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Discovery of the Lost City of Apollo at Stonehenge

by Dennis on July 25, 2007



When I was a young boy, my mother bought me *Gods, Graves and Scholars*, C.W Ceram's wonderful history of archaeological excavations, and I was immediately transfixed by the story of how, in 1871, Heinrich Schliemann discovered the ruins of Troy, a supposedly legendary city whose walls were said to have been built by the god Apollo himself.

Back in the late nineteenth century, no serious academic considered that Homer's account of the Trojan War was anything other than pure fantasy, but Schliemann chose to believe that every last word written by Homer describing the geographical location of Troy was true; as a result, he became responsible for one of the greatest archaeological discoveries of all time. By following Schliemann's simple method of trusting in the words of a man long dead, let us see if we can achieve the seemingly impossible feat of discovering the remains of another lost city sacred to Apollo,

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Go in a mile or so of the most photographed and studied archaeological sites on the face of the Earth.

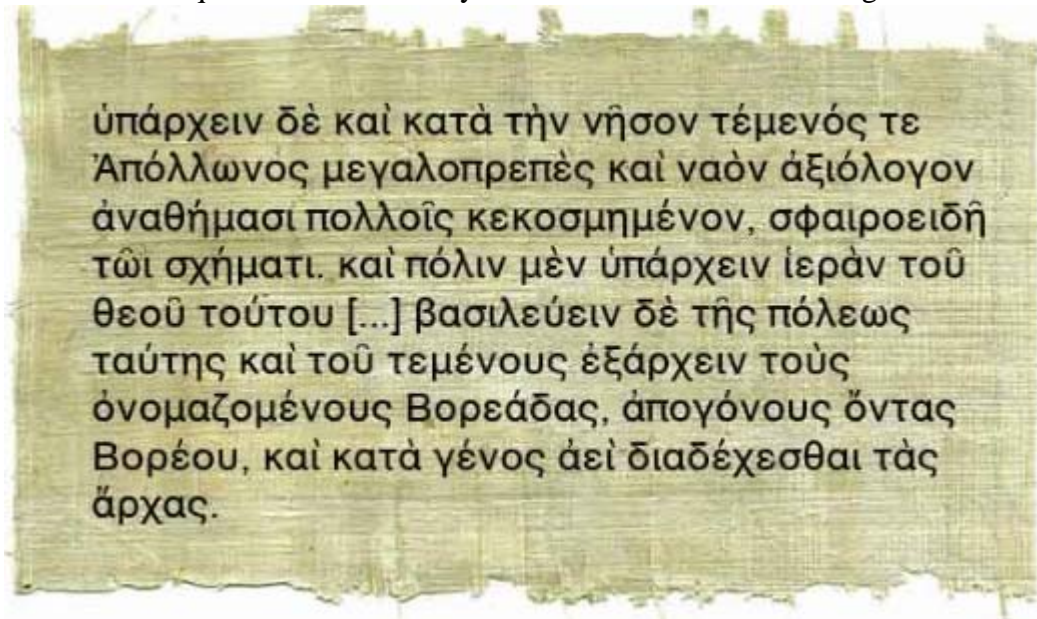
English Heritage have very many, supplied an excellent interactive map containing all the original photographs and maps you could possibly require, so you'll probably wish to inspect and refer back to [this link](#) as you read on.

So, prehistory is by definition a period before written records, which means that acquiring an accurate picture of life in Britain before the Roman legions arrived in 55 BC is notoriously problematic. This difficulty increases enormously when it comes to trying to make sense of Stonehenge, a structure that began life in 3,200 BC during the Neolithic Era or New Stone Age; according to accepted archaeological theory, it “fell into disuse” in or around 1,600 BC and any memory of its original function was quickly forgotten.

The first person *known* to have visited ancient Britain and to have left an account of his travels was the Greek mariner Pytheas of Massilia, who came to this island in around 325 BC. His original report, entitled *On the Ocean*, has not come down to us in its entirety, but fragments have survived in the writings of later authors such as Hecateus of Abdera and Diodorus Siculus, who composed his famous history in the first century BC. The most famous and tantalising fragment of this history has long been thought to refer to Stonehenge, and it is not difficult to see why when we examine the passage speaking of a wonderful discovery on the Island of Hyperborea, or Britain:

“And there is also on the island both a magnificent sacred precinct of Apollo and a notable temple decorated with many offerings...spherical in shape [and] a city is there which is sacred to this god... and the kings of this city and the supervisors of the sacred precinct are called Boreades, since they are descendants of Boreas...”

Here is the original Attic Greek passage, printed on papyrus courtesy of my great friend Salim who runs the Phoenician Bequest Unearthed site you'll find on the links to the right.



However, before we proceed to a minute examination of the text and the structures described by Pytheas, there are some pertinent questions that we must ask ourselves, the first being “Was this island of Hyperborea in fact Britain?”

There is no question that Pytheas visited Britain, while he recorded the name of the inhabitants as being the Prettanike, a word that later evolved into Britannia. Although he was disbelieved by others of his era, Pytheas became the first known person to describe polar ice, the midnight sun and the Northern Lights, or Aurora Borealis. Diodorus Siculus, who claimed to have acquired much of his information from earlier sources such as Pytheas, tells us:

“Of those who have written about the ancient myths, Hecateus and certain others say that in the regions beyond the land of the Celts (Gaul) there lies in the ocean an island no smaller than Sicily. This island, the account continues, is

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By the time that Diodorus Siculus writes, Britain had been known to the Romans as the island twice in 55 and 54 BC, while a recent discovery of a Roman coin in Cornwall has been dated to 170 BC. However, Diodorus Siculus spells out that he is writing of ancient accounts of visits to this island, while a Roman writer named Avienus speaks of a Massiliote seaman in 525 BC who described Britain as “The Land of the Albiones”.

It is clear that The Land of the Prettanike, Britannia, Albion, the Land of the Albiones and Hyperborea were all one and the same place, as opposed to the mysterious Ultima Thule, an even more northerly island discovered by Pytheas for which a number of geographical locations have been suggested. Pytheas was undoubtedly referring to structures in Britain and the famous passage has been written about in a serious fashion by reputable publications such as the National Geographic Magazine and British Archaeology, among others, but I’ve been unable to find any truly informed or in-depth study of the original ancient Greek text, which is surprising, considering its huge potential importance.

When I first read the translation, it seemed to me that there were some ambiguities in this much-quoted passage. When Diodorus writes “And there is also on the island both a magnificent sacred precinct of Apollo and a notable temple decorated with many offerings...” there appears to be a clear distinction between the “magnificent sacred precinct” and the “notable temple”, implying that Pytheas was referring to two separate structures; furthermore, while Stonehenge possesses, or possessed, a striking ring of curved lintels suspended in the air, no one could accurately describe such a thing as being “spherical in shape”.

