned the rest of his twelve books. Apart from the general silliness of this, it does not even make superficial sense, for if Arthur went off to Avilion in the eleventh book, what on earth would happen in the twelfth? Mercifully the great poem is normally printed in anthologies without this excrescence.

The poem is based on Malory,[100] but the already fine chapter of Malory's book has been converted into matchless poetry. The most famous and often-quoted lines are pure Tennyson, owing nothing to his source:

And slowly answered Arthur from the barge:
'The old order changeth, yielding place to
new, ...
Lest one good custom should corrupt the
world'.

This is not a platitude of the Victorian moralist, but an imaginative insight of the great poet.

In April 1835 Tennyson and Edward Fitzgerald were in the Lake District.[101] As they were boating on Windermere, Tennyson quoted his lines about the Lady of the Lake and Excalibur:

Nine years she wrought it, sitting in the deeps
Upon the hidden bases of the hills.

'Not bad that, Fitz, is it?' he asked.[102] Though not always a good judge of his own work, he clearly knew when he had written something great.

Preparations for the *Idylls*

'The vision of Arthur as I have drawn him', said Tennyson, 'had come upon me when, little more than a boy, I first lighted upon Malory.'[103] He cannot have read Malory thoroughly at this point, wince we have seen he had never heard of Elaine when he wrote 'The Lady of Shalott'. But it is interesting that his sister Cecilia recalled his fascinating his younger siblings by telling tales of knights and heroes.[104]

In 1833, the year of Arthur Hallam's death, the poet planned a major work on Arthur, 'an epic or a drama'.[105] He eventually abandoned the idea of an epic,[106] but it left its vestiges in the composition of *twelve* Idylls, suggestive of the twelve books of the *Aeneid* – or the imaginary epic of the awful frame of 'Morte d'Arthur'.[107] But in any case all his plans for a big Arthurian work were set back for many years by a foolish and vicious review of his 1832 poems, including 'The Lady of Shalott', in the *Quarterly Review* of April 1833, which utterly disheartened him.[108] This review, apparently by Lockhart, was actually by an unpleasant idiot called John Wilson Croker.[109] It was this same Croker whose nasty review of *Endymion* badly upset Keats; though it did not really hasten his death, which tuberculosis brought about anyway, it inspired Byron's famous couplet:

Strange that the mind, that fiery particle,
Should let itself be snuffed out by an article.

[97] Horton (ref 28) 70
[98] Ormond (ref 2) 36–7
[99] Ricks (ref 4) 136
[100] 21.5
[101] Ormond (ref 2) 71
[102] Sharp (ref 3) 186
[103] Horton (ref 28) 176
[104] Ormond (ref 2) 8
[105] Horton (ref 28) 176
[106] Ricks (ref 4) 265
[107] Ormond (ref 2) 171
[108] Thwaite (ref 17) 92
[109] Lucas (ref 22) 159–60

Ian Brown

However, by the summer of 1848 Tennyson was in Cornwall, thinking of 'again taking up the subject of Arthur'.[110] In 1850, on their honeymoon tour, he and Emily visited Glastonbury, where Emily noted in her journal that her ancestor was 'the only Abbot buried in the chancel near the real or reputed grave of King Arthur'.[111] In 1855 he fixed on the final form of the *Idylls*.[112]

Emily was delighted when the poet returned to Arthur as a subject.[113] She reinforced the demands of the critics for 'something big' with a 'message'. She regularly liked each Idyll as he wrote it, and overcame his resistance to writing one about the Grail.[114] Tennyson wrote to the London Library: 'My wife has a great fancy for books about King Arthur, so oblige her as far as you can. She thinks I can write about the old king'. By 1856 he was planning to read the *Mabinogion* in Welsh, helped by Lady Charlotte Guest's recent translation.[115]

That year they went to Wales. Emily was 'glad to have seen even so little of the land of Arthur and Merlin and Taliessin'. She wrote to Edward Lear: 'You do not know how real the story of King Arthur looks, how awfully grand in Welsh ... I think he must be a real being of some grand perfect kind. I am going to bring up the boys as Knights of the Round Table'.[116] She must have been pleased when Coventry Patmore's wife (yet another Emily) described young Lionel as 'exactly what King Arthur might have been at three years old'.[117]

In 1860, the poet was in Cornwall again, writing Hallam a letter from 'the ruined castle of Arthur' at Tintagel,[118] and also the Scilly Isles.[119] In 1864 he and Emily went to Brittany, where they found the people 'totally ignorant ... of the Arthurian legends'. According to young Hallam, his mother 'proclaimed everywhere' that her husband 'was the poet of *notre grand roi, Arthur*'.[120]

In view of all this interest in the lands of Arthur, it is bizarre to find Tennyson expressing a real hostility to Celts. Chesterton is good on this: 'When Tennyson wrote verses like:

Of freedom in her regal seat,
Of England; not the schoolboy heat,
The blind hysterics of the Celt

[110] Ormond (ref 2) 93
[111] Thwaite (ref 17) 316
[112] Ricks (ref 4) 166
[113] Thwaite (ref 17) 316
[114] *Ibid eg* 321, 390, 427–8
[115] *Ibid* 316
[116] *Ibid* 317–18
[117] *Ibid* 319
[118] Horton (ref 28) 150
[119] Ormond (ref 2) 150
[120] Thwaite (ref 17) 392

he quite literally did not know one word of what he was talking about; he did not know what Celts are, or what hysterics are, or what freedom was, or what regal was or even of what England was – in the living Europe of that time'.[121]

We can only suppose that, for all his wide general knowledge, the poet was totally ignorant of linguistics, and did not realise that the P-Celts (the Welsh, the Cornish, the Bretons and Arthur himself) *are* Celts; he seems to have reserved the term exclusively for Q-Celts, and in particular the Irish. We know he hated the Irish; he quarrelled with Gladstone over Home Rule for Ireland, and Emily, knowing his feelings, insisted that no Home Rulers should be invited to his funeral.[122] Though in theory against slavery, Tennyson disliked the American North because of the 'overproportion of the Celtic blood among them'.[123] Although some Welsh people emigrated to the United States, far more Irish did, and here again Tennyson was equating them with Celts.

The writing of the *Idylls of the King* was spread over twenty years, and their publication over sixteen, 'Geraint and Enid', 'Merlin and Vivien', 'Lancelot and Elaine' and 'Guinevere' came out in 1859. 'The Coming of Arthur', 'The Holy Grail', 'Pelleas and Ettarre' and 'The Passing of Arthur' followed in 1869. Then came 'The Last Tournament' (1871) and Gareth and Lynette' (1872), and in 1873 'The Marriage of Geraint' was split off from 'Geraint and Enid', bringing the total up to eleven. Finally 'Balin and Balan', though finished in 1874, was not published until 1885.[124]

Prince Albert approved of the first four Idylls. After his death in 1861, Tennyson added a Dedication to his memory to the next edition.[125] At Emily's suggestion, he ended the 1873 edition (complete except for 'Balin and Balan') with an Epilogue addressed to the Queen.[126] Both Tennyson and especially Emily had 'passionate feelings about the Empire and the importance of a close relationship between England and her colonies'.[127] So it is not surprising that a large part of this Epilogue is a protest, hardly relevant to Arthur, against proposals to loosen the connections of the Empire. This brought a grateful letter from Lord Dufferin, the Governor-General of Canada, thanking the poet for 'the spirited denunciation with which you have branded those who are seeking to dissolve the Empire'.[128] In 1885, as Viceroy of India, Dufferin welcomed Lionel Tennyson there, and would no doubt have helped him to a glittering career if the young man had not died, as we have seen, on the way home.[129] In 1892, Dufferin was one of the pallbearers at Tennyson's funeral.[130]

Idylls of the King

Parturiunt montes; wrote Horace, *nascetur ridiculus mus* (the mountains are in labour; there shall be born a ridiculous mouse).[131] After all those preparations of reading and travels, Tennyson's *Idylls* is perhaps not quite a ridiculous mouse, but certainly has none of the fearful symmetry of a poetical tiger. Here and there the great poet has slipped in a splendid and memorable line, for instance, 'that fierce light which beats upon a throne' in the Dedication to Prince Albert's memory, and 'the little rift within the lover's lute' in 'Merlin and Vivien'. But apart from such lines, which are few and far between, and part of 'The Passing of Arthur', which is a straight repeat of 'Morte d'Arthur', the Victorian moralist is supreme throughout. Compared to the superb story-telling of the *Mabinogion* or Malory, the *Idylls* are positively tedious. As I quoted Eliot earlier, 'for narrative Tennyson had no gift at all'.

Writers have almost unanimously taken a poor view of the *Idylls*. 'Another Idyll and another and another', wrote Jowett in 1871, 'He is caught in the vicious circle of the

[121] Chesterton (ref 15) 164
[122] Thwaite (ref 17) 8–10
[123] Ormond (ref 2) 146
[124] Ricks (ref 4) 264–7
[125] Horton (ref 28) 166–7
[126] Thwaite (ref 17) 483
[127] *Ibid* 517
[128] Lozynsky, A and Reed, J R *eds* (1977) *A Whitman Disciple Visits Tennyson* (Lincoln: The Tennyson Society) 13
[129] Thwaite (ref 17) 560–66
[130] *Ibid* 9
[131] *De Arte Poetica* line 139

Arthur legend'.[132] 'The colour, the temperature, the very music left me cold', wrote Elizabeth Barrett Browning.[133] 'This stuff is not the Muse,' said Meredith, 'it's Musery'.[134] Hopkins called the *Idylls* 'unreal in motive and incorrect, uncanonical so to say, in detail'.[135] Bulwer Lytton could 'scarcely understand how any man could reconcile himself to dwarf such mythical character as Arthur, Lancelot and Merlin, he said, into a whimpering old gentleman, a frenchified household traitor and drivelling dotard'.[136] The most devastating comment came from Eliot. You have only to compare Malory, he said, 'to admire the skill with which Tennyson adapted this great British epic material – in Malory's handling hearty, outspoken and magnificent – to suitable reading for a girls' school: the original ore being so refined that none of the gold is left'.[137]

Celebrities who were *not* writers, such as Gladstone, were full of admiration for the *Idylls*. The critics were respectful, and the Victorian public went crazy. Tennyson was at the height of his fame, the first volume sold 10,000 copies in the first week,[138] and the work inspired photographs, and 'innumerable, tiles, plates, paintings, tapestries and sculpture'.[139] Can we wonder that Tennyson was tempted by the huge success he enjoyed as a Victorian moralist?

