

NOTES ON LUNDY AS VORTIGERN'S BURIAL PLACE

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Perhaps if one were an archaeologist one would not dare speculate on Lundy as a Royal Necropolis. The writer is not an archaeologist, but has been interested in historical controversy since undergraduate days, believing that controversy can contribute in three ways to historical truth. It can open up new lines of enquiry; it can lead to the critical testing of a particular generalization or hypothesis; it can lead to new synthesis. An historian who has researched deeply into his subject can become blinded to wider perspectives and alternative lines of enquiry; and a new speculation could force consideration of such alternative lines of enquiry. A magnificent hypothesis might well only be re-examined in a confrontation with another such. These enquiries and confrontations could produce a synthesis which might come closer than before to historical truth.

The writer would not wish to incur Glyn Daniel's strictures on 'the sort of nonsense that luxuriates in the lunatic fringes of serious archaeology', and therefore stresses the speculative nature of these notes.

Notes

1. For some years now the writer has felt that there were 'on the ground' on Lundy many more Tumuli than appear to be recorded on any maps. They appear to follow the pattern of tumuli observed on Exmoor, that is, from any one given tumulus it is possible to see at least one other, and often many others, as if the mounds were not only burial or memorial places, but markers, often in alignment or conjunction with standing stones.

2. These standing stones on Lundy, and the Kistvaen (opened in 1851- indicate (together with the tumuli) a use of the island by megalithic and bronze age tomb builders. The writer also believes there is a simple form of passage grave in the S.W. field.

3. Such evidence as is available to the writer (in secondary form, a bibliography is appended) indicates that tombs such as those on Lundy were not for communal burial, but were the tombs or cenotaphs of the leaders of communities.

4. Lundy is placed in a most interestingly central position on the megalithic sea-routes, from a historical point of view. [See figure 4 in 'Saints, Seaways and Settlements' by E. G. Bowen.] It is also a place that would catch the imagination of people living on the mainland coasts of S. Wales, Somerset, Cornwall and Devon. On some days it is dramatically visible for miles, and on others it vanishes; a legendary Island of Glass. The sun setting behind it can give an aura of power almost tangible. It seems, then, a not unlikely choice as a megalithic/bronze necropolis of what we might call a 'royal' kind.

5. An additional point of interest in assuming 'royalty' for these tombs is their possible mathematical and astronomical value to the communities. There appears to have been a high degree of importance attached to tumuli, stone circles and alignments, which allows one to wonder if that importance was a part of 'royal' burial. The mounds and stones appear to have been sightlines for 'roads' (many tumuli carry modern ordnance survey triangulation marks) and to have been calendar fixings on sun, moon and/or stars, as well as tombs or cenotaphs. It is as if the knowledge necessary for living were also a veneration for the 'royal' dead.

6. If Lundy were a megalithic necropolis, it might then be also a place natural for a Christian missionary of the Dark Ages (Romano-Celtic) to choose for a cell. The writer believes St. Elen and St. Ann, or their predecessors did so choose. Archaeology indicates Christian burial on Lundy. Christianity is theoretically an egalitarian religion, but it is quite remarkable that many early saints (or missionaries) were of royal or patrician families, for example Kentigern and the children of the (legendary ?) king of Brecon. It seems likely that this leadership

may have marched with a use of ancient burial grounds of pagan kings for Christian lords and kings. [The Sutton Hoo sceptre/whetstone symbolises pagan kingship, and it has been suggested Sutton Hoo is a pagan monument for a Christian convert, so that a close relationship between the pagan and the Christian exists in royal burials elsewhere.] If the Christian chapel or cell of the Dark Ages did continue the use of the hypothesized megalithic necropolis on Lundy, then the Tigernus stone could mark a 'royal' burial. In 'Current Archaeology' of May 1968 Keith Gardner says, '... the first part of each word is missing. Possibly, therefore, the second line should be Fili Tigerni... and the first line should, perhaps, read something like Contigerni, for Tigernus means Chief and Contigernus (or Kentigern) means Big Chief.' It could also mean 'High King'.

7. The writer suggests that this High King could be Vortigern. He appears to have been killed or died under circumstances that might preclude any name being given him on his headstone, although it is also possible that the reverence for proper burial of the Northern Warrior (cf. the Valhalla Concept) might mean the missing letters are 'Vort' rather than 'Cont', and he was buried as the sometime High King.

8. Vortigern appears to have met his end in S.E. Wales, somewhere in Monmouthshire, by Wye and Severn, which places him culturally and geographically where Lundy would be the proper necropolis for him. (It is interesting to note that Alcock allows some substance to the story of Arthur's burial at Glastonbury, another ancient holy place.)

9. The inscription on the Tigernus stone, if it is a Fili Tigerni inscription, is one of those which Bowen suggests is perhaps Pelagian, rejecting Matt. xxiii, v.9 (and rejecting also the Hic Iacit/Jacet inscriptions). Bowen also suggest Vortigern may have been instrumental in promoting Pelagianism.

10. None of these points is conclusive (the writer fully realizes), but taken together (and there is, of necessity, a great deal of collaborative 'evidence' left out of these Notes) they seem to constitute a speculation that might promote further interest in specialists in the field.

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SIZES AND AGES OF SOME CRUCIAN CARP ON LUNDY

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INTRODUCTION

During the drought of 1976, Pondsbyrd dried out, and I. G. and L. V. Black rescued numbers of crucian carp (*Carassius carassius*. L.) and transferred them to Quarry Pond. No other species of fish are known to have been present in Pondsbyrd. Quarry Pond already contained crucian carp, goldfish (*Carassius auratus*. L.) and at least a single tench (*Tinca tinca*. L.). According to Muus and Dahlstrom (1967) growth of the crucian carp in small ponds may be very slow and a stunted form (*forma humilis*) results. It is this form that is found in Pondsbyrd and Quarry Pond.