Looking more closely, it seems uncertain that the “notable temple” is also sacred to Apollo unless by inference, but there is no question about the precinct and the city being sacred to Apollo. However, while this passage that apparently refers to Stonehenge has long fascinated people, the repeated reference made by Diodorus to a *city* sacred to Apollo has gone completely unremarked upon.

My ancient Greek is pretty rusty, as I’d not studied the subject in earnest since 1977, so I decided to consult an expert at the Classics’ Department at Exeter University for a clarification of what Diodorus Siculus had to say. I won’t say who this person is, simply because you’re welcome to check independently with *any* expert at *any* Classics Department, whether it’s in Britain or abroad, while I’d simply prefer that the person who kindly assisted me wasn’t deluged with emails or phone calls. In any event, every seeming ambiguity in the passage immediately became clear after I’d had the precise meanings and nuances of the text pointed out to me, but you will have to decide for yourselves whether or not you agree with my conclusions.

Firstly, was Pytheas telling the truth about what he saw? He had recorded Polar ice, the Midnight Sun and the Aurora Borealis, all unheard-of wonders to Mediterranean readers of his account of his voyage in the fourth century BC, so why should he lie about a precinct, a temple and a city sacred to Apollo? In an attempt to win some extra favour, either from gods or from men, he could possibly have claimed that this precinct was sacred to Zeus, as Zeus was the senior deity in the Greek pantheon of the time. Given the nature of his lengthy voyage into the unknown, he could also have possibly claimed that this magnificent precinct was sacred to Oceanus, the primeval and potent deity whose watery domain lay beyond the Pillars of Hercules or modern-day Straits of Gibraltar. But he did not. Immediately before the passage about the precinct, the temple and the city, Diodorus records:

“The following legend is told about it (Hyperborea): Leto [mother of Apollo and Artemis - Zeus was their father] was born on this island, and for that reason Apollo is honoured among them above all other gods; and the inhabitants are looked upon as priests of Apollo, after a manner...and honour him exceedingly.”

Pytheas specifies that the precinct, the city and possibly the temple too were sacred to Apollo and in doing so, he merely continues what was already a firm tradition of ancient Greece’s connection with Hyperborea. Writing a century before the time of Pytheas, the historian Herodotus had a great deal to say on this matter, but leaving this aside for now, the references made by Diodorus Siculus to Apollo, a magnificent sacred precinct and a city are unmistakably clear.

So why should we think that the sacred precinct of Apollo, to the "notable temple...spherical in shape..." nor to the city. There is no description of the foot of a mountain inhabited by Centaurs, for example. The unwritten implication is that these places are each other and are so extraordinary that they tower over the competition, while no one could possibly miss them or mistake them for any combination of other structures if they too were to visit the island.

Britain has many outstanding prehistoric stone monuments, but none of them attract visitors in anything like the number that Stonehenge does – roughly one million every year who view the place as a Wonder of the World, much as Pytheas seems to have done. If you consider that this is an unfair or inaccurate modern analogy, then the discovery of the graves of the Boscombe Bowmen or Builders of Stonehenge in May 2003 provided evidence that Stonehenge was a powerful attraction as far back as 2,300 BC, or two thousand years before the visit of Pytheas.

Tests on the teeth of the bowmen showed that they may have originated in what is now south Wales, or else they may have travelled to Stonehenge from the Lake District in the north of England. Remarkable though these journeys undoubtedly are, they pale in comparison with the journey made by the man now known to us as the Amesbury Archer, or King of Stonehenge, who is known to have travelled to Stonehenge in or around 2,300 BC from as far south as the Alps. He was found buried close to a companion, the so-called "Prince of Stonehenge" who came to Stonehenge from Brittany at the same time.

Although it's a hotly disputed subject, one of the most famous prehistoric carvings at Stonehenge seems to show a dagger of the type used in ancient Mycenae. While it doesn't constitute proof that the ancient Greeks had a hand in building Stonehenge, it is certainly not out of the question that a visitor from ancient Greece carved the dagger into the stone, *after* it had been put in place but *before* Pytheas or his men visited the site. Perhaps it was some small thing that caught their eye and increased their interest in a temple that Pytheas went on to connect with the Greek god Apollo?

Be that as it may, there is irrefutable evidence that Stonehenge constituted a potent attraction for people originating as far away as continental Europe in 2,300 BC, so it is no great surprise if the same structure caught the attention of a Greek explorer two thousand years later; it would be very surprising if it *hadn't*. Not only that, but there is no other known structure in Britain from the time of Pytheas' visit that could reasonably be described as a "magnificent, sacred precinct of Apollo" nor is there a "notable temple, spherical in shape.." Regardless of whether Diodorus was describing one or two structures in this passage, the only one that remotely fits the bill is Stonehenge. So, does Stonehenge have anything at all to do with Apollo?

Professor Timothy Darvill of Bournemouth University has recently advanced the theory that Stonehenge was some form of prehistoric Lourdes, where people came from all around to be healed. He based this idea on the fact that bluestones were used to line healing wells in Wales, while bluestones are a main component in the inner structure of Stonehenge. He also saw Stonehenge as some kind of oracle and he referred to Apollo, or a deity like Apollo, as having had some connection with the place, citing the fact that Apollo was notably a god of prophecy and of healing.

However, by the time of Pytheas' visit, Apollo was coming to be seen by the Greeks as an equivalent of the Sun God Helios, while the most notable phenomenon that takes place at Stonehenge is the appearance of the rising sun on Midsummer Solstice over the Heelstone. Not only that, but Apollo was intimately connected with Britain, as his mother Leto was said to have been born here and Apollo was said to visit Britain during the winter months. The other most striking aspect of Stonehenge is how it was engineered so that the rays of the *Midwinter* Sunset would appear between the former uprights of the now fallen Great Trilithon.

Apollo was notably a god of archery and this element exists in abundance at Stonehenge. In 1978, the skeleton of a man who died in 2,300 BC was found in the ditch surrounding the ruins, his body pierced by six or more arrows. In May 2002, archaeologists announced the discovery of the grave of "The King of Stonehenge" at nearby Boscombe, although this was more commonly known as the "Amesbury Archer" on account of the sheer number of arrowheads found with him. He was also found buried with the earliest known gold in Britain, a metal that has long been synonymous with the sun, while he had died at the same time as the man buried in the ditch at Stonehenge.

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they had most likely originated in south Wales, the home of the famous bluestones. Once more,
however, the archaeologists he
arrowheads buried with the school adult in the grave. Recent excavations at Durrington Walls by the Stonehenge
Riverside Project show beyond doubt that bizarre displays of archery regularly took place there as part of the
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funerary ceremonies that were linked with nearby Stonehenge. The vast majority of the victims of these prehistoric bowmen were young pigs, but at least one human femur has been excavated that shows sign of having been hit by two flint arrowheads.