The trouble was, of course, that he thought he could do better than the *Mabinogion* and Malory. What he thought of Malory appears in his Epilogue, where he refers to the Arthur

> Of Geoffrey's book, or him of Malleor's, one
> Touch'd by the adulterous finger of a time
> That hover'd between war and wantonness.

This is not the honest cynicism of Shakespeare's Thersites – 'War and lechery confound all!'[140] It is pure Victorian hypocrisy. Tennyson himself was anything but a pacifist. In 1852 he published some ferociously militaristic poems urging war against Louis Napoleon and attacking 'babbling Peace Societies, Where many a dreamer trifles!'[141] When the Crimean War was about to break out in 1854, Tennyson inserted into his poem, 'Maud', 'fifty-nine lines in praise of war, and denouncing peace'.[142] One of Carlyle's many heroes was William the Conqueror. One day he remarked to Tennyson: 'Oh, for a day of Duke William again!' The poet said 'the returning hero had better steer clear of him, "or he will feel my knife in his guts very soon"'. 'Eh, you're a wild man, Alfred!' said the Prophet of Ecclefechan.[143]

As for wantonness, Tennyson's language was variously described, by Edward Lear and others, as Rabelaisian, ugly, bawdy, coarse, and showing a taste for infantile obscenity.[144] He composed many bawdy limericks, which of course were all destroyed soon after his death.[145]

Tennyson himself gave away his Victorian moralism in his writing about Arthur. 'How much of history we have in the story of Arthur is doubtful ... He is anyhow meant to be a man who spent himself in the cause of honour, duty and self-sacrifice, who felt and aspired with his nobler knights, though with a stronger and a clearer conscience than any of them'.[146] In other words, for him Arthur was not the Romano-British warlord of history or the magnificent monarch of medieval literature, but a Victorian British gentleman.

Stopford Brooke provided a beautiful illustration of the difference between Victorian morality and that of the fifteenth century.[147] Tennyson's Arthur (in 'Guinevere') abuses and insults her with enormous self-righteousness, and

[132] Thwaite (ref 17) 483
[133] Ricks (ref 4) 268
[134] *Ibid* 271
[135] *Ibid* 272
[136] Ormond (ref 2) 172
[137] Ricks (ref 4) 273
[138] Horton (ref 28) 184
[139] Ormond (ref 2) 172
[140] *Troilus and Cressida* Act 2 Scene 3
[141] Brooke, S A (1970) *Tennyson: his Art and Relation to Modern Life* (New York: AMS Press) 231; Ormond (ref 2) 115–16
[142] Ridley (ref 11) 563
[143] Symons, J (1952) *Thomas Carlyle* (London: Gollancz) 201
[144] Thwaite (ref 17) 22, 349, 354, 357
[145] Baring-Gould, W S (1970) *The Lure of the Limerick* (London: Panther Books) 74
[146] Johnson (ref 31) 22
[147] Brooke (ref 141) 364–5

absolutely refuses, on principle, to take her back, for:

I hold that man the worst of public foes
Who either for his own or children's sake,
To save his blood from scandal, lets the wife
Whom he knows false, abide and rule the house.

He (and Tennyson) ascribes to Guinevere's adultery the disastrous war that is breaking up the Round Table.

Now we can contrast Malory.[148] Here it is made quite clear that the war between Arthur and Launcelot is primarily due not to Guinevere's adultery but to the fury of Gawain after Launcelot accidentally killed his brothers. The Pope, 'considering the great goodness of King Arthur, and of Sir Launcelot, that was called the most noblest knights of the world', sent the Bishop of Rochester to Arthur with papal bulls commanding him to take Guinevere back and be reconciled with Launcelot. The king was happy to do both, but Gawain would not tolerate the reconciliation. However, he made no difficulty about the return of the Queen. It was agreed that 'the queen should not be spoken unto of the king, nor of none other, for no thing done afore time past'. The Bishop took this agreement, signed by Arthur, to Launcelot, who promptly undertook to bring the Queen back. He did so, and she was duly accepted, but Gawain prevented the reconciliation and the war continued. Evidently the Pope's action deeply offended Tennyson's Victorian sensibilities, and he totally altered the whole trend of the story as Malory (and of course earlier romancers) had told it. This is a more telling evidence of the Victorian moralism of the *Idylls* than any of the criticisms I have listed.

There is an additional ironic twist to the self-righteousness of Tennyson's Arthur. In Malory, if there is a sexual act responsible for the final catastrophe, it is not Guinevere's adultery but the act of incest when Arthur got Mordred on his own sister.

The Gleam at the End

After the sad fiasco of the *Idylls*, it was pleasant to recall that Arthur was to appear in one last poem, one of the most beautiful and moving Tennyson ever wrote. This was 'Merlin and the Gleam', written in 1889, three years before his death.[149] It begins:

O young Mariner,
You from the haven
Under the sea-cliff,
You that are watching
The gray Magician
With eyes of wonder,
I am Merlin,
And *I* am dying,
I am Merlin
Who follow The Gleam.

The poem is, as Tennyson himself told, a kind of autobiography of the poet's life and work, with all the sorrows and set-backs and resilience and recoveries.

Clouds and darkness
Closed upon Camelot;
Arthur had vanished
I knew not whither,
The king who loved me,
And cannot die.

The reference to Hallam is unmistakable, and in fact in a first draft he wrote 'The friend who loved me'.[150] But after this sorrow the Gleam gradually returns, and it reappears at the end of every stanza of the poem. After all the hard things I and others have said about Tennyson the Victorian moralist, we must never forget that throughout his life he did try to follow the Gleam of great poetry, and as a result gave us the greatest poems of his age, and the two greatest contributions to Arthurian literature since medieval times in 'The Lady of Shalott' and 'Morte d'Arthur'.

Not of the sunlight,
Not of the moonlight,
Not of the starlight!
O young Mariner,
Down to the haven,
Call your companions,
Launch your vessel,
And crowd your canvas,
And, ere it vanishes
Over the margin,
After it, follow it,
Follow The Gleam.

[148] 20.8–14

[149] Ricks (ref 4) 39

[150] *Ibid*

talking head — fred stedman-jones

THE ARTHURIAN EMPIRE

Foreword: by a strange coincidence I have been working for some time on the subject of Arthur's supposed voyages and conquests of foreign lands. Professor Russell's note in the last journal on Elizabethan claims to Northern territories by virtue of these conquests is the subject of the first of my two articles arising from these studies. Arthur's Voyages will appear next time. Great minds..!

Whilst researching my last article I had cause to consult Professor Gwyn Alf Williams's *Excalibur, The Search for Arthur* - the splendid book published in conjunction with his two television programmes. Sadly, we Pendragons were unable to meet him face to *face* at the Welsh Academy Arthurian Conference at Cardiff in October 1994 as he was then too ill to attend.

This fine academic historian was held in great veneration in Wales and far beyond. At York University Gwyn Alf's lectures were attended by staff and students of all disciplines, who would crowd into every available space to hear him speak. This was repeated when he moved to Cardiff and his television programmes - many made with Pendragon member Colin Thomas as co-producer and director - won major awards from professional colleagues.

Now, to come to the point, it was re-reading *Excalibur* again that set me off researching Arthur's Voyages and Conquests, the subject of these two articles. The following introductory summary is of the content of chapter 10 of this book:

1. The Tudor monarchs' presentation of themselves as heirs of Arthur- in order to help legitimize their sovereignty- and the resultant focus on the British-Arthurian 'history' in ritual, poetry, propaganda, etc.

2. The reorganisation of Tudor Wales on the English pattern, when new opportunities enabled the Welsh to take a much fuller part in the Nation's life at all levels, to contribute their talents in many more fields. The London Welsh emerged at this time!

3. The consequences of the break with Rome and Continental Catholicism, which encouraged a group of Tudor humanists to evaluate the Celtic Church's teaching as being a purer, truer form of Christianity which they believe had been handed on in turn to the English church. (Joseph of Arimathea, Glastonbury, etc.)

4. The division of the world between Catholic Spain and Portugal by the Pope, as Christ's vicar, so that all newly discovered territories were carved up between them by a line drawn down the centre of the world map.

5. Numerous energetic and adventurous English sea dogs emerged and relationships with Spain degenerated into open war when the seafaring exploits of Gilbert, Drake and Raleigh led to the attempted invasion of Britain by the Spanish Armada in 1588.

And, as Gwyn Williams points out, '*central to these maritime adventures was a remarkable Welshman, Dr. John Dee. He cherished his Welsh roots and the 'British History.' He was a dreamer of dreams of Empire and a Christian Commonwealth and an admirer of Elizabeth, who cherished him, and it was he who now carried the History of Geoffrey of Monmouth , in a new vogue, to unheard of heights*

Henry the Seventh's abilities are often underestimated, his patronage of exploration reveals an imaginativeness and readiness to experiment. In 1496 he granted John Cabot and other Bristol merchants letters patent to annexe lands unknown to

Portrait above: Dr.John Dee

Christians. Cabot made landfall on either Nova Scotia or Newfoundland in 1497 and his son was later granted similar privileges, discovering Hudson's Bay in 1508. Henry VIII's ideas of empire building were more conventional, concerned not to offend his Spanish allies at first he dreamed of re-establishing an old-fashioned British empire in France. His major achievement was to expand the navy and make Britain a greater power at sea.

Dee, a brilliant scientist, mathematician, geographer, navigator and skilled map maker, was prominent in the group which believed that protestant England under Elizabeth was returning to an earlier, ideal phase of its history. He seems to have coined the expression 'British Empire'. He had taught at Paris and Louvain universities at the age of 23, filling the lecture halls like Gwyn Williams, so that students hung from the window frames to hear him. (Welsh eloquence?) For the rest of his life he corresponded with doctors and professors in almost every Continental university. He had brought back navigational instruments in 1551 and taught most of the English mariners to use the new aids and charts, many of which he produced himself.

