

Trajectories of the Grail Myths: A Checklist.

The Holy Grail is such a persisting icon that, even though it was the focus of only a brief flowering of romance literature in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, it has resonated through the centuries as fodder for arcane speculations and inspiration for such poets as Tennyson and T.S. Eliot. This checklist brings together works which shed light on the origins of the Grail tradition. They come from the field of Medieval literature but also from the study of folklore and religion. The intention is to provide material to assist in the tracking of the trajectories of the various traditions through the available texts, much as has been attempted in New Testament scholarship, to illuminate backwards towards the origin of the sources, and forwards, looking at their later influences.(Robinson and Koester)

The nature of the subject requires important exclusions to make it useful to the solely English speaking user. The texts concerned are often from originals in Old French or German languages and for practical reasons I have only listed their English translations and when several exist, those likely to be most easily accessed. The literature on the subject is also often in French or German and these articles have been excluded except where available in translation. A further exclusion is due to the multiplicity of small, obscure journals this subject has spawned which are not easily accessed, which, like the foreign language articles, I have been unable to check for their relevance to the subject. Later literature inspired by the Grail romances, but which has nothing to say on the possible sources have been omitted, as has the vaguely New Age genre in which the Grail acts as a symbol for self-fulfillment, more at home in California than Glastonbury.

Checklist

1. Aronstein, Susan Lynn. "The Quest for a Genre: Continuation and Generic Transformation in the Medieval Grail Legend (Arthurian)." DAI. 48.11 (1988): 2868A. Stanford University.
2. Baigent, Michael, Richard Leigh and Henry Lincoln. The Holy Blood and the Holy Grail. London: Corgi, 1983.

Phenomenally successful book based on applying a stubborn literal mindedness to the aspect of the Grail story to do with the blood of Christ. The Grail becomes code for the bloodline of the Magdalene and Christ through the Merovingian dynasty, the Templars and the Masons to the present day. While, to paraphrase Douglas Adams in the Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy, this book is often wildly inaccurate and contains much which is apocryphal , it does contain a lot of material on the hermetic associations of the Grail myth and is an example of its trajectory forwards to the present.
3. Ball, Jenny L. "Joseph of Arimathea and the Arthurian Tradition." DAI. 47.12 (1987): 4393A. University of Tennessee.
4. Bogdanow, Fanni. The Romance of the Grail: A Study on the Structure and Genesis of a Thirteenth-Century Arthurian Prose Romance. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1966.
5. ---. "An Interpretation of the Meaning and Purpose of the Vulgate 'Queste del Sant Graal' in the Light of the Mystical Theology of St. Bernard." The Changing Face of Arthurian Romance. Ed. Alison Adams et al. Woodbridge, England: Boydell, 1986. 23-46.
6. Bowman, Leonard J. "The Shape of the Metaphor." "Itinerarium": The Idea of Journey. Ed. Leonard J. Bowman. Salzburg: University of Salzburg, 1983. 3-33.

This paper looks at the Grail quest within the motif of the "Journey", particularly with reference to the feeling of being a stranger in this world, which he finds commonly in records of Medieval times. It is suggested that the actual adventures of crusading knights and the mystical journeys like that described in "Pearl" are merged into the Grail quest. This resulting quest is depicted as being through an imaginary topography and paralleled by a spiritual journey towards God and self-knowledge. The Grail also becomes a symbol for the sacraments of the Church.

7. Bradstock, Margaret. "Malory's Tale of the Sankgraal: The Culmination of a Tradition." Journal of the Australian Universities' Language and Literature Association. 68 (1987): 207-32.
8. Brown, Arthur C.L. The Origin of the Grail Legend. New York: Russell and Russell, 1966.
9. Bruce, James Douglas. The Evolution of the Arthurian Romance: From the Beginnings down to the Year 1300. Gloucester, Massachusetts: Peter Smith, 1958.
10. Buether, Bonnie. "The Good Friday Scene in Chretien de Troyes `Percival'." Traditio. 36 (1980): 415-26.
11. Campbell, Joseph. "Indian Reflections in the Castle of the Grail." The Celtic Consciousness. Ed. Robert Driscoll. New York: Braziller, 1982. 3-30.
This is the introductory talk from a Symposium on the Celtic consciousness. He highlights the mystical nature of the Grail story by giving several parallels with Indian mythology. Campbell suggests that they share an esoteric view of mythological symbols and while he stops short of suggesting common origins, he interestingly notes in Wolfram's Parzival the possibility of Islamic influence, which may then in turn have

been influenced by Indian ideas. He summarises this strain of the Grail tradition and notes the other major sources as Celtic fairyland tales and a strain derived from an elite ecclesiastical tradition.