It is generally thought that few arrowheads have been found at Stonehenge itself, but this is to overlook the results of an excavation conducted by the Duke of Buckingham in 1620, when he dug a pit in the centre of Stonehenge and found, among other things “a great many, batter-dashers (presumably clubs, and) heades of arrows...”

Furthermore, the colossal earthwork known as the Great Cursus survives just half a mile or so to the north of Stonehenge. Even though it was probably built before Stonehenge, it is as much as 100 metres wide and runs from east to west for 2.7 kilometres; as such, it is difficult *not* to see some immediate connection with the rising and setting sun in this huge, mysterious feature. Either Pytheas saw one or more of these elements for himself, or else the people living there at the time specifically told him about them.

Before I read the Exeter University Classics’ Department analysis, I had never heard of a “notable temple... spherical in shape” anywhere on Earth, let alone in ancient Britain. The only possible contender seemed to be Silbury Hill, some twenty miles to the north of Stonehenge that was built in about 2,600 BC. Standing 130 feet high, its base is circular, and after a heavy rainfall, it sometimes seems as if a huge globe is suspended in the air due to the reflection of the strange hill in the waters beneath.



However, recent studies have shown that Pytheas need not have chanced upon Silbury Hill after a heavy rainfall. As David Field writes in the May 2003 edition of British Archaeology magazine “For just three days in early summer 2001, as the water-filled ditch dried out, a huge vegetation mark, straight-edged and some 10m wide, appeared to extend across the ditch floor for some 50m towards the mound. Its orientation, however, was curious, running diagonally across the ditch extension towards a position off-centre of the mound. The feature definitely seems man-made. It may be that the hill’s Neolithic builders dug a deeper channel here to collect water from local springs and

bringing it to the deep ditch e http://www .eternalidol.com/?p=326 Go s were intentionally
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However alluring this visitor may have been of an ancient Greek emperor, looking up the side of an adjacent
gaze down in awe on a "notable temple...spherical in shape..." It seems that I was mistaken in bringing it to mind,
as the original text is perfectly clear.

The "sacred precinct" refers to a place or to an area, never to a shape or a structure, while this space is sometimes translated as "sanctuary". Today, we think of Stonehenge as possessing a vast, ceremonial landscape all of its own, complete with outlying burial mounds, while one of the most prominent features would have been the immense Avenue snaking up from the River Avon. Writing in the eighteenth century, the antiquarian William Stukeley claimed to have seen holes for stones lining the Avenue, so these may well have been standing when Pytheas saw the place in 325 BC. As for the word "magnificent" used to describe the sacred precinct, the ancient Greek "megaloprepes" specifically refers to something massive and impressive in size and scale. The "megalo" part is of course a component of our word "megalithic", used to describe huge stone structures like Stonehenge.

Judging from the English translation, I originally thought that the sacred precinct was in a separate place to the notable temple, but the sense of the original text makes clear that the temple is enclosed within the area sacred to the god, where rituals are performed. As for the vexed matter of a spherical temple, the original Greek makes it impossible to tell if spherical or circular was meant; it could mean something like Stonehenge in ground plan, or else it could possibly refer to a dome or vault, as ancient Greek is often vague as to this concept or shape.

However, as "sphaioeides" could mean circular or round, then Stonehenge once more comes to mind. The word "axiologos" is the word for notable, while it further means "worthy of mention" or "remarkable", so of all the stone circles in the world, it is impossible to think of one that is more truly remarkable or worthy of mention than Stonehenge, on account of the sheer size of the sarsen uprights and the intricate, interlocking, and unparalleled ring of massive lintels suspended high in the air.

So, what of the *city* that Pytheas mentioned twice, the city sacred to Apollo? Diodorus records elsewhere that "Furthermore, a city is there which is sacred to this god, and the majority of its inhabitants are players on the cithara; and these continually play on this instrument in the temple and sing hymns of praise to the god, glorifying his deeds..."

While this account of the musical interests of the inhabitants is intriguing, especially in light of research carried out into the acoustic properties of stone circles by Aaron Watson of Reading University in 1998, it does not tell us much about the location of the city. If the inhabitants frequent the temple and sing hymns of praise to Apollo, however, then this further increases the likelihood of the temple being Stonehenge, as we've already noted the many links between the god and the structure, while I've pointed out still more in a previous entry entitled Snowblind.

However, there is no mention of directions, no mention of how the city lies three days walk away from the temple, for example, but we're told that the inhabitants *continually* play on this instrument in the temple, something that suggests that the city and the temple lie close together. Furthermore, the original text speaks clearly of kings of the city and supervisors of the temple – literally overseers, or people who are in charge of the place. It is perfectly possible to have a claim to a far-flung place, but it is another to be in direct charge of a temple, for example, unless you live close by. In brief, there is nothing to suggest that the temple and city were at any great remove from one another, while the sense of the passage, by contrast, strongly implies that they lay very close together.

And what of the city? The word used in Attic Greek to describe such a place was a "polis", a word used by all Greek writers of all periods to refer to a settlement of any size, from a small town to a large city. However, as this city lay close to a temple and a sanctuary described as "megaloprepes", or something magnificent, massive and impressive in size and scale, and as the city was clearly a home to kings, then logic suggests that we should be looking for something at the larger end of the scale.

It would be a simple matter to go looking for a small, nondescript settlement, but less us instead enter into the full spirit of what Pytheas told us and go in search of:

- A structure, or the remains of a structure that is readily identifiable with Apollo in some way.
- A structure, or the remains of a structure which possesses a name, however erroneously deduced, that might reflect some connection with kings or emperors.
- A structure or the remains of a sizeable structure lying close to Stonehenge.

Does such a place exist? Most certainly; just a mile or so to the east of Stonehenge is a gigantic prehistoric earthwork called [Vespasian's Camp](#), named in later years by William Camden after the same Vespasian who subjugated the southwest of England during the Roman invasion of Britain in 43 AD. It is invariably described as an Iron Age Hillfort, yet excavations there have shown the existence of far earlier Neolithic pits, while there still exist the remains of Early Bronze Age funeral barrows, showing that the site was in use while nearby Stonehenge was being constructed.

Aside from possessing the name of a man who later went on to become an Emperor, Vespasian's Camp lies at the bottom of a slope occupied further up by what is known as the King's Barrow Ridge overlooking Stonehenge, while this is further divided into the New King Barrows and Old King Barrows. These funerary mounds were named on account of their sheer size and they are supposed to date from the Early Bronze Age, although as there is no record of excavation of these barrows in modern times, it rather begs the question of how we know their precise age.