No Englishman now doubted that England was a great land, the equal of Spain and France, and had a natural right and lawful title to explore, possess and colonize the lands of North America. In 1556 Sir Humphrey Gilbert began the English search for the north-west passage, England's special route to the riches of the Orient. In 1582 Richard Hakluyt published his *Divers Voyages*, a collection of documents to encourage English mariners to find a passage round America to China. He claimed for England, by right of Cabot's discoveries, all lands, *'from Florida northwards to 67 degrees not yet in any Christian prince's possession'*.

After the Frobishers' three voyages the Queen wanted to know what right she had to call the new coasts and islands her own and asked Dee to set forth her title to Greenland, Estoteland (Newfoundland) and Friseland. In 1580 Dee delivered two Rolls of *The Queene's Majestie's title* to her in the garden of Richmond palace. Lord Burghley asked Dee for a meeting for more information and Dee felt slighted, but some days later he reported that, *'the Lord Treasurer greatly commended my doings for her title'* and had followed up this approval with a haunch of venison.

In 1577 Dee had presented his evidence for an early British empire in his fourth book the *Great Volume of Famous and Rich Discoveries*. He challenged the pope's ruling by recourse to legendary history - asserting Arthur's voyages in the North Atlantic which, with the Cabots' expeditions, made a case for English primacy in those waters. He included two main sources in his argument:

1. A list of Arthur's conquests which had appeared in William Lambarde's *Archaionomia* in 1568, a collection of texts in the Anglo-Saxon language which includes all the Saxon and Norman laws extant.
2. Gerald Mercator's letter to him in April 1577, based on the *Itinerary* of one Jacob Cnoyen, who said he was quoting information from the *Gestae Arthuri* (Deeds of Arthur), both mss. now lost.

I will outline the relevant contents of these sources next and describe the contemporary geography of the North Pole. In my second article I'll look at the geographical and historical background to the mythical Celtic wonder voyages - including Arthur's Expedition to Annwn.

It was Geoffrey of Monmouth who transformed the Celtic warrior king into the conquering medieval king-emperor, of course. In the *Historia* Arthur subdues the Saxons, Picts and Scots, then the inhabitants of the Northern Isles and Scandinavia before going on to tackle the Roman Emperor Lucius and the rulers of the

Queen Elizabeth at the helm of her imperial ship Europa restores the lost kingdoms to Arthur's Empire, 1577

East. Geoff Sawers' translation of Wace's *Brut* in the last issue tells us that Arthur conquered Ireland *'and wanted lordship over all' and* on hearing this the kings of *'Orchenie, Godlande, Wenlande hastened to pay tribute to him at Islande'*.

William Lambarde's *Archaionomia* (Greek- 'Original Laws') was published in 1568 and the Folger Shakespeare Library in the USA has a copy with what is believed by many to be Shakespeare's signature on the title page! Lambarde informs us:

'To Arthur, who was once a most renowned king of the Britons, a great and courageous man and famous warrior, this kingdom was of little account. His soul was not content with the realm of Britain, and he therefore vigorously subjugated all Scandia, i.e. Iceland and Greenland (which are dependencies of Norway) and Sweden, Ireland, Gotland, Denmark, Samland, the land of the Wends, Courland, Ruhnu, Finland, V`irland, Estonia, Flanders, Karelia, Lapland, and all the other lands and islands of the Baltic as far as Russia (i.e., he located the eastern border of the realm of Britain in Lapland), and many other islands beyond Scandia, as far as beneath the Great Bear, which are dependencies of Scandia, now called Norway. They were a savage people, and untamed, and did not have the love of God or neighbour, for all evil comes from the North. Also the Christians there lived in hiding.'

Gerardus Mercator

Dee's assurance to Elizabeth of her firm title to many foreign lands in 1580 would have also incorporated the argument from this text that the Saxon King Ine's wise rule echoed that of the Celtic Arthur - whose imperial conquests not only gained land but had led to the Christianisation of the formerly barbarian Norwegians who then had proceeded to marry noble British wives, *'for which cause the Norwegians claim to be of the body of this realm, that is the crown of Britain.'*

Arthur's imperial conquest of Scandinavia had turned the table on the former invaders of England and the actual Norse conquest of Northern England became transmuted into peaceful settlement - information most useful to a new dynasty anxious to unify the peoples of its newly-conquered realm and to expand its claims to the islands of the North Atlantic!

It is also stated that Ine himself married a Welsh princess and his Germanic people of Wessex intermarried with the Celtic Britons and Scots so that all became one people and flesh, *'duo in carnina una'*.

It is even claimed that *'Arthur, who was once a most renowned king of the Britons'* effected a decree that a great Folkmoot should be established where all communities and classes should meet in the realm once a year, in May, *'to swear unweakened loyalty and allegiance.'* Arthur had obviously become a good Englishman and Chairperson of the National Assembly!

In Dee's manuscript named *Volume of Great and Rich Discoveries*, the final chapter is entitled *'That all these Northern Iles and Septrional Parts are lawfully appropriated to the Crown of this Brytish Impire: and the terrible adventure and great loss of the Brytish people and other of King Arthur his subjects perishing about the first discovery thereof. And the placing of Colonies in the same Iles and Regions by the same King Arthur. And an entire and general Description of all parts of the world within 12 degrees of the North Pole and somewhat more.'*

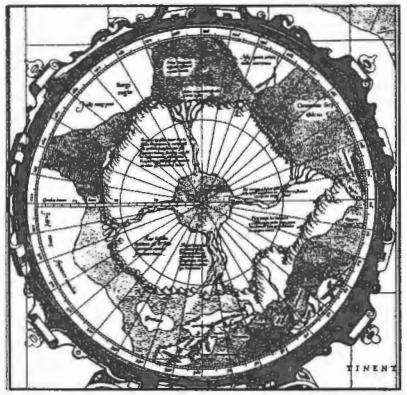
From where did he obtain this remarkable information? Most of it from a letter dated April 20, 1577 from his friend Gerardus Mercator, the greatest and most ingenious geographer and cartographer alive. Mercator first coined the word 'atlas' and solved the riddle of representing the three dimensional globe on a two dimensional map while retaining true compass bearings. This allowed mariners to steer their courses over long distances on charts merely by plotting straight lines. It also enabled man to step back and look at the world as if from space and it is Mercator's projection that NASA are using today to map Mars!

In 1569 he had published an atlas of the world that would profoundly affect Arctic exploration for the next 300 years. The problem with a Mercator projection of the

world is that to extend the projection to the North Pole the top of the map would need to stretch to infinity, so he provided an additional map showing the Pole as seen from above. He explained in the letter that much of the information he had used to draw the map had been gained from one Jacobus Cnoyen. All we know of Cnoyen is that he was a Hollander who had travelled widely 'like Mandeville' and his description of the Northern lands was broadly in accord with current geographical notions. He quotes sources, none of which are extant.

Mercator's map shows the Pole as a black glistening magnetic rock 33 miles wide, in the midst of a great whirlpool. Outside, four large islands form a ring, all having high mountains on their southerly coasts. The islands are separated by four large channels, the 'indrawing seas', through which the sea is sucked in to disappear into the bowels of the earth with such force that ships drawn into their current have no chance to return This symbolism and other associations will be explored in my next article.

King Arthur is mentioned four times in the letter. We are told that after conquering Scotland about AD 530 his great army had sailed to conquer Iceland. Then four ships



returning from the North had warned Arthur not to proceed further so, instead, he peopled all the islands between Scotland and Iceland, including an island called Grocland. In this Grocland he found people 23 feet tall!

Another passage in the letter tells how, *'afterwards Arthur put on board a fleet of ships (about) 1800 men and about 400 women. They sailed northwards...and of these 12 ships, five were driven on the rocks in a storm, but the rest made their way between the high rocks.'*

Then, intriguingly, *...'part of the army of King Arthur which conquered the Northern islands and made them subject to him.... and we read that 4000 persons entered the indrawing seas who never returned. But in A.D. 1364 eight of these people came to the King's Court in Norway....the eight were sprung from those who had penetrated the Northern Regions in the first ship.'* This information is included in Hakluyt's *Principal Navigations.*

Dee was excited, but while Elizabeth continued to be warm and interested Lord Burghley was suspicious. Anyway, Dee was soon to discover Madoc, the Welsh prince who is said to have sailed to America twice in the 1170s and founded a tribe of white Welsh-speaking Indians. This legend is still believed in by groups of Americans today, even some Indians! Expert historians Wilson and Blackett have ingeniously found proof that Prince Madoc was a brother of their King Arthur II and now have anounced that they have been made honorary colonels in Kentucky! More of this next time.

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Reviews

Tim Whewell
The Dark Origins of Britain
BBC Radio 4, January 16 / 23 / 30 2003
Produced by Tanya Datta

Tim Whewell's three half hour programmes *The Dark Origins of Britain* were packed with good things. With the overall aim of investigating the early origins of the three nations of mainland Britain, each programme had a separate theme. The first considered the fifth and sixth century transfer of power from the British to the Angles and Saxons. The second concentrated on the mystery of the Picts and their disappearance, while the third followed the developing idea of Celt and Pict and Saxon down the centuries.

Ambitious this, but expertly handled. Whewell managed to produce a comprehensive set of images and ideas through each programme, presenting orthodoxies and more bizarre notions with balance and humour. I was particularly impressed with Whewell's use of the voices of over twenty different historians, archaeologists and writers. The word soundbite is used pejoratively these days, but Whewell's 'bites' from this phalanx of erudition and passion was always intelligent and always managed to give a coherent idea of the expert's view.

The only thing I took against was the ethereal music. I could almost see the druid draped harpists in the doorway of the New Age gift shop. Why is music for history programmes so stereotyped?

