

P E N D R A G O N

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POINT-TO-POINT

Large question marks -- like megalithic stones on successive hill ridges -- have dotted the Pendragon landscape for many long years. It looks now as if we may have stumbled on a connecting track that links them together in a way that gives them a possible overall meaning.

We have been pursuing this track in Bristol and have found ourselves unexpectedly meeting other Pendragons, living in other parts, who seem to have been following the same trail but for other reasons. Because of this we think we ought to dot in this path with various clues and suggestions so that all may join in if they wish. Whether or not the avenue we are exploring proves to be rewarding or not remains to be seen.

First set up the Question Marks. Then we'll try to ride a point-to-point between them.

1) Why has Arthur been handed down to us as the shining example of a Christian king when the priests of his own time either detested or ignored him ?

2) Apart from the exoteric argument about the date of Easter, what was the fundamental, esoteric bone of contention between the old Celtic Church and the missionaries from Rome ?

3) Kai, Bedevere, Tristram, Gawain can be identified from references in the Welsh Triads, but there is no mention of Lancelot till we come to the legends, the romances, the troubadours etc. There are those who think that Lancelot did not exist: if he did, that he was not part of the original group who did battle against the Saxons.

4) "Whom does the Grail Serve ?" This was a vital and fundamental question. Failure to ask it led to the abortive end of a previous quest.

5) Why is it that, nation-wide, during the last few decades, almost as much public interest has been developing in Richard III as has been shown in Arthur ? In our early history books (and in Shakespeare) we learnt to know him as the wicked, hunchback king who murdered the little princes in the Tower. There is a Richard III Society and successive books have been white-washing him with ever-growing enthusiasm.

Recently a book has been published in Britain called, "The Cathars and Reincarnation" by Arthur Guirdham, published by Neville Spearman. This book has roused so much interest that it is difficult to obtain from the libraries. Briefly, the book concerns a woman who lives in the West Country here who suffered intolerable nightmares until she was convinced she was going out of her mind and decided to visit a psychiatrist, Dr. Guirdham. Slowly, over the years, the patient recovered her confidence as

she dredged up names of people and descriptions of terrible events which she appeared to "remember" from a previous life when she was a peasant living in the Pyrenees. She described her friends and neighbours, all of whom were Cathars, when the Inquisition finally decided to liquidate this "heretical" community. Many details she gave, though apparently incorrect when checked with the records of the Inquisition, proved on further investigation to be more correct than the records.

Catharism was another name given to the Albigenses who were, according to the Church of Rome, heretics. (In Classical Greek the word 'heretic' meant only a free-thinker.) As the Cathars had roundly denounced the orthodox Church for its (at that time) obvious corruption and evil-living, it was natural that the Roman Church should reply with equally resounding denunciations of the evil-living Cathars. For this reason it has been difficult to discover what the real, basic, fundamental 'heresies' were. However, at this point a book has been put into our hands which -- together with the Guirdham book -- gives us a pretty clear picture of the kind of people the Cathars were, and a considerable number of their fundamental beliefs. (This book is, "The Albigensian Heresy" by H.J. Warner, published by the S.P.C.K. in 1922.)

They were a Puritanical sect, strict in morals and, as far as possible, sharing their goods communally. They ate no meat, cheese or eggs. They said in general that the doctrines of Christ and His Apostles were sufficient for salvation without the statutes of the Church. Their major heresy appears to have been their attitude towards the Mother of Jesus.

"They denied that the Blessed Virgin Mary was the true mother of Jesus; they deny also that she was a woman of flesh. But they said their sect and Order is the Virgin Mary and that true penance is a chaste virgin who bears sons of God when they are received into their sect and Order." (The Rev. R.J. Warner.)

