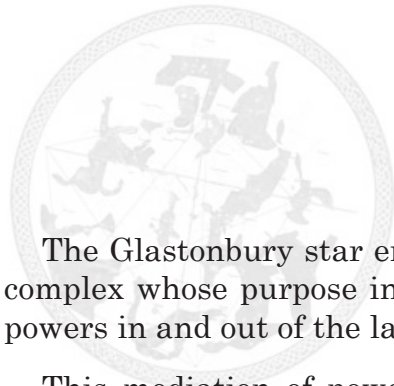




Logres, the Stellar Fire & the Land of Faery



The Glastonbury star enclosure is a sacred centre, a magical complex whose purpose includes the mediation of great stellar powers in and out of the landscape.

This mediation of power has to do with healing the earth, and with maintaining harmony and balance between the Three Realms and within the landscape and its denizens. The spiritual power flows through a weaving or net of interconnected paths, which are commonly referred to as *leys* or dragon lines.¹ These are interlaced lines of invisible fire in the earth that connect nodes of power much the same way that constellational lines interlink the stars. And just as the stars circle about a pole, so do the land-forms in which they are imprinted and through which the dragon lines flow also open up to the centre of the earth, to the stellar fire of the "earth star" at the core of the planet.



Now all this is no matter of speculation, but of living magical experience that is well-documented in the history of traditional sacred landscapes. Perhaps one of the best examples of the notion of this triangulation of power lines running across the landscape and deep into the UnderRealm is found among the aboriginal peoples of northern New Mexico.²

The sacred landscape of the *Tewa* people is defined by the seven directions. Sacred beings in the form of six pairs of twins watch over and guard the landscape from the six points of space around the centre. The centre is at a spot in the village of *Ohkay Owingeh* (meaning "place of the strong ones"), the most northerly of the ancient villages or *pueblos*. This centre is marked by a circle of stones around a depression in the earth known as the Navel of the Earth Mother,³ which is a kind of magical well-spring connecting the mysteries of the pole star to the sacred presence of the Deep Goddess and the chthonic mysteries of the UnderRealm.

Four pairs of the guardians are linked to four sacred mountains, each of which has a similar well. Around these wells also are stone circles with clearly defined, stone-lined channels that point to the various villages in the landscape. Magical power emerges from the central well, across the land to the four mountains, where it is gathered in and mixes with the energies of the local wells. It then flows out again as a "blessing" power along designated paths to each of the *pueblos* (Figure 1).

The whole complex is a living example of a grid of interlaced lines running through the landscape and enabled by the powers of the deep earth and stars. I have visited one of the mountain-top sites and looked with inner vision into the well. There was a great whorl or swirling of light and power within it, like the turning of the starry heavens ~ but within the earth ~ and there were presences that I can only describe as beings of Faery.

I first learned about this sacred landscape from the late Alfonso Ortiz (1939-1997), himself a *Tewa* Indian from *Ohkay Owingeh*, and was fortunate to take classes from him at the



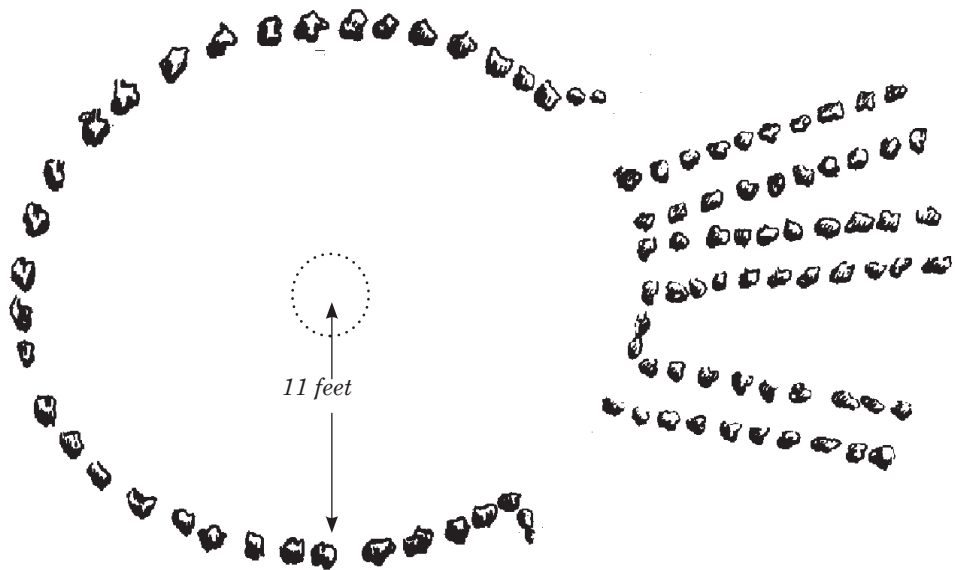


Figure 1: On the four world mountains of the sacred landscape of the Tewa peoples are stone circles with channels opening toward the main villages. At the centre is a shallow “well” of spiritual power that flows between the UnderRealm and Stars and radiates out across the land.