Any irritation I felt at this was more than made up for by the allure of Whewell's voice – a younger version of Alan Bennett, as warm though less arch. But Whewell was cunning in his own way, teasing his audience on several occasions. In the first programme, Whewell used the turn and turn about method with the idea of the Anglo-Saxon 'conquest' of what is now England. In the preamble he presented the traditional view of rampaging Teutons pushing the weak British irresistibly back into the mountains of the west. Then he countered this with a string of people asserting that because there is no real evidence of slaughter, the Britons may well have accepted Angle and Saxon culture by assimilation, almost because their ways were more fashionable than the old British habits. Then in the final twist he introduced other experts saying that the acceptance of codes of behaviour and dress is one thing across cultures, but the complete replacement of one language by another without powerful coercion is unlikely. I was surprised that he could find no one to argue for a middle way – that there may have been slaughter in some places, wholesale British emigration in others, enslavement elsewhere, but that in many places they might have lived in settlements cheek by jowl with Anglo-Saxon incomers and gradually accepted their ways. Whatever the relations in the fifth and early sixth centuries we know from Bede that in the late sixth and early seventh century the British suffered a series of disastrous defeats at the hands of Angles and Saxons from which they never recovered. Fashion icons or not the Anglo-Saxons eventually cut up rough.

Whewell was at his most cunning in dealing with uses of the idea of Celt, Pict and Saxon to suit later cultural and political needs. There was a fine 'bite' during Whewell's discussion of the Picts. He had Scottish writer Alistair Moffat playing up the reputation of the Picts as hard men. Moffat grew nostalgic at the memory of their battle against the Northumbrian king Egfrid in 685 in which the Picts defeated the English and sent them reeling back south. 'They saved Scotland from becoming England' he said, seemingly unconcerned that it didn't save Pictland from becoming Scotland. And in the final episode Whewell could not resist going to Glastonbury to demonstrate that Celtic identity, even in England, is often used as a marketing device. He gently teased a gift shop owner by asking how well her business might do if it were called the 'Anglo Saxon Thread', rather than the 'Celtic Thread'.

But after all that I worried that he'd let himself down by succumbing to the conceit of a powerful overarching British identity being more important that any differences

between us. 'We don't care if our blood is pure or mixed,' he said, 'we're cosmopolitan ... pure Saxon or pure Celt has never been accepted'. It was with relief that I heard the final note of irony in the strains of *Rule Britannia* which ended the programmes.

Dave Burnham

Melvyn Bragg, presenter
In Our Time: the Holy Grail
BBC Radio 4, May 15 2003

This edition of *In Our Time* was chaired by Melvyn Bragg, with participants Eric Knight, Carolyne Larrington (tutor in Medieval English at St John's College, Oxford), Jonathan Riley-Smith (Dixie Professor of Ecclesiastical History at Cambridge University) and Juliette Wood (Associate Lecturer in the Department of Welsh, University College of Wales in Cardiff).

The overall grail story structure is of a naive innocent who overcomes a series of hurdles. Dr Larrington declared that though the story originated as part of an élite culture it is now part of popular culture and folklore, and in America has been adapted to American ideas of self-realisation, so that the Grail has become "a tool to think with". For Chrétien de Troyes however the Grail was a "platter". It is noteworthy that the Grail was not mentioned in Geoffrey of Monmouth.

The idea of the unasked question was introduced: after Pereval's visit to the Fisher King's castle a female cousin asks Perceval why he never asked who the Grail fed, and curses him. Chrétien never finished the story so we do not have his version of how the fault was expiated. The suggestion has been made that Chrétien was a converted Jew (candelabra having a kabbalistic significance) or that that his name is a *nom de plume*. The bloody lance also enters the story with Chrétien.

The years around 1180 were a time when the Crusaders were under pressure – the attempt to seize the Holy Sepulchre appeared to be ending int defeat, the "True Cross" was lost to Saladin in the disaster of the battle of Hattin – and though Chrétien probably wrote before this great defeat his continuators were perhaps influenced by the knowledge. The Grail quest ironically has a parallel with the situation of many knights on Crusade – landless knights in search of lands and/or a wife under the pretext of following a holy cause.

Dr Wood pointed to a Crusade link in Wolfram's version of around 1200 where Parzival has a pagan half-brother, and where Parzival represents the spiritual and Gawain the earthly. Wolfram's story in great part is an identity quest: Parzival finds his unknown half-brother, discovers that his mother is of the family of Grail guardians, and so on. There is also a parallel with a frequently-found feudal situation: the Fisher King, wounded in the thigh, kept alive by the Grail, is like a lord unable to act the warrior role of a knight any more and must wait for a successor or active heir to keep the estate going. The Grail stories, too, belong to the category of "passive Arthur" tales, that is, Arthur sits at court and the knights wander off.

Professor Riley-Smith discussed *virtus* or holy power, a term linked with relics and a quality of the Grail. This reflects an obsession of the time: the 9th century saw the start of serious collecting of relics associated with Christ's passion, and by the 1230s this was a mania. St Louis of France redeemed a major collection (the Crown of Thorns *etc*) pledged by the Latin Emperor of Constantinople, and built Sainte Chapelle in Paris to house it.

Dr Larringon discussed Robert de Boron's version of around 1200, where Joseph of Arimathea enters the story. This possibly drew on the apocryphal gospels for the account of Joseph saving from the Last Supper the dish used to serve the paschal lamb and drink, later using it to catch the blood from Christ's side at the Crucifixion. After his imprisonment, when he was fed by the Grail, he escaped to nearby Sarras, converted its king, then travelled to Britain to found a line of Grail keeper-kings, thus authenticating the link with the Passion. Yet, curiously, the Grail nowhere appears in relics lists like other relics of the Passion, no matter how dubious their authenticity to our eyes.

As the Grail story begins to take on a Christian role of teaching through narrative,

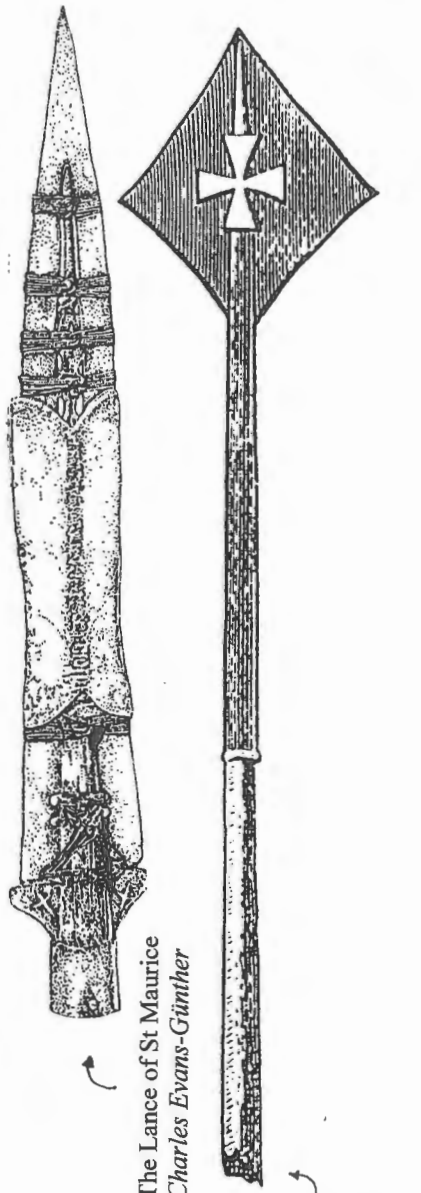
the Grail itself becomes an embarassment with the gradual enhancement of the role of the Eucharist (by the 14th century the body and blood of Christ had become the pinnacle of the belief system). At the same time, Dr Larrington pointed out, the Eucharist was becoming distanced from the laity – they took communion only once a year, and the elevation of the host as a focus of ritual was not clear to the laity – whereas the Grail is, throughout the accounts, accessible to laity of the knightly class without interposition of the clergy.

Also embarassing were the Grail's associations with the Templars, with Wolfram's *templeisen*, marriage, secret rituals, turtle dove symbolism and all having parallels with real anti-Templar accusations. Professor Riley-Smith suggested that the Protestant version of the Grail quest was the Society of the Rosy Cross, rejecting the notion of the Eucharist – and hence, by association, the Grail – but wishing to preserve the idea of arcane mystery.

Having faded out almost entirely with the Reformation – it was dangerous on both side of the religious divide as it embroiled divisive questions of transubstantiation *etc* – the Grail came back in the mid-19th century as providing a model for imperial adventures, ideals to soften the industrial revolution (as in the Middle Ages the period of Grail questing reflected ideas, given lip service at least by the knightly class, of holy days with neither sex nor fighting). The Grail quest also had echoes of pre-Augustine elements in Christianity of the "chosen people approach".

The final overview looked at the supposed finding of Arthur's body at Glastonbury and of another king presiding over the translation of Arthur's body to the centre of the nave. Henry VIII was particularly destructive against Glastonbury, perhaps fearing its associated symbolism as a focus of opposition. Malory, writing in 1469 at the time of the War of the Roses, portrays the ending of an earlier chivalry as due to the Grail, which caused to some extent the unravelling of the Arthurian world. Perhaps Henry VIII was also wary of a similar unravelling.

from notes by Steve Sneyd



The Lance of St Maurice
Charles Evans-Günther

Spear of Christ
BBC Two, broadcast June 14 2003
Written and directed by Shaun Trevisick
Produced by Sarah Strupinski
Atlantic Productions / Discovery / BBC

The claims for various objects to be the spear that pierced Christ's side at his crucifxion are legion. *Spear of Christ* looked at one claimant only, the Holy Lance of St Maurice, managing to dispel some of its mystery and replace it with real history, but like many such programmes it proved to be a curate's egg.

Spear of Christ referred to undated legends and unattributed prophecies as it outlined the supposed provenance of a Viennese relic which had had survived the personal interest of Hitler, Napoleon, Charlemagne, Constantine, St Maurice and finally Longinus, the restoration of whose sight allegedly convinced him of Christ's divinity. The programme set out to establish the spear's genuine history through scientific examination, though not without a few rhetorical questions along the way.

Metallurgist Robert Feathers subjected the object to non-destructive testing, namely X-ray fluorescence to determine its structure, microscopic analysis to determine its composition, and comparative forensic archaeology to determine its age. The commentary seemed to imply that no-one had previously investigated the spear in any detail, though this is not so – for example, J Charles Wall's *Relics of the Passion* ably summarised its known history way back in 1910, together with other claimants, one each from Antioch and Erivan in Armenia, and two from Constantinople (one of these latter now in St Peter's, Rome).