Be that as it may, Vespasian's Camp encloses a vast area of roughly fifteen hectares compared with the twelve hectares of Durrington Walls to the north. It is 730 metres long from north to south and 374 metres wide at the southern end, while it is mostly enclosed by a bank 40 metres wide and a ditch up to 10 metres wide. At its highest remaining point on the west side, the bank stand up to 6.5 metres above the bottom of the ditch, while there's a low counterscarp bank up to 18 metres wide on the outside of the ditch, giving a maximum overall width of 68 metres to the hillfort's defences. When Pytheas saw this city in 325 BC, it would of course have been in a far better state of repair, but there is more to it than that.

According to the English Heritage archaeological report, Vespasian's Camp belonged to a particular class of hill fort known as the univallates or single-valleyed hill forts, which were centres of redistribution for subsistence products and items produced by craftsmen. In addition to the massive fortifications, this sounds very much like a functioning city, while the archaeological report also speaks of a layer of domestic rubbish one metre thick that followed the construction of the ramparts, showing that it had been intensively occupied.

Is there anything about this city that would have made a discerning Greek navigator such as Pytheas believe that it was sacred to Apollo? The locals undoubtedly told him that it was sacred to Apollo, while it also lay close to Stonehenge or the "magnificent sacred precinct" and "notable temple" that display such obvious affinities with Apollo. Moreover, Vespasian's Camp is fashioned from a natural spur of chalk pointing north to south with entrances at the north and south (i.e. not totally dissimilar to Silbury Hill), and there was a curious ancient Greek ritual named the Delphic Steptaria that involved a youth representing Apollo fleeing north from a burning timber building.

Apollo's mother Leto was said to have been born in Hyperborea, or the Land Beyond the North Wind, while one of Apollo's titles was Apollo Hyperboreus, or Hyperborean Apollo, because he was said to journey north every winter. According to the Oxford Classical Dictionary, the name Apollo itself is of non-Greek origin, so as Greece is largely bounded to the east, south and west by sea, there is a fair chance that this name originated somewhere to the north. In addition, the names of the kings and supervisors were the Boreades, meaning the Sons of the North Wind; Apollo's mother may have been Leto, but as she was born in Hyperborea itself, there is an obvious northern link once more between the god and the kings of this city. One is known as Hyperboreus, the others are known as Boreades.

Vespasian's Camp cannot be seen from Stonehenge, but it lies to the east of the ruins, or in the direction of the rising sun. As Apollo had largely become thought of as a Sun God by the time Pytheas was writing, it is another fairly obvious connection, while Vespasian's Camp lies slightly to the south-east, or the direction of the Midwinter

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Given the huge scale of the... of Apollo, as some later versions of the stories of this place speak of Apollo building the walls there along with Poseidon. We cannot know precisely how Pytheas came to equate the sanctuary, the temple and the city with Apollo, but he speaks unambiguously of this connection which he is likely to have made through a combination of information passed to him by local inhabitants and through first hand observation.

Finally, the northern entrance of Vespasian's Camp lay close to the Avenue approaching Stonehenge, while anyone making their way to the ridge from this city would have found themselves in the commanding position of literally overlooking or overseeing Stonehenge to the west. As the original text wrote of kings and inhabitants who were in charge of or who supervised or "oversaw" the magnificent precinct and notable temple, then it is difficult to think of a more exactly appropriate physical setting than Vespasian's Camp for such a set of circumstances.

A heroic attempt to locate this "City of the Sun" was made in a book published in 1842 entitled "Stonehenge; or, The Romans in Britain", by a man with the memorable name of Malachi Mouldy. However, this book placed the city on the slopes of Old Sarum further to the south through a combination of wishful thinking and a doubtful interpretation of place names. In the February 2002 edition of [British Archaeology](#), Aubrey Burl tries to place this temple at Callanish in Scotland, but he does so on the mistaken assumption that Pytheas described the moon and sun as being low in the sky as far as observers at Stonehenge were concerned. If you look at page 139 of [this translation](#) of Diodorus, you'll clearly see that Pytheas made no such mention of heavenly bodies from the temple, because he speaks of these phenomena being visible from a presumably northern part of the island i.e. Britain or Hyperborea. Furthermore, contrary to Aubrey Burl's assertions, such a phenomenon *was* actually visible from Stonehenge around the time of the Summer Solstice in 2007 and you can check this for yourselves on [this link](#).

Given a thorough examination of the original text by Diodorus Siculus as well as a consideration of all the other archaeological elements, it seems unavoidable that what we now call Vespasian's Camp, a largely forgotten part of the Stonehenge landscape now on private land and shrouded with a canopy of trees, was once the City of Apollo as described by the first known person to have visited Britain and recorded his experiences.

Do the massive prehistoric fortifications and arboreal confines of Vespasian's Camp harbour any further secrets about Stonehenge? Certainly, because the official English Heritage Schedule of Ancient Monuments has this to say on the matter:

"The two bowl barrows and the ring ditch, situated within the hillfort, and the fort itself are known to contain archaeological remains and environmental evidence relating to the monument and the landscape in which it was constructed."

If ever a further archaeological investigation of this place is carried out, the results should be fascinating. All the evidence suggests that Pytheas of Massilia visited Stonehenge and saw the city of Apollo in 325 BC, because he clearly described functioning kings, priests and supervisors of a nearby temple that was "adorned with many offerings", yet this was something like 1,300 years after the archaeologists say that Stonehenge finally "fell into disuse". The reference to the city's inhabitants singing in this notable temple sounds suspiciously like Bardic or Druidic activity, something that it is of course completely unthinkable to current archaeological views on such matters.

Better still, Pytheas records that the people who sang at the temple also played on the cithara, an ancient instrument like a harp from which we derive our word "guitar". As such, this must be the earliest record of a "heavy rock concert" at Stonehenge and it is something I would have liked to put in the previous entry, "Hail to the Stonehenge Gods", but that would have been jumping the gun.

The main reason for supposing that Stonehenge "fell into disuse" in or around 1,600 BC is because of an interpretation placed on certain features of the place by Professor Richard Atkinson, who excavated there from 1950 to 1964. In brief, he found fragments of bluestone in two sets of pits encircling Stonehenge known as the Y and Z holes; as these pits had been allowed to silt up almost as soon as they had been dug, Atkinson decided that some

calamity had overcome the pits were ever designed to hold more stones, as they most closely resembled the grave pits found beneath the headstone. But it, then this surely suggests that this unique, lonely and widely-tailed ceremonial site has acquired an importance and spiritual potency, albeit of a malevolent kind.