12. Chretien de Troyes. Arthurian Romances. trans. William W. Kibler. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1991.
13. Evans, Sebastian. trans. The High History of the Holy Grail. London: Dent, 1910.
14. Fiedler, Leslie A. "Why is the Grail Knight Jewish? A Passover Meditation." Aspects of Jewish Culture in the Middle Ages. Ed. Paul E. Szarmach. Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1979.
Fiedler suggests that the Grail Knight is essentially a Jewish character. He makes interesting points on the Grail story in general, being largely critical of past attempts to find concrete sources and definitive solutions to a problem which cannot be tied down. The suggestion is made that the story necessarily only has a middle and attempts to provide continuations and beginnings misrepresent the intent. The Grail is presented as alien to the Celtic roots of the story with the failure of the Grail quest signifying the inability of chivalry to come to terms with a Judeo-Christian ethic.
15. Fisher, Lizette Andrews. The Mystic Vision in the Grail Legend and in the Divine Comedy. New York: AMS., 1966.
16. Grant, Marshall Seery. "'Sir Gawain and the Green Knight' and the Quest for the Grail: Chretien de Troyes' Perceval, the first continuation, Diu Krone and the Perlesvaus." DAI. 52.2 (1991): 533A. Yale University.
17. Girard, Charles Auguste Othenin. "Christian Belief and Practice in the Conte Del Graal of Chretien de Troyes." DAI. 45.2 (1984): 516A. Tulane University.

18. Hall, Manly Palmer. The Secret Teachings of All Ages: An Encyclopaedic Outline of Masonic, Hermetic, Qabbalistic and Rosicrucian Symbolical Philosophy. Los Angeles: Philosophical Research Society, 1988.

19. Hancock, Graham. The Sign and the Seal. London: Mandarin, 1993.

A book aiming to be as popular as The Holy Blood and the Holy Grail, and interestingly packaged in paperback to look almost identical to it. Written by a journalist with Ethiopian experience, it suggests that the Ark of the Covenant still exists in Eritrea. Written in an odd, self-conscious style, it is a quest story on its own and ties in with the Grail in the contention that the Grail is the tablets of the Law contained in the Ark. While clearly ludicrous, there is interesting material on the Knights Templars in Jerusalem which provides background to the influence of the crusades on the Grail legend.

20. Holmes, Urban Tignor and Sister M. Amelia Klenke. Chretien de Troyes and the Grail. Chapel Hill, North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 1959.

21. Holmes, Urban Tignor. Chretien de Troyes. New York: Twayne, 1970.

22. Ihle, Sandra Ness. Malory's Grail Quest: Invention and Adaptation in Medieval Prose Romance. Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1983.

23. Jung, Emma and Marie Louise von Franz. The Grail Legend. Trans. Andrea Dykes. New York: Putnam, 1970.

24. Kahane, Henry and Renee Kahane. The Krater and the Grail: Hermetic Sources of the "Parzival". Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1965.

This details possible hermetic sources for the Grail legends. The "Krater" of the Corpus Hermeticum is equated with the Grail of the

romances. While giving many interesting parallels between Wolfram's work and those in the hermetic lexicon, the suggestion that Wolfram simply retold an Arabic story from the Corpus Hermeticum is likely to be an oversimplification. The book contains some interesting reproductions of hermetic and Grail pictures from the era.

25. Lagorio, Valerie M. "Joseph of Arimathea: The Vita of a Grail Saint."

Zeitschrift fur Romanische Philologie. 91 (1975): 54-68.

This article emphasizes the hagiographic and apocryphal basis for the Grail Story as it relates to Joseph of Arimathea. Sources are found for Joseph material in the Gospel of Peter, the Gospel of Nicodemus and in traditional works attributed to the Church fathers. These have Joseph as an influential knight, a friend of Pilate and descended from the line of David, and represent a tradition in which Joseph is esteemed above even Peter. The Joseph tradition is shown to inextricably linked with the cult of relics, and its influence on the Grail myths forms part of the transformation from the magic cup of plenty to the chalice of the mass.

26. Lee, Sonia. "The Struggle between Cistercian and Cathar 1145-1200 AD and

Its Possible Influence on Holy Grail Literature." DAI. 36.6 (1975): 3656.

27. Locke, Frederick W. The Quest for the Holy Grail. Stanford, California:

Stanford University Press, 1960.

28. Loomis, Roger Sherman. Celtic Myth and Arthurian Romance. New York:

Columbia University Press, 1927.