The Viennese relic is partly covered with a gold plate (a "sheath" according to the programme makers), known to have been fastened in place with silver wire by the Emperor Charles IV in the 14th century and inscribed with the legend *LANCEA ET CLAVVS DOMINI*, "the lance and nail of the Lord". Beneath the gold plate is an 11th-century silver band confirming in a Latin inscription its placement by the Emperor Henry III over the "nail of the Lord and the lance of St Maurice". Note that it is claimed as the lance of St Maurice, not of Longinus.

Who was this St Maurice? Traditionally the North African Maurice – probably not the West African or Afro-Caribbean suggested by the film – and his companions were Roman officers in a Christian legion who were martyred in 287 for refusing to sacrifice to the gods at Agaunum (now St Maurice-en-Valais) in Gaul. St Maurice subsequently became patron saint of knights and crusaders. A comparison with spears in the British Museum confirmed that the lance's shape could indeed be Roman but also that the lower so-called "wings" were typical of the early medieval period. The film's reference to what it identified as 7th-century dagger blades (added to the ensemble) also as "wings" made this part of the discussion particularly ambiguous.

The discussion of the *clavus Domini* or "nail of the Lord" also involved some interpretative sleight of hand. It has long been suggested that the spear was broken when the alleged nail from the cross was added to the centre. It suited the visual impact of the programme to suggest this may have been by order of Charlemagne in the 8th or early 9th century, but historical opinion has long inclined towards the Holy Roman Emperor Otto the Great or his successors, Otto II and Otto III, in the late 10th century. An ivory diptych, now in Milan, showing the kneeling figures of Otto II, his Byzantine wife and their son (later Otto III) flanked by St Mary and St Maurice, testifies to their veneration of the warrior saint (Philip Dixon's 1976 *Barbarian Europe* illustrates this on page 109 of the Phaidon edition). The "nail" itself was reportedly in a good state of preservation, and analysis suggested that this may not have been from the Roman period but may have included fragments of an earlier iron nail, possibly shaved from relics discovered by St Helena in the Holy Land.

The lance is known to have been kept in a golden chapel in Castle Karlstein in Prague by Charles IV, provider of the gold band. In 1424 it was sold to Nuremburg where it was kept in a suspended chest in the Church of the Holy Ghost and displayed on the second Friday after Easter, the feast of the Holy Lance. The Reformation put an end to its popularity, but Nuremburgers

smuggled it and other relics to Vienna in 1806 when the last Holy Roman Emperor abdicated. Despite conspiracy theorists, Feather's tests on the Viennese lance suggest it is the genuine medieval relic and not a copy made in more recent times.

J Charles Wall reminds us (145–6) that in the Arthurian Grail legends a lance figures in the procession in the castle of the Fisher King: Chrétien's "continuators identified it, without hesitation, with the spear of the crucifixion. This may have been ... suggested by the reported discovery of the Lance at Antioch half-a-century before." James Bentley, in his *Restless Bones: the story of relics* (1985), declares that the Holy Lance (whether from Vienna, Antioch or elsewhere) and other such objects were testimony to "an unslakeable thirst for tangible remembrances of Jesus" (131). In a less godly age, occult superstition or simple curiosity prevails instead. It is a shame that *Spear of Christ* was unable to explore in depth the lance's various contexts – literary, cultural, historical – that the unprecedented access to the relic could have allowed the programme-makers. Still, this was a rare chance to view an antique object subjected to modern scientific analysis.

Chris Lovegrove

Arthur, King of the Britons
presented by Richard Harris
BBC One, broadcast March 31st 2002

I thought that *Arthur, King of the Britons*, shown on Easter Sunday [the day of the Queen Mother's funeral, resulting in a slightly earlier transmission time] was rather good. I was quite impressed by the computer-generated 'virtual-reality' bits, which created ancient timbered halls, Roman roads *etc.*

This was yet another programme which featured, among others, Geoffrey Ashe and his Riothamus theory, though no mention was made of the suggestion that Riothamus may have died or been slain in France, and buried at Avallon in Burgundy. But the programme certainly nailed the belief that Arthur was a king of *England* (which he was portrayed as being in Lerner & Lowe's *Camelot* – as played by Richard Harris!) let alone Alexander Winslow's recent "Duke of England" howler!

I must say that this Richard Harris documentary made out a strong case for Cadbury Hill having been a great hill-fort for *some* Dark Age chieftain – but was it Arthur? Or Riothamus? As I've said before: I don't think we are ever going to know the real truth about the Dark Ages until some genius builds a workable time machine, so that we can go back and have a look ...

Beryl Mercer

In Search of the King
West Country Tales series
ITV1 Westcountry, broadcast May 17 2002

Unfortunately I didn't notice this programme in the *Radio Times* until it had been on for ten minutes or so, and didn't video the part that I did see, but it featured Geoffrey Ashe; local historian Craig Weatherill (with whom I used to work at Carrick District Council offices, 1979/80); Joe Parsons of The Arthurian Centre, Cornwall, and one or two others whose names I didn't catch.

Geoffrey Ashe's contribution mainly concerned his predilection for Riothamus (which is, according to him, a title meaning *High King*, and not a name – come to think of it, wasn't Vortigern the same?). He said the Riothamus was definitely a historical, not legendary figure, and might have been Arthur's father, or even Arthur himself. And he agrees with the gist of what Charles Evans-Günther has said in one of his letters: "... too much time has been spent looking for the origins of many of the later Arthurian tales in Britain rather than France. Many elements of the scene have come from France and French writers, and would suggest that place holds the keys to much of the Arthurian genre."

Beryl Mercer

Avalon (BBFC certificate 12)
Directed by Mamoru Oshii
Japan 2001 106 minutes

This is a thought-provoking film about a young woman's involvement in an illegal virtual-reality game. Emotionally detached from her fellow humans, her fondness for her sedentary pet dog finally catpults her into the final denouement.

Put like that, it doesn't sound very Arthurian, does it? Most of *Avalon* is shot in tinted monochrome, hinting at a future dystopia while visually recalling Cold War spy films set in Eastern Europe (location filming was actually in Warsaw, and all the actors are Polish). Other influences are Japanese graphic novels and cartoons (as you might expect from the Japanese writer, director and production team) and video games and role-playing games (where the routine use of English names and terms seems strangely alien), all producing haunting and often ravishingly beautiful images.

So much for style; what about content and story-telling? Some of the audience I watched *Avalon* with were clearly bored: this is not undemanding mainstream Hollywood fare, and thus requires some intellectual effort from the viewer, not to mention some previous knowledge and interest in the subject matter to appreciate the allusions.

The plot is essentially of a protagonist living on her earnings in the underground virtual-reality game called Avalon, aiming to get to the final level that is the motivation for such games. However, the film's title and script explicitly suggest that the Matter of Britain plays a large part in proceedings, and indeed there are correspondences galore for those who seek for them. There is the freelance (female) knight questing for answers to questions, the concentration on food and food-vessels in a materialist wasteland, the realm created, maintained and guarded by Nine Sisters, and so on.

But there are other strands too, strongest of which are Northern European legends. There is a RPG character who plays a Loki-like Thief. The heroine herself is called by the gender-neutral name Ash, supposedly because of strands of colour in her hair (which we never see) but which we must suspect is a reference to the World Tree in Norse tradition. When she dons her virtual-reality helmet, there is an explicit reference to Odin – who we remember was blind in one eye – and elsewhere there are visual references to Ash's glasses and the use of night-vision imaging equipment.

The over-riding premise of this film is that nothing is as it seems. When Ash emerges from her monochrome world into the technicolor landscape that is the game's final level, is this indeed Avalon or modern-day Warsaw? Do the facts that sequences don't repeat themselves and that RPG neutrals appear to be ordinary passers-by and tourists tell us that this is reality, or do ghosts who look like angels suggest otherwise? And does killing someone in this final level mean real pain, real finality, real consequences? The dying strains of the Orff-like cantata *Avalon*, performed in concert by the Warsaw musicians, are moving and appropriately enigmatic. If you haven't caught this film on the art-house circuit, then try to get it on video or DVD: I'm sure you won't be disappointed.

Chris Lovegrove

Tom Byrne
The Last Druids
2002
thelastdruids@hotmail.com

This self-produced CD introduces us to Taliesin, Aneirin, Llywarch and the two Merlins – the 'last druids' of the title – through instrumental music penned and performed by member Tom Byrne, himself a very experienced rock keyboard player. Over nearly 50 minutes six tracks narrate wordlessly the end of an era in the region of the summer stars, through episodes at Dinas Emrys, Badon Hill and other conflicts.

The music teacher in me has a few reservations, mainly to do with balance in composition – in a piece which is virtually orchestrally conceived there needed to be a little more variety in texture, especially within sections, in metre (rather foursquare for the most part), in pace (the tempo is unremitting at times) and in grading of dynamics (not always easy, admittedly, with synthesised and sampled sounds).

That said, this is melodically very accomplished – Byrne is without a doubt a talented tunesmith – and instrumentally very inventive, with a rich mixture of synthesised classical, folk, rock and electric sounds. The use of sound effects – dragons, birds of prey, forest, battle – is well judged and never dominates the music. It is certainly testimony to *The Last Druids* that despite my earlier provisos I've listened to it several times with pleasure even though my musical tastes normally lie elsewhere.

Chris Lovegrove

Nigel Pennick
The Power Within:
the Way of the Warrior and
the Martial Arts in the European Tradition
Chieveley, Berks: Capall Bann Publishing
2002 £13.95
186163 1537 pb iv + 269 illus

This book seems to me a bit of a hodge-podge, with no very obvious connecting thread of narrative, but it is so full of interesting, often off-beat, facts, and so lucidly and agreeably written, that one needn't really bother about its formal structure.

Pennick begins with a well-documented and well-organised account of ancient and medieval irrational pre-scientific conceptions of man and the universe. He thus describes the four elements, the four humours beloved of Corporal Nym, very well set out in long quotations from Ben Jonson, microcosm and macrocosm, and so on. All these notions are derived from the totemistic beliefs of tribal societies; real science begins to emerge as these fancies lose their grip, but the process is not complete even now.[1] [2] Pennick pursues these themes of irrantional beliefs right up (or down!) to Mesmer's animal magnetism and, most recently, Lonbroso's physio-gnomy.