Professor Richard Atkinson famously dismissed the genius builders of Stonehenge as “practically savages – howling barbarians”, while he further declared it unlikely that we would ever know why it had been built. As attested in Mike Pitts’ book *Hengeworld*, he tried to interfere with the successful completion of the English Heritage history of excavations at Stonehenge until the time of his death in 1994 and his appalling track record as far as Stonehenge was concerned was described as “scandalous, incompetent and immoral” by one archaeological commentator.

So, faced with the evidence of Stonehenge being in active use in 325 BC when it was supposed to have “fallen into disuse” over 1,300 years earlier, I have to ask myself who I believe? Do I trust the interpretation of man whose record-keeping of the excavations he carried out at Stonehenge was abysmal, a man whose methods have been roundly condemned by others in his profession?

Or do I believe the word of an ancient Greek mariner who was daring enough to sail into the unknown seas beyond the Pillars of Hercules and who was brave enough to tell a disbelieving world the truth about previously unheard-of wonders such as polar ice, the Aurora Borealis and the midnight sun, as well as simply reporting back on the kings and supervisors of a city and a notable temple of Apollo?

My apologies to those of you who would understandably like to have seen more images of this Lost City, real or otherwise, but I simply don’t possess the resources available to a magazine, university or production company. So, in place of a picture, there’ll have to be a thousand words or so by way of recompense to hopefully fire the imagination.

First of all, I’ll simply quote the great Marcus Aurelius once more: “If anyone can show me, and prove to me, that I am wrong in thought or deed, I will gladly change. I seek the truth, which never yet hurt anybody. It is only persistence in self-delusion and ignorance which does harm.” I’m full of admiration for those geophysicists and archaeologists who located the prehistoric village at Durrington Walls and the same applies to those people who located the Roman settlement around Silbury Hill. At the same time, I like to think that I’ve gone one better by locating a previously Lost City just a short distance away from Stonehenge and if anyone can point out to me where I’ve gone wrong, I’d positively welcome any comments to that effect. Until such time as that happens, I’d like to think that anyone reading this journal can luxuriate in being the first people in millennia to *knowingly* gaze upon a Lost City of Apollo, a structure first described by Pytheas of Massilia back in 350 BC or thereabouts.

In previous entries, I’ve maintained that Professor Richard Atkinson saw something at Stonehenge and Silbury Hill that he disliked to such a degree that he concealed evidence of its existence. This naturally begs the question of how such a thing could be possible in an age of cameras and mass scrutiny, but I’d firstly point out that the axe and dagger engravings at Stonehenge weren’t discovered until 1950, despite having been available for inspection for over three and a half thousand years. There are other huge features, alignments and structures in the Stonehenge landscape besides Pytheas’ Lost City that have also gone unnoticed, but one of these fine days, I’ll get around to writing about the rest of them. In the meantime, I’d simply say that if a city as described by an ancient Greek visitor can escape detection for well over two thousand years in one of the most photographed and studied landscapes on Earth, then I’m absolutely certain that Professor Atkinson “discerned” something at Stonehenge and Silbury Hill that seems to have escaped everyone else’s attention.

What are the other implications? If, as seems certain, what we now call Vespasian’s Camp was the city of Apollo or the Boreades as described by Pytheas, and if Stonehenge was the notable temple, then it was clearly in use in or around 350 BC or well over a thousand years after the archaeologists say it “fell into disuse”. Who, precisely, was using it?

Well, this period was right in the middle of the Iron Age and the most notable priests that we know of from this era in Britain were the Druids, of course. As I’ve pointed out in previous entries on the Druids, their knowledge or lore consisted of verses that took as many as twenty years to memorise. Verse, by its very nature, is not prose, so verse is either recited in a poetic, rhythmical or “sing-song” fashion, chanted or sung; Pytheas said that the inhabitants or

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praise to the god, OKT ANP M

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We know that Druids were... would be compatible with their interests or beliefs. Songs to Apollo were known as "Paeans" or healing songs, which would also seem to give some credence to Professor Timothy Darville's notion of Stonehenge as a prehistoric Lourdes, but I'll be posting a lengthy entry dealing with the forthcoming Timewatch programme and one or two of its contributors closer to the time of broadcast.

To conclude, for now, with the matter of the Druids, you might like to closely examine the reproduction of the map at the top of this entry. If you zoom in above the large "E" in the centre, you'll see that the person who drew up this map over 200 years ago included a cave and I have to give full credit for spotting this fascinating feature to Pete Glastonbury. If you've read the previous entries on the Druids in this journal, you'll see that I've looked closely into the matter of Druids using caves as meeting places, whereas the conventional wisdom maintains that they met only in groves.

Furthermore, this "cave" is in limestone, just a mile or so from Stonehenge, which brings to mind the swallets in the Mendips with their funerary uses dating from the Iron Age to the Neolithic, while you'll see from the English Heritage links in this entry that Vespasian's Camp has features dating from the Neolithic up to the Iron Age. This cave is also on the eastern edge of Vespasian's Camp, but I'll leave it to you to investigate the matter further, if you wish.

Archaeologists generally profess to have little interest in gold or treasure, but they are just as enchanted by the allure of precious metals and stones as anyone else. As recently as 1968, the BBC funded an excavation of Silbury Hill in the real hope and expectation of finding a British Tutankhamen in the form of a solid gold, life-size King Zil on horseback, while as you can see from details on [this link](#), the archaeologists currently excavating there haven't ruled out the manmade hill being a burial chamber. The fantastic golden artefacts found with the [Bush Barrow Warrior](#) in 1808 constantly feature in books and programmes about Stonehenge, while the archaeologists and media were equally fascinated by the gold discovered with the "King of Stonehenge" and the "Prince of Stonehenge", something reflected in the international coverage at the time. Impressive though these discoveries undoubtedly were, I've got good reason to believe that there are much richer finds awaiting discovery to the north and south of Vespasian's Camp and in the River Avon.

Finally, for now, all the evidence suggests that the place we now know as Vespasian's Camp is Pytheas of Massilia's Lost City of Apollo or City of the Boreades; if this *is* the case, then it throws a fascinating new light on the nearby Cursus. In 1723, William Stukeley described this colossal earthwork as a Hippodrome, or a course for chariot and horse races, although he later changed this description to the shorter Latin word Cursus, meaning exactly the same thing.

Generations of archaeologists have scoffed at Stukeley, despite the fact that they still use the word "Cursus" to describe the monument. They point out that horses as means of transport and wheeled vehicles were unknown in Britain at the time the Cursus was constructed, as well as the fact that the terminals of the Cursus aren't rounded, but square, so that chariots would have found it nigh-on impossible to make a high-speed turn. However, this is to assume that any charioteers who may have used the Cursus at some later point would have *wanted* to perform a high-speed turn. It also assumes that they raced *within* the confines of the Cursus, not around it.