While they lived in the quiet countryside of the Pyrenees they were kept in touch with other similar groups and other free-thinking communities by the Troubadours. Many of their romantic songs were not love ballads, as others believed, but were religious beliefs and ideals expressed in song and secret language. It seems that the Cathars, by and large, did not set much store by the Bible as a whole, but they carried copies of St. John's Gospel wherever they went and taught from that.

Note: St. John was the Apostle who, at the time of the Crucifixion, was commanded to care for the Mother. Great significance was attached to the verse in Ch. I. "And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not." The Huguenots, who carried on the Cathar traditions, were the people who invented watermarks and incorporated them into every sheet of paper they produced. Nearly all these watermarks carried symbols of one sort or another signifying Light. Also, the old history book tale about Richard Coeur de Lion being tracked down by a Troubadour becomes more interesting if we suspect that he may, secretly, have been a Cathar.

At this point a Pendragon member wrote in to ask a question which revived memories of things read in the past but which are now difficult to trace to source. He reminded us that the Garter Tower in Windsor Castle was built by Edward III who was a keen Arthurian, to incorporate the Round Table and the Arthurian princi-

-ples. The number of the original Knights of the Garter was 13 composed of the Royal Coven, and the jewelled snake garter was said to be the secret emblem of the Old Religion. We seem to remember reading somewhere that all Plantagenets were secretly followers of the Old Religion. Richard III, too, was a Plantagenet.

Which brings us to the latest book to appear in Britain which paints a completely new picture of Richard from the one we were presented with in our history books. (If he couldn't be safely liquidated, perhaps he could at least be discredited?) This book is called, "We Speak No Treason" and is written by Rosemary Hawley Jarman. Descriptions in the Press of how this book was written seem to hint that it may have a certain affinity with the Guirddham book inasmuch as a great deal of it was "remembered" rather than imagined.

A Cathar who was known to live a blameless life was known as a Parfait. Lancelot may, or may not, have been a "very gentil, parfait knight." We note with interest, however, that our American member, William Linden, wrote to us recently (as we printed in a previous issue of 'Pendragon'): "I thought his fiefs were mostly in the south (the Landes, Armagnac, Foix, bearn etc)". Well, were they? These were the cantons that sheltered the Cathars until their extermination.

Members who still have copies of "King Arthur's Avalon" should now go back and re-read the Appendix: it is too long to quote here. In this Geoffrey Ashe quotes extracts from the Acts of Pilate and from an apocryphal Gospel written by 'Barthomew'. The Apostles, he says, insisted on questioning Mary until finally she gave in to their entreaties and gave a remarkable reply which had startling results. From this Geoffrey deduces that the answer to the query, "Whom does the Grail Serve?" would seem to be "Mary." If we accept the Cathar interpretation of this word we can think up our own explanations. Finally there is the testimony that when Peter was told to "Feed My sheep" and asked, indicating John, "And what of him?" he was given the enigmatical reply: "If I will that he should tarry till I come again what is that to you?"

We note that in "Camelot and the Vision of Albion" Geoffrey Ashe has recently written: "It is more certain that the offbeat religion of the earlier Grail romances retains Celtic touches. The secret words spoken over the Grail, the question which is asked or not asked, belong to a spiritual tradition which evoked responses among the Celts. The actual question is usually stated as "Whom does the Grail serve?" Apparently it unlocks some mystery of divine action in the world. Such an approach is out of keeping with Roman orthodoxy, as is the whole atmosphere of quest".

And later: "Though Celtic Christianity was never strictly heretical, it did convey an odd flavour, a "Sense of Something Else" as it has been called...The debate at Whitby had a violence which the facts do not really explain...Both parties hinted at curious traditions descending from Simon Magus and the Apostle John. The papalist Christians scented a heterodoxy which they never managed to pin down. They felt the presence of something elusive and baffling. Such was the Celtic Church, in which the main corpus of Glastonbury and Grail legend are rooted".

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The above line of inquiry still needs much thought, discussion and revision. Please write to us and contribute your views.