He gives an excellent account of similar beliefs in Northern Europe, with sections on the Anglo-Saxon monk Byrhtferd, the Welsh bards, and the physicians of Myddfai, with the legend of their descent from the Lady of the Lake. Charles Evans-Günther has recently reported in this journal that they made no such claim, and that the connection was made certainly after the 16th, and probably not until the 19th century.[3] Of special interest in Pennick's account of the Northern concept of *megin* (which he relates verbally to magnets), the gaining of strength from contact with the earth. This has obvious relations with the Greek tale of the murderous Libyan giant Antaeus, son of Poseidon and Earth, who grew stronger every time he touched his mother. Heracles finally killed him by holding him in mid-air away from the earth and crushing him.[4]

With the following sections, we move into a more rational world: the very interesting ideas of Vitruvius and of Renaissance artists and scientists on the geometry of buildings and of the human body. This is followed logically by the study of body *movement* by the early cinephotographers. He moves on to dancing, and finally to fencing. At last we have got to the way of the warrior of his sub-title. It is not obvious to me what his early chapters have to do with this, but I suppose these fancies of the intellectuals may have filtered down to the soldiery, and certainly to the authors of books on the Martial Arts, which, he notes, began to appear in the later Middle Ages. At any rate the remainder of the book is straightforwardly about warriors.

He begins with literally hand-to-hand unarmed combat, a speciality of the Welsh, according to a letter he quotes from Henry II. He shows that Roman soldiers knew about the pressure points we were taught in the army in World War Two training sessions on unarmed combat.

A short section on woman warriors includes the Amazon guard of the King of Dahoney, one of the warrior women listed

[1] Russell, C and Russell, W M S (1976) "The Social Biology of Totemism" *Biology and Human Affairs 41* 53–79
[2] Russell, C and Russell, W M S (1977) "Space, Time and Totemism" *Biology and Human Affairs 42* 57–80

[3] Evans-Günther, C (2001–2) "Otherworld Denizens" *Pendragon 29* No 4 7–9
[4] Apollodorus, 2.5.11

by Saxo Grammaticus,[5] and several others. One might add the Amazons of Cortes's army, 'such as Maria de Estrada, who handled sword and lance as well as any man'.[6] It seems a pity there is no mention of the greatest of all non-combatant warriors – Joan of Arc.

Totemism re-emerges in the excellent section devoted to the Norse beast warriors.[7] He describes the wolf-warriors, the Ulfhednar, and the bear-warriors, whom he identifies with the Berserkir; Hilda Davidson has shown that both kinds of beast-warriors could be Berserkir.[8] At one point Pennick states that the wolf-men fought singly, the bear-men in packs. This must be a slip: it was, of course, the other way round.[9] Pennick also discusses the less well-known boar-warriors and dog-warriors. He notes the insensitivity of the Berserkir to pain and danger, but does not mention their frequent criminality in peace-time. I have shown that their symptoms exactly fit the pathological condition in modern males called hyperactivity, especially common in blond and blue-eyed, Scandinavian-looking individuals. I have suggested it may have been due, as in modern cases, to zinc deficiency interacting with genetic susceptibility.[10]

Pennick suggests that the knight in Malory called Ulfius may be a last relic of the beast-warrior system, which as he shows died out with the advent of Christianity and its disciplined armies. More advanced religions always have superior military technology and organisation. Christianity was at last beginning to break free from the totemic confusion of man with animals, a necessary first step before Darwin could show the real relationship.[11] But, as Pennick shows, in the 12th century there was a vogue among kings to take lion titles. One would have thought this would be the last animal to appeal to Christians!

In a fascinating section on trial by combat and formal duel, Pennick describes its origin in 501 under Gundebald, king of the Burgundians, and, centuries later, the very elaborate rules laid down in the Assizes of Jerusalem. Then came the different but equally elaborate rules among the Norse peoples, including the fixed enclosure which was to evolve into the boxing ring. He sees a relic of this kind of duel in a combat in Hartmann von Aue's Arthurian romance *Erec*. He describes several formal combats in the Norse sagas, including the duel between Egil and the berserk Ljot. Actually Egil was kindly taking the place of young Fridgeir, to save his sister from the berserk, and the whole family were very grateful when he killed Ljot.[12] This man illustrates my point about the Berserkir: before he got his come-uppance from Egil, he had engaged in a regular orgy of violent crime.[13]

What is so delightful about the poet Egil is that in the course of the duel he was composing and reciting verses, for instance:[14]

> The blood-suckling battler
> Backs away from my blows,
> And beats a retreat
> From the bald-headed bard.

He is matched only by Cyrano de Bergerac – as he is depicted in Rostand's marvellous play and the 1950 film based on it (written by Brian Hooker, directed by Stanley Kramer, star Jose Ferrer):[15]

> *À la fin de l'envoi, je touche.*
> Then as I end my refrain, thrust home.

In 937, at Brunanburh near the Humber, Athelstan King of Wessex and York utterly defeated Constantine II King of the Scots.[16] Pennick relates how this battle was fought under formal rules similar to those of individual combat. He notes that our old friend Egil was one of Athelstan's captains. In the saga, the battle is not named, merely set at a place called Vin Moor, but scholars agree this was the battle of Brunanburh.[17]

In medieval Christendom, Pennick discusses the military orders, noting that there had been a pagan military order, the Jomsvikings, who 'lived in barracks without women' (141). In discussing chivalry, he has the same illusions about it, as a worthy ideal not lived up to, that I had before I read Richard Kaeuper's marvellous book on the subject, which proved that chivalry was an ideology of extreme violence (*prowess*).[18] [19]

In an interesting Arthurian section, Pennick tells of Emperor Ludwig IV's college of knights at Ettal, modelled on the Round Table company, and of the Grail imagery in King Ludwig II's fairy-tale castle, Schloss Neuschwanstein. His interior decorator, Hyazinth Holland, shared the king's enthusiasm for the Grail mystique. This Grail castle was planned in 1868, started in 1869, but only finished after Ludwig's death.[20]

Pennick then turns to military training exercises, including dances with swords and sticks. He considers sports and games a form of military training. Kipling, of course, disagreed:[21]

> Then ye returned to your trinkets; then ye
> contented your souls
> With the flannelled fools at the wicket or
> the muddied oafs at the goals.
> Given to strong delusion, wholly believing a
> lie,
> Ye saw that the land lay fenceless, and ye
> let the months go by.

The book ends with an account of weapons – swords, shields, axes, spears, hammers, clubs, staves and bows. Pennick confuses two techniques for making good swords, pattern-welding, carried out probably in the Rhineland, and damascening, carried out in Iran using Indian steel. These are two quite different techniques. Both were lost, presumably when the families with the trade secrets died out. 'After many experiments, the secret of damascening was rediscovered by Pavel Petrovich Anosov in Russia in the early 19th century, and that of pattern-welding by John Anstee in Reading in 1955.'[22]

Pennick writes of leather-covered shields made of wood, ideally limewood. According to Farley Mowat, the best covering was walrus-hide, which would stop musket balls and resist cutting and thrusting weapons as well as bronze.[23] Pennick mentions Roman shield-walls and the *tortoise* formation. The Romans tried a shield-wall at the disastrous battle of Carrhae in 53 BC, but the Parthian archers used a high trajectory and shot over the shields, causing frightful damage. At their next encounter with the Parthians, in 36 BC, the Romans added a shield-roof, and this tortoise formation worked, and became a standard procedure.[24]

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[5] Jesch, J (1991) *Women in the Viking Age* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: The Boydell Press) 176–180

[6] Russell, C and Russell, W M S (1999) *Population Crises and Population Cycles* (London: the Galton Institute) 62

[7] Russell, W M S and Russell, C (1978) "The Social Bioiology of Werewolves" in Porter, J R and Russell, W M S (*eds*) *Animals in Folklore* (Ipswich and Cambridge: D S Brewer for the Folklore Society) 143–182, 260–269, especially 171–182

[8] Davidson, H R E (1978) "Shape-changing in the Old Norse Sagas" in Porter and Russell (ref 7) 126–142, 258–259, especially 132–133

[9] *Ibid* 133–134

[10] Russell, W M S (1988) "The Social Biology of Zinc" *Social Biology and Human Affairs 53* 21–38, especially 30–32

[11] Russell and Russell (ref 1) 54–56

[12] Palsson, H and Edwards, P *ed transl* (1976) *Egil's Saga* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books) 169–172, 180

[13] *Ibid* 172

[14] *Ibid* 171

[15] Rostand, E (1946) *Cyrano de Bergerac* (*ed* Ashton, H; Oxford: Basil Blackwell) 39–40

[16] Lynch, M (1992) *Scotland: a New History* (London: Pimlico) 44–45

[17] Palsson and Edwards (ref 12) 119, 248

[18] Russell, W M S (2001) "Arthurian Literature, Chivalry and Violence" *Pendragon 29* No 2 34–36

[19] Kaeuper, R W (1999) *Chivalry and Violence in Medieval Europe* (Oxford: University Press) *passim*

[20] McIntosh, C (1986) *The Swan King: Ludwig II of Bavaria* (London: Robin Clark) 128–131

[21] Kipling, R (1994) *The Poetical Works* (Ware, Herts: Wordsworth Editions) 302

[22] Russell, C and Russell, W M S (1983) "Cultural Evolution No 3. The Difference between Cultures" *Social Biology and Human Affairs 48*, 135–151, especially 150

[23] Mowat, F (1999) *The Alban Quest: the Search for a Lost Tribe* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson) 24

[24] Russell, W M S (1995) "The Fish-Scale Soldiers: a Tale of Two Cultures" *Social*

Alice Brues has shown that natural selection, between individuals and between populations, must have produced three types of human physique, tall and lean, shorter with broad shoulders, and short and stocky, adapted, respectively, for using spears, bows, or just farming tools with no weapons but clubs.[25] Gerald the Welshman tells us that in the late 12th century the best spearmen were the North Welsh, the best archers the South Welsh.[26]

An attractive feature of this book is the large number of excellent illustrations, drawn or redrawn by the author. I was amused by a picture of Renaissance soldiers in training, climbing ropes and tight-rope-walking (166). In my training battalion, in 1943, we also climbed ropes. We did not tight-rope-walk, but after climbing a vertical rope we made our way along a horizontal one in the manner of sloths. Unlike the naked soldiers in the picture, we were clad, booted, and carrying pack and rifle. Evidently they were more acrobatic, but we were tougher!