In his 1991 English Heritage publication entitled Stonehenge, Julian Richards makes an interesting observation about the possible uses of the Cursus on page 82: "We can now be certain that the monument is not Roman but Neolithic in date, but beyond this Stukeley could be at least partly correct in his interpretation. Remove the idea of the chariots and the Cursus would have formed an ideal setting for processions, games, races, a wide range of potential activities, all virtually irrecoverable from the archaeological record."

In the same vein, it's worth looking at what Professor John North had to say on the matter on page 278 of his 1996 book entitled Stonehenge, Neolithic Man and the Cosmos: "There are still writers who are content to allude to the possibility of racing on the site of a cursus, or of holding funereal games there – as described by Homer, albeit some two or three thousand years after our structures were built. It is hard to see what evidence one could ever find in

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one important truth;
monument was laid out with reference to the heavens it does not of necessity follow that it was
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With this in mind, Pytheas made no mention of chariots in his account of the temple and city sacred to Apollo, but later writers such as Caesar commented at length on the supreme skill of the ancient British charioteers and the name of one of them, Arviragus, has come down to us in the writings of Juvenal. The original Greek sun god was Helios, but by the time Pytheas was writing, Apollo was beginning to be identified with the sun, and the defining characteristic of Helios was the story that he drove the chariot of the sun across the heavens.

We do not know if the ancient Britons at the time of Pytheas worshipped a deity that they actually called Apollo, or whether Pytheas simply inferred this from what he saw of the ceremonies performed in honour of this god. But when we consider that close by the notable temple and city sacred to Apollo was a huge “track” that ran from east to west i.e. the same course that the sun took, the notion of ancient Britons emulating a sun god by ceremonially driving a “chariot of fire” up and down the Cursus does not seem quite as far-fetched as it once did, and it’s not unthinkable that some future excavation at Stonehenge might provide evidence of this.

Words by [Dennis Price](#). Photograph of Silbury Hill by generous permission of Thelma Wilcox.

{ 33 comments... read them below or [add one](#) }



Joshua Fragot [August 10, 2007 at 12:04 pm](#)

An amazing job of fitting the evidence to a wild romantic fantasy!

Had you thought of writing an executive summary? Reading that was like some kind of marathon! Lord Antrobus might not like the idea of people traipsing round his fort looking for a lost city. Ever been in there? That cave is an old ice house, not for bardic ging gang goolys.



[Dennis August 10, 2007 at 8:56 pm](#)

Hello Joshua,

Well, thank you very much indeed for your kind words – they’re greatly appreciated. As for writing an executive summary, that’s a good point; I’ll see if I can put one together, then I’ll post it up as a separate page.

However, I had to write an extremely detailed piece that covered just about every angle I could think of, because no one had done such a thing before, to the best of my knowledge, while I’ve naturally got to present a fairly comprehensive case to back up my serious claim to have found the location of Pytheas’ Lost City.

As it happens, there’s a lot more about first century Attic Greek vocabulary and nuance that I could have put in, and once again, I’ve got to give full credit to the generous soul at Exeter University Classics’ Department who kindly helped me out with this. However, it would have been even *more* of a marathon read than it is now if I’d included every last fragment, but anyone’s welcome to check with any Classics’ Department if they wish.

No, I’ve not ever been in there, sadly, and I wouldn’t for a moment suggest that anyone went on private property, whether it belongs to Lord Antrobus or anyone else. Thanks very much for the information on the cave as well, as I’d not been able to find out anything else at all about it, despite making a number of enquiries. I’d have loved to have been able to write about underground Druid enclaves taking place a stone’s throw from Stonehenge, but to paraphrase Dirty Harry, it looks as if I’m completely out of luck on that score!

Thank you very much for this and for your kind words, Deborah – it's all much appreciated, I assure you. Best wishes from Dennis

Matt [August 31, 2007 at 6:16 pm](#)

Excellent analysis and an intriguing idea. Well worth the read. Might be interesting to see if Bruce Bedlams idea about a roof for Stonehenge might lend a more spherical shape to a temple....

http://www.dailymail.co.uk/pages/live/articles/news/news.html?in_article_id=463332&in_page_id=1770

Urmuf [August 31, 2007 at 8:55 pm](#)

Hi- WRT an executive summary – check out the post by Entity79 here = <http://forums.fark.com/cgi/fark/comments.pl?IDLink=3039818>

Dennis [August 31, 2007 at 9:40 pm](#)

Hello Matt,

Thank you very much for writing in and thank you for your kind words, as they're much appreciated. As long as it was well worth the read, regardless of whether you agree with me or not, that's all that matters.

I remember reading about Bruce's idea some years back and I like to think that I'm open-minded about Stonehenge. However, I seem to remember that a fairly pivotal part of his concept was that the Y and Z holes had once held bluestones or some other stones, but from everything I've read about these pits, it seems pretty certain that they never held stones of any kind. Anyway, I'll look into it again and thanks for writing in.

Best wishes from

Dennis

Dennis [August 31, 2007 at 10:21 pm](#)

Hi Urmuf,

Thanks very much for writing in, while I'm flattered that you thought that what I had to say was worth the trouble of writing and posting an executive summary. You've got a good point here, so I'll spell out my position.

I'm only interested in the truth about Stonehenge and I honestly don't have any dogmatic points of view about the place. If it turns out that I'm right about something – great. However, if I'm wrong, then anyone's free to write in and point out my mistakes in public, as they have done before now.

Other than that, there's the issue of the length of some of the posts I put up. When I was a kid, I used to bury myself in books, so if I came across one such as Gods, Graves and Scholars that went into enormous detail about something I was particularly interested in, then I just couldn't be happier. While I write and do my studies for the pleasure of it, I presume that "out there somewhere" are others who enjoy reading similar

As you might have seen, I've just posted up a second lengthy story about Stonehenge, but more are possibly three more such entries to come. I've come across "nameless others" in my time who hold strong opinions on Stonehenge, but when I politely asked them for something to back up their assertions, they stared at me as if I were a cretin and snarled, "It's obvious, innit? It's SPIRITUAL!!!" or some variant on the same theme. If I'm saying that I know where Pytheas' City of Apollo was, then I'm honour-bound to back this claim up with every piece of credible evidence that I can possibly muster.

Anyway, back to the Lost City of Apollo, Part ye Third....

Thanks again and best wishes from

Dennis

 [oldnumberseven](#) [September 3, 2007 at 4:14 am](#)

You might check out a book called 'The White Goddess' by Robert Graves. I think he might agree with you.

 [HighschoolKid](#) [December 4, 2007 at 7:13 pm](#)

what is your full name Dennis? I just need it so I can properly quote this website for LA. Thanks.