IN THE LAND OF THE GIANTS

Cornwall is a part of Britain with more than its fair share of Arthurian associations. At Easter this year a group of Pendragons went down to the Penwith peninsula to savour a part of the Celtic world which, inspite of latter-day invasions, has managed to retain some of its otherworldly atmosphere within its heart.

In the early 1900's an astronomer called Lockyer examined several stone-circle sites in Britain, some of them in this south-west extremity, such as Nine Maidens, Boscawen-un, Merry Maidens (there are at least 21 such sites in Cornwall though even now professional archaeologists seem curiously averse to recognising them as megalithic monuments). He was interested to find that, as few circles were on the very highest ground, there were often outlying single standing stones at visible points on the horizon, usually at a mile or so away. Calculating back Lockyer found that these stones marked significant rising and setting positions of certain heavenly bodies as viewed from a stone circle, and that the coincidence of these phenomena was at about four thousand years ago.

It was left to later students to extend not only Lockyer's concepts but also his sighting lines, and it was noticed by John Michell that standing stones across the peninsula form alignments of four, five, and more, mark-points, and that, with an average of a mile or so between, the mark-points were theoretically visible one from another. And, as we found out in going down, the theory works out in practice, despite possible modern complications such as farm buildings, trees and other such viewing hazards. The heart of the peninsula is a remarkable series of undulations in contrasting countryside from farm- to moor-land, but stones were ^{or} placed to be just visible from sight-points.

Half a dozen points on an alignment may seem coincidental on a map, though more credible when examined in the field. Not all standing ^{ones} marked on maps are prehistoric by any means but the majority are, and in the field the differences between a cattle rubbing-post and a monolith are obvious. Similarly not all prehistoric standing-stones are marked on maps, and more than once, in missing our way to find one marked stone on our OS maps, we found another, unmarked; and on transferring it onto the map it was found to be located exactly on a previously marked alignment. (The sheer amount of unrecorded stones is worrying, as is also their steady disappearance by destruction and negligence.)

The range of mark-points was in the main limited to circle and stone. Often enough however Christian crosses (or sites of) are adaptations or replacements of existing earlier monoliths, and churches, founded on pagan sites as ordered by papal edict, also stand on or beside such stones (e.g. St. Buryan's church, which is a very visible land mark all over the south of the peninsula). Then there are the numerous other sites with legends attached to them (cairns, quoits, tumps etc.) which are found on or associated with these alignments.

The purpose of these alignments is not superficially apparent; but it is as well to note that though in co-operation with John Michell we were concerned mainly with extensions of Lockyer's astro-

nomical lines, John is himself interested in other non-astronomical alignments, for which a modern prosaic explanation is not forthcoming at the moment.

The long Easter week-end was, as elsewhere, very sunny and pleasant, and we are grateful to John Michell for the opportunity to help him in his field of study and theories. Our thanks also especially to Mrs. Thomas, Mrs. Lazarides, and to the many, many others who contributed to the success of the venture.

C.L.

THE LEGEND OF THE GRAIL

A book first published over ten years ago in German has now been translated into English: 'The Grail Legend' (by Emma Jung and Marie-Louise von Franz). This considers the basis of the stories in the light of Jung's depth psychology, in terms of symbolism, and its significance to the unconscious mind of all ages. The Grail legend, briefly, is about a mysterious life-giving object or vessel guarded by a maimed King whose health is related to the fertility of the land: the spell can only be broken, and the king and his land restored, by a pure and perfect questing knight who asks a certain question. As Pendragons know, the magic object was, in the medieval Grail stories, christianised into the cup used at the Last Supper and brought to Glastonbury by Joseph of Arimathea. The Jungs were concerned with the archetypal images contained in the Grail itself and its secondary features such as the Grail Castle, its associated objects -- sword, lance, cruets etc: -- and the personages who represent the human aspects; there is also the standpoint of alchemy with which Carl Jung was so much concerned.