In this review I have only given a sample of the wealth of interesting things in this enjoyable book. I cordially recommend it to readers, and hope it reaches the wide public it deserves.

W M S Russell

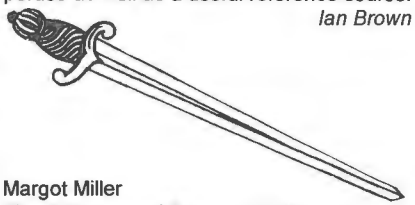
John Gibson
Anatomy of the Castle
Saraband (Scotland) Limited 2001
1 887354 29 8 hb 208pp

This is a useful and interesting book, full of fascinating and often quite beautiful photographs of castles around the world. The author gives a lucid account of the development of castles throughout the Middle Ages, including a general discussion of the political background of the times, to the necessities of castle building and the development of fortifications due to increasing sophistication of arms and strategy in warfare.

From an introduction to fortified settlement in the Classical world, through a more detailed discussion of castles, sieges and warfare throughout the Middle Ages, concentrating mainly on the Crusades, to the eventual development of the castle-mansion, this is a helpful guide to understanding and appreciating the personality, structure and use of castles and the world in which they evolved.

The photographs themselves are an inspiration, including panoramic fold-outs; and, with the addition of a sprinkling of illustrations, this is a pleasant book to peruse as well as a useful reference source.

Ian Brown



Margot Miller
The Priestess of Ennor: A Celtic Journey
Ogma 2001 £12.00
0 954 1161 0 0 pb 340pp

This is a tale of two sisters' journey from their childhood home on the Isles of Scilly to mainland Roman Britain and the experiences that guide them to maturity. Interwoven throughout are short episodes from other tales that serve to illustrate points along the way, as they travel through the sacred centres of the Celtic lands. Gods and Goddesses are met and through their interactions with humans show that they too have many human qualities.

Historical, archaeological and mythological detail combine to form a solid foundation upon which the story is set, and plenty of research has been done to conjure up a believable Iron Age Britain. A good story nicely told, with some charming line illustrations, Margot Miller should be applauded for her efforts to get this self-published work out into the world. I might suggest another proof-read before the next reprint, though.

Simon Rouse

Biology and Human Affairs 60 36–46, especially 40–41

[25] Brues, A (1962) "The Spearman and the Archer – an Essay on Selection in Body Build" in Montagu, M F A (*ed*) *Culture and the Evolution of Man* (New York: Oxford University Press) 202–215

[26] Giraldus Cambrensis (1908) *The Itinerary through Wales and Description of Wales* (Colt Hoare, Sir Richard *transl*, London: Dent) 114

bookworm

Ian Brown

FICTION

Allan Massie's new novel – "brilliant" according to a review by Christopher Hart ("Barbarism lies just beyond" in *The Daily Telegraph* September 27) – "purports to be a history of Arthur written by the medieval scholar Michael Scott for his patron, Frederick II of the Holy Roman Empire". ***Arthur the King*** (Weidenfeld & Nicolson 2003 £14.99 352pp) is apparently the second of "an unconnected Dark Ages sequence," though with a medieval spin.

Jorge Volpi's ***In Search of Klingsor*** (*transl* Kristina Cordero, Fourth Estate 2003 hb £17.99 402pp) didn't find favour in Oliver Morton's "Problem unsolved" review in *The Guardian* recently. The narrative weaves together the 1944 plot to assassinate Hitler, a Nazi scientific advisor called Klingsor, the Princeton Institute for Advanced Study and strands of mathematics and physics, but "for a book dressed up as a thriller, a lack of thrills is a disadvantage". Morton finds the *Parsifal* allusions "a little more successful ... but without a grail it doesn't really hang together".

Michael Moorcock's exposition of the Von Bek dynasty, as part of his Eternal Champion series of novels, continues with ***The Dreamthief's Daughter*** (Earthlight 2002 pb £6.99 342pp). Albino Count Ulric von Bek gets to meet his doppelgänger, albino prince Elric of Melniboné, in a 1998 tale that involves Nazis, the multiverse, a sword Ravenbrand and ... the Holy Grail.

Stephen Lawhead's new novel ***Patrick*** (HarperCollins 2003 £17.99 hb 0 00 714884 4) is about the Dark Age saint of that name. Also from Collins is children's novel ***The Merlin Conspiracy: trick or treason?*** by Diana Wynne Jones (2003 hb £12.99 0 00 715141 1) and involves a bit of time travelling for the young protagonist of the tale. Time travel also features in N M Browne's novel for young adults ***Warriors of Camlann*** (Bloomsbury 2003 pb £5.99 0 7475 62482), the latest in a series.

David Morgan Williams' ***Dragonrise*** (Y Lolfa pb £5.95 086243 637 0) is a teenage fantasy novel inspired by Welsh legends, burial mounds and Gwyn Alf Williams' *Excalibur: the search for Arthur*. "Combines the magic of Harry Potter with the adventure of Enid Blyton" opined one review. Also from Y Lolfa is Liz Whittaker's ***The Fizzing Stone*** (pb £4.95 086243 664 8), a scary quest across the Preseli hills into the dreamworld (sure to be "enjoyed by all adventurous Harry Potter fans"). Both titles are available from Y Lolfa, Talybont, Ceredigion, Wales SY24 5AP, phone 01970 832 304 or email ylolfa@lolfa.com (www.ylolfa.com); carriage is 20%.

US titles not usually available in UK bookshops include Jennifer Roberson's wittily-titled ***Out of Avalon*** (Roc 2001 pb £4.95 0 451 45831 1), billed as an "anthology of Old Magic and New Myths" from various authors, and Jack Whyte's 1999 ***The Fort at River's Bend***. The latter, Book 5 of his Camulod Chronicles, is published by Tor (pb £4.95 0 812 54418 8). Debra A Kemp is a much-published author with a new novel entitled ***The House of Pendragon I: The Firebrand*** published by Amber Quill in the US; further details from http://amberquill.com

Wildstrom Productions, a US comics company, was reported by *Star Trek*

Monthly 67 (July 2000) to have brought out ***Star Trek: Voyager – Avalon Rising***, with story by Janine Ellen Young and Doselle Young and artwork by David A Roach. The Doctor of the *USS Voyager*, with the help of a young squire, has to defeat enemies, access a "forbiddingly enchanted tower" and kill a dragon on a planet "whose customs resemble those of Earth's fairy tales" in a tale which "promises to blend *Star Trek* with Arthurian legend".

FACTUAL

Stuart McHardy's ***The Quest for Arthur*** (Luath Press Ltd, Edinburgh 2001 £16.99 hb 211pp illus 1 84282 012 5) seems to have temporarily slipped our review net. Review soon.

King Arthur's Greatest Battle: is this year the 1500th anniversary? is the third edition of a book previously reviewed in these pages (King Arthur Publications 2003 £3.20 / £3.60 overseas 40pp 0 9517062 9 2). The author tells us that this is basically a tidied-up version of the second edition, incorporating *errata* corrections, revised contents list and minor changes and additions. *Greatest Battle* is available from Richard White at 106 Roding Lane North, Woodford Green, Essex IG8 8LJ (quoted prices represent special discounts for *Pendragon* readers).

It's hard to keep up with Tempus Books: here's another offering of Arthurian interest. Written by the experts in their field – Pierre-Roland Giot, Philippe Guigon and Bernard Merdrignac – ***The British Settlement of Brittany: the first Bretons in Armorica*** (2003 £25.00 pb) deals in depth with a fascinating subject, the migration of Britons to the Continent in the early medieval period. Drawing on recent archaeological work, this study looks at the evidence for migration, the reasons for flight from Britain (asylum seekers or economic migrants?), the impact of this influx on Roman Armorica and later developments.

The American PCA or Popular Culture Association holds annual conferences with a slot dedicated to the Arthurian legends. Two of their area chairs – Elizabeth S Sklar and Donald L Hoffman – have co-edited ***King Arthur in Popular Culture*** (McFarland & Company 2002 0 7864 1257 7), a volume of nineteen essays on the influence of Arthurian legend in the mass media, marketplace and modern myth. Characters, settings and themes are often treated as mere commodity brand names, with little or no Arthurian content, but sometimes a more fundamental interest or idealism may be manifested such as in medieval recreation societies.

Worth a mention are a couple of titles on folklore issues with a bearing on Arthurian Studies. Jeremy Harte's ***The Green Man*** (Pitkin Guide, Jarrold Publishing 2001 pb £3.50 1 84165 045 5) discourses succinctly and sensibly on a subject usually full of pitfalls. Also, the prolific Jack Zipes edits ***The Oxford Companion to Fairy Tales*** (OUP 2002 £14.99 pb 0 19 860509 9), covering in over 600 pages a topic that takes you into unexpected places, though you may have to search hard to find specifically Arthurian themes.

Member Larry Mendelsberg tells us he will be a contributor for the next edition of ***The New Arthurian Encyclopedia*** to be published in 2005. "Ray Thompson asked if I would write entries for most of the short stories in my bibliography and for several novels that I've had the good fortune to uncover." Congratulations to Larry for landing this rather gargantuan task! He has promised to try to turn some of the entries for the novels into reviews for *Pendragon* ...

History Today is running a competition for ***The Legends of King Arthur***, a DVD from Eagle Media productions featuring reconstructions, recreations, images, theories, findings, quizzes and biographies. Send a postcard with your name, address and daytime phone number in block capitals, plus the answer to the question *Who wrote the historical fantasy, the History of the Kings of Britain*? to *History Today* King Arthur competition, 20 Old Compton Street, London WID 4TW or enter online at www.historytoday.com (the closing date is December 1st 2003). Eagle Media Productions can be contacted at 22 Armoury Way, London SW18 1EZ or viewed at eagle-rock.com

Credits: Editor, Steve Sneyd, Simon Rouse and Fred Steadman-Jones

the board

OLD NEWS

No, I hadn't heard of **Vagniacis** either. Ongoing research at a site near Gravesend in Kent suggests that a previously unknown rich complex of Romano-British temples and shrines made it the second largest "holy city" of its type north of the Alps. Surviving until the mid-to-late fourth century AD, it seems not to have withstood the rise of Christianity. Meanwhile, the discovery of a meteorite impact crater in the Italian Sirente-Velino National Park has been linked with the Emperor **Constantine's vision** of the cross in the sky around 312, only slightly spoilt as a theory by the fact that samples from the rim have been dated a little later, to 412 ± 40 years.