Kid over there

 [gemma clery](#) [September 27, 2008 at 9:31 pm](#)

Hail and greeting

I have arrived here via google having typed in the words ancient greek references to Stonehenge, because I have read many many years ago an ancient greek writer had spoken of the Temple of Apollo in the land of the hypoboreans, only I couldn't remember who, and this burst of activity was prompted by the Timewatch programme I've just seen, and my strong desire to protest about so many aspects of it. Given this medium I thought it was best to sort out just one asumption – because that's what they are, the word could means just that, and after every bit of admittedly very interesting solid empirical science, this chap had a bad knee, and what's more he came all the way from Switzerland, and so. probably did his whole family, we were treated to an awful lot of coulds, and even worse, statements of apparent facts – it was really dangerous in those days for people to travel outside their own area, [which flatly contradicts the tooth and bone analysis evidence, the guy was there after all] and they didn't have roads in those days, oh yes they did, they could try reading the Old Straight Track a sober work of Victorian scholarship, I bet the University library could get hold of it – the assumption that Stonehenge is a marker for the Winter not the Summer solstice.

Apollo plainly is the sun god. If you were talking about a place where Apollo was honoured, what would you choose – a place constructed for the lowest part of his cycle, or the highest ? If an ancient greek referred to this far away northern land and its temple why would he pick Apollo the sun god unless that was indeed the dedication or orientation of the place – he would have had the whole greek pantheon to choose from. And why would folk memory, myth, and native knowledge have made Stonehenge a place where

 [Robin Melrose](#) [March 20, 2009 at 4:05 am](#)

Hi Dennis Price,

ne Druids resonated with me, because not long ago I came to the conclusion that the people of Stonehenge probably
this conclusion for much the same reasons as you (traces of archaic Indo-European in names), and also because it seems a number of archaic Indo-European dialects survived into Roman times (e.g. Lusitanian, Ligurian). I was initially more resistant to the lost city of Apollo theory, but the more I read it, the more it began to convince me. Then I wondered about the name of the kings and supervisors, Boreades. At first I thought it was just based on Boreas the north wind, but then, being a retired lecturer in linguistics, I dug a little deeper. Boreas also means devourer, but that seemed irrelevant. There is a Gaulish god called Borvo, whose name is associated with an Indo-European root meaning 'boil, bubble, brew', but again I couldn't see the connection. Then I started pursuing an idea that the people of Stonehenge, having started out as metal-workers, probably gained all their power and prestige from bronze and the copper/tin trade, at least until things started going bad in the Mediterranean with the Sea Peoples and the collapse of Mycenae and the Hittite Empire. So I looked at the etymology of 'bronze', which was irrelevant, but discovered that in times past, bronze was called 'brass'. It turns out that 'brass' has no known etymology, and no Indo-European cognate'. The dictionary suggests French 'brasser' (brew) as a possible source, so I checked on 'brew', which brings us to the proto-Indo-European *bhreue- "to bubble, boil, effervesce" (Borvo again!). So were the Boreads, in the archaic Indo-European dialect of the Stonehenge people, the people who "boiled metal"? If they were smelters of "brass", this would explain their injunctions against collecting selago with iron. One more thing. This has probably been suggested already, but does Amesbury have anything to do with 'ambrosia' (=immortal), and could Ambrosius Aurelianus (=golden immortal) be a memory of the sun god?

Best wishes,
Robin

Liz Forrest [August 17, 2010 at 2:16 am](#)

Haven't time to read all yet, but will, as strangely 'led' to your site from 'hedgehog" page, after looking up West Wick in Wiltshire re my own family history earlier tonight, then looking it up on Google Earth satellite map. Realized it wasn't far from Stonehenge, and took my first look at that as aerial view and had the oddest impression that I was looking at a piece of art, meant to be seen from the air, in the form of a hedgehog! curled up. So then I looked up 'hedgehog Stonehenge' to see if anyone else had made that link, only to be stunned to find the article on the carved 'toy' found there! Hence finding my way to your article. Prickliness aspect may relate to the Lord of Vegetation, as depicted in the story told by Credo Mutwa, the Zulu sangoma and sanusi. Sang-oma links to the Sumerian/Akkadian 'Sang = Blood, so 'priest/priestess of the blood? Courtesy of John Allegro. I began as a transmitter of poetry many years ago, then found 'The White Goddess' just before I came back 'home' to the British Isles and then found Harold Bayley's work and J.F. Hewitt's, though Carl Jung and Joseph Campbell. Gave a good foundation long before. Many thanks.

Gilbert [November 14, 2010 at 12:24 pm](#)

THE NORTHERN END OF THE WORLD WAS TRONDHEIM

There is new information adding credence to reports from Greek mariner Pytheas.

An interdisciplinary team of mathematicians, historians and geographers at the Technical University Berlin have managed to decipher the map of Europe drawn up by Ptolemy in the 2nd Century including information about the voyage of Pytheas 330-320BC. The original description by Pytheas has not survived.

Sailing from the Mediterranean Pytheas first visited Britain, and then from the vicinity of the Shetland Isles, he struck out across open sea, and with the prevailing winds behind him, reached the coast of Norway at Trondheim. Pytheas called this place Thule. Its actual location has always been a mystery.

INTERNET ARCHIVE
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According to old sources, the Phoenicians showed us the place where the sun goes to rest. For it was the case that in these parts the nights were very short after it had set.

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which corresponds well with the summer lighting for this region.
The motivation for the exploration was probably to find more sources of tin and amber.
More, but only in German.



Gilbert [January 2, 2011 at 9:15 pm](#)

source of above:

<http://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/print/d-73107924.html>

wiki:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geography_%28Ptolemy%29

and the book:

<http://www.amazon.de/Germania-die-Insel-Thule-Entschl%C3%BCsslung/dp/3534237579>



Aynslie Hanna [January 2, 2011 at 11:30 pm](#)

A couple of facts regarding the god Borvo, whose name Robin suggested might be connected to Pytheas's "Boreades": He was one of the gods that the Romans equated with Apollo, and he was associated with thermal healing springs. One of the recent discoveries made at Vespasian's Camp is of an ancient spring. Open U's web page on it says, "Recent work at the spring by Tim Roberts and Mike Clarke has revealed that it may be thermal."



Dennis [January 3, 2011 at 2:11 am](#)

It's been over three years since I published these pieces, so I'll have to re-read them very carefully, as well as the many comments that were sent in. I'm very grateful to Aynslie for revisiting this story, as well as doing so in such a generous-spirited way, while I am of course very pleased indeed by the thousands of people who have read these pieces over the years.

What most surprised me about this account by Pytheas was the way in which the vast majority of people seemed to concentrate on his mention of a temple, ignoring the almost equally fascinating account of a city nearby. I've been through this hundreds of times, but the original Greek word was 'polis', which can translate as a city, so as Pytheas made mention of a city, the location of which is now (apparently) unknown to us, then it obviously classified as a 'lost' city. I could not fail to be captivated by such a thing, let alone one in the Stonehenge landscape, so I investigated it as best I could, then published what I had discovered.