The nature of the Grail is presented in a variety of images. The Christian 'chalice' aspect has already been touched on, and the alchemist's crucible (in which the vision of the Grail is said to have taken place after years of search for the philosopher's stone) may be an attempt to explain the mystery in medieval terms. One model was the pagan Celtic: the cauldron of Caridwen (in Welsh legend) or of Dagda (in Irish), a liquid source of inspiration or an inexhaustible supplier of nourishment. Other models include a horn of plenty, a magic talisman, a casket or platter, even a scrying-crystal, all of which are objects found frequently in Mythology. Its symbolism is equally diverse -- the void from which the Self emerges, the womb of unconsciousness, the Ark of the New Covenant, an unidentifiable flying object.....

Many places claim the Grail for their own, on the Continent and in the Middle East. In view of the current interest in the Cathars, it may be of interest to note that there have been "attempts to prove that the Grail was a relic or cult object of the Albigenses, the sect of the Catharists which.....was persecuted and exterminated in the south of France in the thirteenth century." It is suggested that "contents of a Catharistic nature which, on account of the risk of detection, were clothed in poetical and romantic language are concealed behind the texts of the Grail poems, and...that the Grail itself, the cult object, is

still lying hidden in some Pyrenean cave. The Grail stories do in fact contain very unorthodox features, and the fellowship of the Grail knights might perhaps be compared to the followers of the Albigensian sect, as they were equally thought to be connected with the Templars." At Nanteos, too, near Aberystwyth, is kept a fragile wooden cup no larger than a finger-bowl taken there after the dissolution of Glastonbury Abbey.

But the most hardy tradition of the Grail, like that of Arthur, is that it has passed away from human eyes, as Arthur has retreated to his cave or western isle, waiting for the moment ripe for the Return. The mystery of the Grail is of more potency when considered as symbolic, as a disappearance of the Inexplicable into the Unconscious, as opposed to the disenchantment of a mere physical object.

C.L.

'The Grail Legend' -- Emma Jung & Marie-Louise von Franz.
(Hodder & Stoughton).

'The Christ', Psychotherapy and Magic' --A.D.Duncan (Allen & Unwin.)

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THE WORTHY FARM FESTIVAL

Any Pendragon members or friends who are going to this Festival during the week of the Midsummer solstice, are invited to call at the Pendragon tent where we shall be distributing leaflets and selling bumper copies of our magazine, properly printed.

The tent will be gaily decorated with symbolic posters and should be readily identifiable on account of the windsock Pendragon standard that will be flying from it --if this can be successfully contrived !

There will be no gates, fences or entrance fees: the organisers have no intention of making it a commercial venture. They have been living at the farm for a considerable time, and their intention is to build the festival into an annual event in the manner of a medieval Fair.

Behind the farm there is a wide dip between the hills and the Fair will be held there. The organisers have told us that they hope to build a scale model of Stonehenge in the centre of this dip with a scale model of the Great Pyramid over it. One side of the Pyramid will be let down to reveal the inner circles and to form a platform for performances. It seems unnecessary to add that there will also be a certain amount of Pop music.

We wish the Festival every success and we hope we shall meet old friends there as well as new ones. The site is not far from Cadbury.

If any of our members on the other side of the Atlantic are interested enough to want to buy a copy of our Bumper Number, this will be available from PENDRAGON HOUSE:

Canada
71 Bathurst St.
Toronto 135,
Canada

U.S.A.
731 Myrtle Avenue,
Redwood City,
California 94061, U.S.A.

THE CATHARS

By Roger Davie Webster.

The Cathars comprised many sects of like doctrines, the most famous of which was the Albigenses (centred around Albi in southern France). They were at their most active around the end of the twelfth and the beginning of the thirteenth centuries A.D.