University of New Mexico in the mid nineteen-nineties.⁴ Its description is undoubtedly an important document for the comparative understanding of sacred landscapes in general. And in particular, we find a number of important parallels with the Glastonbury Star Enclosure. I would point to the Seven Directions, the Thirteen Presences, the sacred wells and their relation to the generation and flow of “blessing” lines through the landscape.

Rather interesting is the existence of four sacred hills surrounding the Enclosure. KEM mentions three of these: Burrow Mump in the west, Glastonbury Tor, Cadbury Castle. The quaternary is completed by the addition of Hamdon Hill to the south.⁵ All these are about 11 miles apart and are associated with sacred springs.

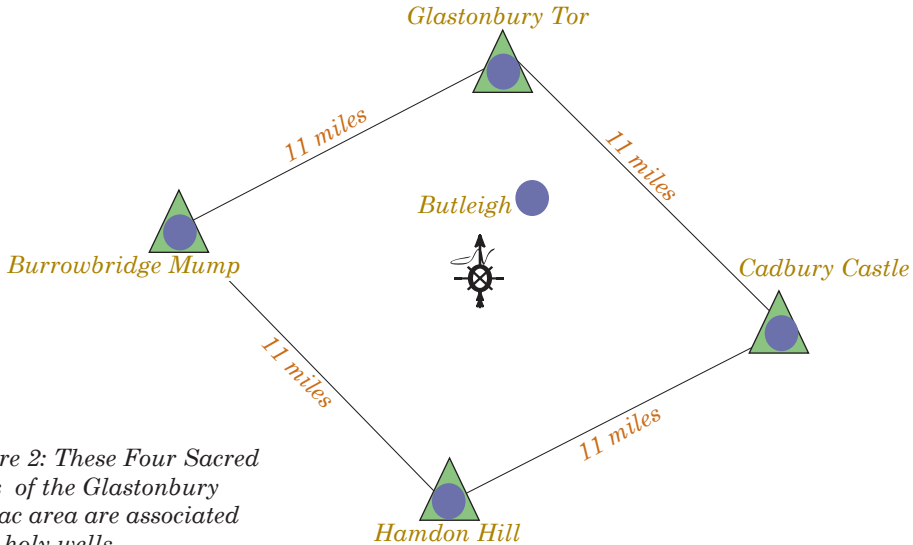


Figure 2: These Four Sacred Hills of the Glastonbury Zodiac area are associated with holy wells

Also of note is the existence in the *Tewa* landscape of a world navel or omphalus, which is not surprising since the omphalus appears almost universally in world traditions as an expression of the principle and power of the spiritual Centre. The best known example was at Delphi, in ancient Greece where it takes the form of a central stone, with a net carved upon it. This stone was, Plato tells us, the seat of Apollo (*Republic 427b*) who in addition to being a god of light is also the lover of the Goddess in the UnderRealm.⁶ Apollo was widely known in Celtic tradition too, as Belen or Ablun (a name which has connections to *Avalon*).

In many Celtic lands it seems certain standing stones or *menhirs* served a similar function to the Delphic omphalus. There are no central *menhirs* left at either Glastonbury or Butleigh, though this does not mean they never existed. In any case there are a couple of other suggestive visions and traditions regarding a centre stone that deserve mention here.⁷ For instance, Katharine Maltwood envisioned the Grail as a green stone deep in the earth below Butleigh at the centre of the Enclosure whence it radiated spiritual light.⁸



No less interesting is the lore surrounding the *Siege Perilous*, which was a special chair at the Round Table reserved by Merlin for the Grail winner. Sometimes this seat appears at the centre of the table, at others it is shown at the top, that is, the north, which is merely another way of linking it to the power of the pole or spiritual Centre. In Chrétien's *Conte du Graal*, when Perceval, the Grail knight, sits in the chair, which is itself a gift of Faery, a great earthquake splits the earth around it and a passage to the UnderRealm opens up. Lewis Spence, in his *Magic Arts in Celtic Britain*, pointed out the close connections between the Siege Perilous and the Celtic *Lia Fail* or Stone of Destiny, and to standing stones in general (p.161ff).

There are also interesting connections between the legends of the Siege Perilous and Glastonbury Tor. Not only is the Tor in the north of the Round Table of constellational effigies, but according to KEM it is closely connected to the figure of Percival. What's more, the Tor is known to have been rocked by a massive earthquake in 1275. This is not to suggest that the earthquake in the Tor is the inspiration for the story of the Siege Perilous, which would in any case be somewhat anachronistic. However, I would suggest that what we have here is a certain power in the land expressing itself in historic events through the principle of magical resonance.

This idea of a sacred power in the land is closely bound up with the mysteries of the Glastonbury Enclosure as an expression of Logres, the sacred land of Arthurian tradition.

Further light is thrown on these mysteries by a curious work known as *The Elucidation*⁹ which first appeared as a prologue to a manuscript of Chrétien de Troyes' *Percival*.