Dr Alex Woolf joins the discussion about the inability of TV programme DNA tests to distinguish between **Lowland Scots** and the **English** by confirming that much of north of the Borders was indeed part of 'Anglo-Saxon England', with much population movement in the following centuries. Matters are further complicated by the fact that around 25% of early populations did not produce children who reached breeding age, and so cannot have been the ancestors of anyone living today.

- David Keys "Revealed: Britain's Holy Roman City" *BBC History 4* no 8 (August 2003) 18–21
- David L Chandler "Crater find backs falling star legend" *New Scientist 2400* (June 21 2003) 13
- Alex Woolf "Scots and English" *British Archaeology 71* (July 2003) 24–5

ARTHURIAN ARTS

A *tangled tale* of "the **Lady of Shalott** being rescued by an Icelandic trawler skipper in love with the romance of English Pre-Raphaelite art" emerged early in 2003. The fisherman had acquired an oil sketch many years ago from the London King's Road, but his find was recognised only recently as not just significant but an original work of art in its own right. John William Waterhouse was obsessed with Tennyson's poem and painted episodes from *The Lady of Shalott* many times. The 1894 version in Leeds City Art Gallery shows the moment when "the mirror crack'd from side to side", but the sketch has details absent from the finished painting – the dress is "flame-red" and there are no strands of silk wrapping around her legs. Waterhouse must have been affected by William Holman Hunt's versions of this episode, but Poulson thinks Waterhouse created "a more immediate and intimate effect ... simpler and more dynamic". The sketch was auctioned by Sotheby's in June.

A review of the **Holy Grail tapestries** at Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery from May 24 to August 31 will appear in the next issue. Meanwhile *aficionados* may be drawn to the **Pre-Raphaelite Society** whose aim is to encourage the study of the works and lives of the Brotherhood and to promote a wider appreciation of the PRB. Membership starts at £14.00 from Michael Wollaston, 18 Floyd Grove, Balsall Common, Coventry CV7 7RP (www.pre-raphaelitesociety.org).

- Maev Kennedy "Fisherman finds lost sketch for Lady of Shalott" *The Guardian* May 26 2003
- Christine Poulson (1999) *The Quest for the Grail: Arthurian legend in British Art 1840–1920* (Manchester University Press) chapter 8 "The Lady of Shalott"

PEOPLE AND PLACES

Fifty children from north-west England and Yorkshire recently received honorary knighthoods from King Arthur ... courtesy of **Camelot Theme Park** in Chorley. The Park had "set out to find children who had overcome personal difficulties, tried extra-hard at school or spent time helping others" and the search had unearthed some remarkable stories.

Among the new knights were a haemophiliac and twins, one with fluid on the brain and the other who raised funds for a new children's hospice. The courage and selflessness of all the nominated children had ensured that the day's ceremony had been "a truly magical experience for all concerned".

In the course of a colourful life as soldier, athlete, author, animal trainer and film actor, **Michael O'Farrell**'s claim to Arthurian fame was his role as Sir Tarquin in John Boorman's 1981 film *Excalibur*. With escalating costs and bad weather threatening, "the cameras were no sooner rolling than Mick's Jack Russell bitch locked her jaws around Sir Lancelot's ankle. By the time the actor had shaken her off, it was raining again ..."

News now on the grail – or rather, **grails**. Archaeologist N A Hudleston recently reported taking his folklorist wife, Mary, who then had high blood pressure, to "a house in Wales" in 1964. A "dirty, dilapidated wooden cup, just like the ones from Vindolanda on Hadrian's Wall" was produced, judged by Hudleston to be possibly 1st century Roman provincial. Though the alleged Glastonbury link was retailed, his wife was nevertheless "OK within 24 hours!" after sipping from the **Nanteos Cup**.

Folklorist Jacqueline Simpson noted the modern "successors" to the Knights Templar using ultrasound and thermal imaging to trace the whereabouts of buried vaults under **Rosslyn Chapel**, Edinburgh. She suspected "some modern mystery-monger" to be responsible for the folklore supposedly suggesting that the Grail lies inside the Prentice Pillar in a lead casket. A cryptic note in *The Guardian G2* for April 21 suggests however that the **Holy Grail** was actually a boy band from southern California in the mid-50s. Can anyone confirm this?

- Hazel Ettienne "Brave boys honoured by King of Camelot!" *Huddersfield Daily Examiner* June 7 2003
- Nicholas Fogg "Michael O'Farrell" (obituary) *The Guardian* June 30 2003
- N A Hudleston "Visiting the Grail, 1964" and Jacqueline Simpson "Seeking the Grail, 2003" in *FLS News, the Newsletter of the Folklore Society 40* (June 2003) 5

BED AND BOARD ...

Chorley's **Park Hall Hotel**, set in woodland by a lake, and a walk away from the above-mentioned Camelot theme park, puts on regular medieval banquets in "true Camelot style" where guests can mingle with Arthur, Merlin and so on. Camelot itself has magic shows, jousting competitions, Merlin's school of wizardry for wannabe Harry Potters and, of course, rides. Tickets for Camelot are free to those who book into the hotel (01257 455000).

Camelot Castle itself featured in one of *The Guardian*'s columns. The "castellated colossus of the arrow-slits-meets-pebbledash variety" meets approval for its "spectacular" location, but "time-warped period interiors with a distinct baronial ambience" are marred by "way too many of the artist-proprietor's abstract paintings". Nevertheless, the rooms are declared eccentric but comfortable, the beds spotlessly clean, the ferry-cabin-like bathrooms supplied with loads of hot water, and the English breakfasts generous (01840 770202).

- Clare Morris "In the world of Camelot" *Huddersfield Daily Examiner* July 19 2003
- "Somewhere for the weekend" *The Guardian G2* July 5 2003

... TREADING THE BOARDS

Chester Gateway Theatre presents ***Merlin & Arthur***, a musical for all ages by Richard Williams and Stephen McNeff, from December 5 to January 17. "Two children play a game called *Return to Camelot* and before long they are taken on an adventure into the medieval world ... This is a day they'll never forget!" Details from Hamilton Place, Chester (01244 340392) and at www.chestergateway.co.uk

What was "effectively the first-ever fully staged" performance of Albéniz's ***Merlin*** was this year produced at the Teatro Real in Madrid. Isaac Albéniz's English patron Francis Burdett Money-Coutts provided a rhymed alliterative libretto for the work – the first part of an incomplete Arthurian trilogy – composed between 1898 and 1902.

After some "Excalibur business" Merlin and Arthur face up to Morgan and Nivian, here a Saracen slave. One reviewer thought the score "more relaxed and meandering" than Wagner, but with "charming" dance interludes and "beautiful" impressionist scene-painting. *Merlin* is dramatically weak, however, and the production was castigated for poor direction, scenery, costumes and

choreography. A British premiere is planned for next year by Garsington Opera.

In the wake of a furore at the Metropolitan Opera in New York comes a warning to arts organisations not to take money with "artistic strings attached". The Met's 2001 production of Wagner's ***Tristan und Isolde*** was not deemed "traditional" enough by a major sponsor, which is now suing them for millions of dollars. Cornwall's Restormel Castle saw a performance by Kneehigh Theatre of ***Tristan and Yseult*** in July (followed at Rufford Abbey, Nottingham) in a less traditional production clearly regarded as atmospheric by *The Guardian*'s reviewer: "dynamic acting ... pognant chorus ... tragic denouement ..." A scarlet sail hung from a mast built by Penryn Boatyard, swallows flitted across the enclosure, and battlements reflected the setting sun in an appropriate venue given that the Tristan Stone is not far away.

A stage version of *Monty Python and the Holy Grail* opens in New York in early 2005, tentatively called ***Spamalot***. The book of the Broadway musical is by Eric Idle, with music and lyrics by Idle and John Du Prez and choreography by Jerry Mitchell.

- Rupert Christiansen "Merlin without the magic" *The Daily Telegraph* May 30 2003
- Charlotte Higgins "A note to future sponsors ..." *The Guardian G2* July 31 2003
- Virginia Spiers "In on the act" *Guardian G2* July 23 2003
- "Spamalot, the musical!" *Huddersfield Daily Examiner* September 12 2003

CORRECTIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

Embarrassingly, *embarrassment* was wrongly spelt *three times* in last issue's editorial, and **Michael Morpurgo**'s name was also misspelt (page 7). The latter is currently Children's Laureate, a roving ambassador of literature for young readers.

In Charles Evans-Günther's review of *Pendragon* (page 37 last issue), a sentence in the paragraph beginning "First, did Arthur fight the Saxons?" should have read "However, if we decide that Arthur didn't fight the Saxons, the battles could likely have been in Wales rather than in the Eastern part of Britain" and not as printed.

J Haines, S Sneyd, F Stedman-Jones, Editor

JOURNALS AND SOCIETIES

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Caerdroia Journal of mazes and labyrinths. Editors: Jeff Saward, Kimberly Lowelle, 53 Thundersley Grove, Benfleet, Essex SS7 3EB. Annual sub: £6.00, ffi tel 01268 751915 info@labyrinthos.net

The Cauldron Paganism, folklore, earth mysteries. Sample: £2.50, annual subs: £12.00, cheques: M A Howard, BM Cauldron, London WC1N 3XX
the-cauldron.fsnet.co.uk

Celtic Connections Journal of Celtic and related subjects. Sample: £1.25, UK annual sub: £9.00, cheques: David Barton, 97 Rosehill Drive, Bransgore, Christchurch, Dorset BH23 8NX 4ER
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Hallowquest Caitlin and John Matthews' publishing and teaching programmes. Four issues £8.00 / £16.00 World, cheques: Caitlin Matthews, BCM Hallowquest, London WC1N 3XX *hallowquest.org.uk*

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The Round Table Occasional Arthurian poetry and fiction. Editors: Alan Lupack, Barbara Tepa Lupack. Enquiries: The Round Table, Box 18673, Rochester, New York NY 14618, USA (enclose IRC)
lib.rochester.edu/camelot/arthmenu.htm

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