Their doctrines were Dualist in nature (i.e. they believed in two creative forces: 1) The Devil, creator of the world and all things visible, and 2) God, creator of all things invisible. Also they held that the doctrines of Christ and the Apostles were alone sufficient for salvation without the statutes of the Church. They had two groups within their Church: 1) The Parfaits (Perfects) upon whom the Holy Spirit was said to have descended, and 2) The Credents (Believers).

They were in total opposition to the Roman Church and held it to be a creation of the Devil -- this is more credible when one considers the degenerate state of the contemporary Church in France.

In this atmosphere it is little wonder that they were, with the demanding simplicity of life apparent in their behaviour, very quickly accepted by the common people, and spread with amazing rapidity throughout France and the rest of Europe, even into Italy.

Up till this time the Roman Church had attempted persuasion against the Heretics by way of preaching, disputation, and even excommunication, but by then it was apparent that the Papacy was in imminent danger of being supplanted by the Heretics, so powerful had they become. So it was that the Catholics took a hitherto-unprecedented step: they proclaimed the first Crusade ever to be launched against fellow Christians in Europe.

The struggle was long and arduous (nearly twenty years all told). Moreover, it was only after some time that the Cathars organised themselves into effective fighting units, this being due to their policies of non-violence which quickly became obviously suicidal in their cause.

The end came with the final fall of Toulouse in 1229 A.D. Simon de Montfort, a prime mover in the Crusade, having taken and lost Toulouse three times, vowed he would take it and hold it on the fourth attempt or or die: he died. Nonetheless it was eventually taken and held and this time the walls were destroyed to ensure that the Town was not held against them again. It was here that the Inquisition (set up to deal with the Cathars) was most active.

By the end of the thirteenth century the heresy had been virtually exterminated, though it was not until 1404 A.D. that the Bishop of Amboise declared Toulouse "A city no longer tainted by Heresy". It may have lingered on in out-of-the-way places for some time but it was certainly finished as a significant religious force.

It may be of interest to local readers to know that a monastic sect of Cathars, called the Bonshommes, is thought to

have been active in Bristol at that time.

Reference books.

The Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics.

The Albigenian Heresy by the Rev. H. Warner, M.A.
(S.P.C.K.)

The Cathars and Reincarnation by A. Guirdham.

The Catholic Encyclopaedia.

Correspondence: A letter of inquiry sent to Mr. Linden brought this reply: The identification of Lancelot with Aquitaine --specifically, with Guienne - is made by Malory in XX 18, where he invests his various followers with Limousin, Poitiers, Querne, Saintonge, Perigeux, Rouerge, Bearn, Comminges, Armagnac, Foix, the Landes, Provence, Languedoc, Agenais (?), Anjou, Normandy and several other places which I cannot identify from his spelling. Perhaps someone more versed in the literature than I can say whether anything similar occurs in the French versions of the Morte. (Malory connects Benwick with Beaune). This line of speculation is highly interesting to me as Manichaean Influences are my personal hobbyhorse.

Mr. Linden does not see any connection between the Cathars and troubadours. We can only refer him to the Guirdham book mentioned on Page 1.

A letter of inquiry to Major Woodhead brought us a list of Lancelot's legacies as given by Malory. They are as above with a few additions. Our thanks also to Major Woodhead for replying.

Mr. Linden also refers to a previous issue of 'Pendragon'. "In a recent Pendragon, John Brooke suggested that the familiar George-and-Dragon icon really commemorated Arthur. It may interest you to know that the emblem was used by, of all places, Moscow, and was thence adopted by the order of St. Andrew. If Mr. Brooke's suggestion is correct, that makes Arthur a semi-patron of the Russian Empire. (There was also a Russian Order of St. George.) "

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Our very kind, helpful and useful member, John Badger, who owns Pendragon House Ltd: and lives in Toronto, has just been to visit us. In the fall he is publishing a book he has written himself which is to be called "The Arthuriad". He thinks it may well become the storm-centre of the Seventies.

Roll on The Fall !