29. ---. Arthurian Tradition and Chretien de Troyes. New York: Columbia

University Press, 1949.

30. ---. Wales and the Arthurian Legend. Cardiff: University of Wales Press,

1956.

31. ---. ed. Arthurian Literature in the Middle Ages: A Collaborative History. Oxford: Clarendon, 1959.
- An enormous collection of essays, forty-one in all, covering the whole corpus of the genre. Particularly relevant is one of the editors' pieces "The Origin of the Grail Legends" in which he summarises his position on the source of the myths. He provides interesting critiques of several theorists in the area, notably Weston, Nutt and Brown, and then gives the evidence which supports his viewpoint. He sees their origin ultimately in Irish sagas which were transformed into Welsh Tales which were then Christianised in France prior to Chretien's time. The inconsistencies between versions are put down in part to difficulties in translation of the tales during this process.
32. ---. The Grail: From Celtic Myth to Christian Symbol. Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1963.
33. ---. Studies in Medieval Literature: A Memorial Collection of Essays. New York: B. Franklin, 1970.
34. Malcor, Linda A. "The Chalice at the Cross: A Study of the Grail Motif in Medieval Europe." DAI. 52.4 (1991): 1472A. University of California.
35. Malory, Sir Thomas. Le Morte d' Arthur. Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1969.
36. Matarasso, Pauline Maud. trans. The Quest of the Holy Grail. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1969.
37. ---. The Redemption of Chivalry: A Study of the "Queste del Saint Graal". Geneva: Droz, 1979.
38. Nutt, Alfred. Studies on the Legend of the Holy Grail with Special Reference to the Hypothesis of Its Celtic Origin. New York: Marandell, 1965.
- An old, but comprehensive coverage of the subject, being a reprint of an original work from the turn of the century. This book provides a useful

summary of Chretien and his "finishers", Wolfram and de Boron. His literature review covers the extent of study into the Grail up to the Victorian period which is now difficult to access. Nutt's major contribution here is a detailed study of the parallels to the Grail stories which he finds in Celtic literature. An unusual and useful appendix, in view of the multiplicity of texts, is a list of the Dramatis Personae of the legend.

39. Nutt, Alfred. The Legend of the Holy Grail. New York: AMS., 1972.
 40. Olschki, Leonardo. The Crail Castle and Its Mysteries. Trans. J.A. Scott. Ed. Eugene Vinaver. Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1966.
 41. Owen, D.D.R. The Evolution of the Grail Legend. Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1968.
 42. Pickens, Rupert T. The Old French Grail Romances of the Twelfth Century. Ann Arbor, Michigan: University Microfilms, 1968.
 43. Ratliff, Julie Marie. "Gawain, Perceval, and Galahad: A Study of the Grail Heroes." MAI. 28.2 (1984): 206. Northeast Missouri State University.
 44. Skeels, Dell. trans. The Romance of Perceval in Prose: A Translation of the E Manuscript of the Didot Perceval. Attrib. to Robert de Boron. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1961.
 45. Sturges, Robert S. Medieval Interpretation: Models of Reading in Literary Narrative. Carbondale, Illinois: Southern Illinois University Press, 1991.
 46. Weston, Jessie Laidlay. From Ritual to Romance. Garden City: Doubleday, 1957.
 47. ---. The Quest of the Holy Grail. London: Cass, 1964.
- Weston presents here her ritual theory of the origin of the Grail. She outlines the path from a pagan nature worship cult whose tradition was

taken over and modified into the Christian romances by authors who did not understand the meaning of the original tradition. This work is of interest more from its influence on the writing of T.S. Eliot than any claim to being a definitive view on the Grail.

48. ---. The Legend of Sir Perceval. Geneva: Slatkine Reprints, 1975.
49. Weintraub, Eugene Joel. Chretien's Grail: A Jewish Rite?: A New Investigation based on Medieval Hebraic Sources. Ann Arbor, Michigan: University Microfilms, 1974.
50. Wilson, Suzanne. "From Enigma to Explanation: Rereading Old French Grail Stories in the Light of the Fourth Lateran Council (French, Perlesvaus, Chretien de Troyes, Robert de Boron)." DAI. 51.5 (1989): 1606A. Washington University.
51. Zeydel, Edwin M. trans. The Parzival of Wolfram von Eschebach. Chapel Hill, North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 1951.

Appendix: Bibliographic Reference Sources

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Crosby, Everett V., Julian C. Bisko and Robert L. Kellog. eds. Medieval Studies: A Bibliographical Guide. New York: Garland, 1983.

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2-444, 1979.

Robinson, J.M. and H. Koester. Trajectories Through Early Christianity.
Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971.