Now, according to Sebastian Evans *The Elucidation* was written by the same hand as the *High History of the Holy Graal* ~ the text that first sparked KEM's realisations about the Glastonbury Zodiac. This is surely significant because it suggests that these texts are speaking of the same area – the sacred enclosure around Glastonbury.



A detailed examination of *The Elucidation* is beyond the scope of this paper. However, there are two elements in particular that are immediately relevant and cannot go unmentioned. These are:

1. *The Maidens of the Wells*. The text mentions a group of women who dwelled in wells, fed all travellers from magical golden bowls, and enabled contact with the court of the Rich Fisher, "which had made the land resplendent." When the maidens are raped, the "Voices of the Wells" are silenced, the children of the maidens retreat to the forests, and Logres becomes a wasteland.

2. *The Seven Wards or Guardians of Logres*. Now these Seven Guardians are called "branches," which we may take in at least two contexts. The first being the branches of the polar tree, that is, the seven directions (the seventh being the centre); the second being branches of a story or tradition. And in the text these guardians are indeed described as both beings and traditions. They can be identified with the guardians of the maidens in the forest mentioned above.¹⁰ This suggests, therefore, that there were seven maidens of the wells (or nine if we consider the central one in triple aspect, which seems to have been the case of the nine maidens of Avalon mentioned by Geoffrey of Monmouth).

What we have here are fragments of sacred lore dealing with a line of Faery women whose primary role was to maintain the relationship between the UnderRealm and the Land. When the relationship is broken, the blessings disappear from the land and it becomes a place of desolation.

Much of the Arthurian matter can be seen as detailing this break with reality, its disastrous consequences, and failed attempts at restitution. The Arimathean stream of tradition on the other hand reveals a path of restoration. The Arimathean stream is essentially a camouflaged expression of an ancient line of sacerdotal mysteries that are epitomized in the figure of Merlin, for whom Joseph of Arimathea became a Christianised surrogate.¹¹ These mysteries are particularly connected to the birth of a Child of Light from the UnderRealm and Stars.



We are in a position today to participate in this restoration, which has implications and magical resonance far beyond the specific physical enclosure of the Glastonbury Zodiac, which contains a kind of primal imprint of the perennial sacred land. No matter where we live, it is now within our power to call forth the Court of the Rich Fisher, gain sustenance from the Golden Bowl, and hear once more the Voices of the Wells of Logres.

Notes

¹ Though they are not unrelated on a primordial level, the use of the term “dragon lines” here is distinct from Chinese traditions that mention dragon paths running through the landscape. They are called dragon lines because they link sites connected to mythical dragons. The dragon may appear in several ways – a common one being in association with sacred hills as at Glastonbury and Burrowbridge with St Michael the Dragon Slayer. It is also significant that dragons sometimes appear in connection with sacred stones and wells such as those at St Martin’s Stane in Scotland, which is also tied to traditions of nine maidens – a motif that occurs at Glastonbury too. A third interrelated connection is, as at Butleigh, with Draco the stellar dragon who represents the coursing star fire within the sacred landscape.

² I first drew attention to this in connection with ley line theory in 1995, briefly in my book *Patterns in Magical Christianity*, and more extensively in dialogues with various people and on internet discussion lists.

³ Literally "Earth mother earth navel middle place." See note 2 above.

⁴ Descriptions and references in Ortiz, *The Tewa World: Space, Time, Being, and Becoming in a Pueblo Society*. Ortiz’s work got him into trouble with some of the Tewa elders who accused him of revealing certain spiritual secrets of his people.

⁵ On Hamdon Hill as the fourth point see *The Isle of Avalon: Sacred Mysteries of Arthur and Glastonbury* by Nicholas R. Mann (Green Magic, 2001).

⁶ See Peter Kingsley, *In the Dark Places of Wisdom*. Duckworth and Co., 2001. p 91.

⁷ In the Glastonbury star complex there are a number of images of the centre, that are, in a fashion, concealed ~ for instance, in the Butleigh cross. But the centre is most evidently expressed in the hill of the Tor, which constitutes a kind of master or great omphalus, being both a centre and sacred mountain. That is, it is the centre of



a sacred precinct, where great powers flow and are modulated in and out of the earth; and it is simultaneously the central hill or focus in a sacred landscape, or island. The association of the Glastonbury star complex with a holy well and special burials is surely significant. As is its connection with the constellation of Aquarius, which is closely linked with the mediation of power through the landscape and with the mysteries of the stars.

⁸ Rosemary Brown, *Katharine Emma Maltwood, Artist, 1878-1961*. Sono Nis Press, 1981.

⁹ Albert Wilder Thompson, *The Elucidation: A Prologue to the Conte del Graal*. New York, 1931.

¹⁰ One of these guardians is named Blihos or Bleheris who is clearly the same personage as Blihis, earlier mentioned in the text as the Faery storyteller who first revealed the mystery of the grail. The name Blihis is no doubt a form of Blaise, Merlin's teacher.

¹¹ It is interesting that Robert de Boron, who in the twelfth century introduced many of the legends of Joseph of Arimathea and the Grail, also wrote a work on Merlin. De Boron links these two figures through the image of the Round Table.