In doing this, I had a luxury open to me that was and still is denied to other archaeologists, because I can write what the Hell I like. Had I been completely mistaken about this 'lost' city, then so what? I could have lived with my errors, just as I've happily lived with many others I've made, but I'm very pleased I wrote what I did and I shall certainly revisit it when I have time.

I'm only interested in the truth of the matter, and I've yet to be persuaded by any of the arguments raised against the structure we now know as Vespasian's Camp having been the 'city' that Pytheas referred to. Better still, I'm fascinated and delighted by what Aynslie has just had to tell us about Borvo and thermal springs, so I know how Pythagoras felt when his theorem rang the cherries and he sacrificed 300 oxen to the Muse. Having said that, I will as always welcome any and all thoughts on the matter.

On January 2nd 2011, Aynslie revisited this post and the two 'sequels' for reasons she explained in the [video](#) below. I've been considering writing a fourth installment, but as ever, time has proved to be a problem when it comes to organising and presenting what I have to say.

Nonetheless, I'm consistently amazed at the amount of visitors to these posts, as demonstrated by the statistics section on this site, while I assume that if anyone had ever found a serious flaw in my writing, they would have announced it to the Four Winds long before now. My late friend Alex Down went over the material in some detail before his untimely death, but I was never persuaded by his arguments on this matter, so my conviction remains that what is now known to us as Vespasian's Camp is the site of the City of Apollo, as described by Pytheas of Massilia in the fourth century BC.

I've mentioned this elsewhere on this site long before now, but all the evidence suggests to me that Vespasian's Camp is the site of a lost city from antiquity. All the evidence suggests to me that it was intimately connected with an active and functioning Stonehenge in the fourth century BC, contrary of course to the 'accepted view' of these matters. All the evidence suggests to me that if any real answers are to be found to the 'mystery of Stonehenge', then they will come in part from this neglected site, but when that day will come, I cannot say.

In the meantime, the subject still fascinates me and as Aynslie recorded in her piece earlier this year, it is something that captured the imagination of a great many people around the world, so I'm very pleased that I put my thoughts into print at the time, despite the highly predictable wilful misinterpretation of what I wrote from some quarters.

As Carl Sagan once wrote "Somewhere, something wonderful is waiting to be discovered" and while there's at least one other location in the Stonehenge landscape that falls into that category, something I plan to write about as soon as possible, I predict that one day, something wonderful will be found at Vespasian's Camp.

We'll see.

[Dennis March 29, 2012 at 4:02 pm](#)

As Hannibal Lecter once observed "All good things to those who wait". To my mind, [the content of this link](#) deserves a whole new post, but for the sake of continuity and keeping as much information in one place as possible, I'll confine myself to a simple comment.

As you'll see for yourself, the link above deals with what archaeologists consider to be the oldest musical instrument discovered in Europe. They believe they've discovered the remains of a lyre or harp, which date back to around 2,300 BC, or in other words, almost exactly the same time that Pytheas of Massilia was here.

Of course, a cave in the Hebrides is not Vespasian's Camp, but the nature of the location immediately brings to mind what Pomponius Mela had to say about Druids working in caves, while I've written at great length about the relevant word 'specus' elsewhere on Eternal Idol.

Otherwise, Pytheas told us "Furthermore, a city is there which is sacred to this god, and the majority of its inhabitants are players on the cithara; and these continually play on this instrument in the temple and sing hymns of praise to the god, glorifying his deeds..."

As far as I'm aware, the cithara, lyre and harp all belong to the same family of musical instruments, so it is intriguing to say the least to learn of the discovery of the remains of one of these musical instruments in a cave, while it dates from almost the exactly the same time that Pytheas spoke of people worshipping Apollo by playing on the cithara and singing hymns. More specifically, Eternal Idol is virtually brimful with details

Simple common sense would have recited much of it in the form of verse, because the addition of a metre or metres to the spoken word makes it easier to remember. When we consider also the technological ingenuity that was able to transport, shape and erect the stones at Stonehenge and elsewhere, at the same time inventing and refining the bow, it seems inevitable that the people who dwelt on these islands when Pytheas visited would have possessed and used stringed musical instruments.

And now, it appears, the remains of one of those instruments from this era has come to light. From what I see of the many visits to the "Lost City of Apollo" posts here and the archaeologists who are swarming over Vespasian's Camp, it doesn't seem out of the question that the remains of a cithara, harp or lyre might one day come to light from this intriguing place.

As you'll see in the link, Dr Lawson, of Cambridge Music-archaeological Research, said: "For Scotland, and indeed all of us in these islands, this is very much a step-change. "It pushes the history of complex music back more than a thousand years into our darkest pre-history. And not only the history of music but, more specifically, of song and poetry because that's what such instruments were very often used for."

However, the link is full of gems like this, so I'll leave you to read it for yourselves, along with this picture of Apollo Citharoedus.



Just goes to confirm that the temple of Apollo is in the north – Callanish.

JohnWitts [March 29, 2012 at 9:20 pm](#)

“Just goes to confirm that the temple of Apollo is in the north – “Callanish”

There we are then – the end of the matter – I just love that sort of contribution.

Dennis [March 29, 2012 at 9:38 pm](#)

It has to be said that the nom-de-plume Procopius is a truly first class one, and one that I’ve toyed with using myself, for obvious reasons. We are all entitled to our opinions on these matters, so if Procopius feels that the latest archaeological discovery places the Temple of Apollo in the far north, then that’s fine by me. One day, I’m sure that some thing will come to light that puts the matter beyond all doubt and to judge from the current frenzy of interest in the place, my money’s on Vespasian’s Camp providing it. We’ll see.

Procopius [March 30, 2012 at 10:39 am](#)

With the greatest of respect Mr Witts, if on the other hand, a 2,300 year old lyre had been found at say, Vespasian’s Camp, or somewhere else in Wessex, you would be waxing lyrical about it as definitive proof of Stonehenge being the Temple of Apollo.

chris johnson [March 30, 2012 at 11:48 am](#)

Very interesting link Dennis, and thanks to Procopius for having drawn my attention to it.

I am not surprised we find evidence for more sophisticated musical instruments in early days. The notion that our ancestors restricted themselves to beating drums or blowing conch shells always seemed to me to be a big underestimation of their native intelligence and capabilities.

JohnWitts [March 30, 2012 at 4:39 pm](#)

Procopius – and with equal respect, sorry, but you will have to do better than that.

Procopius [March 30, 2012 at 7:37 pm](#)

Better than what?

Dennis [March 30, 2012 at 11:18 pm](#)

It’s true – if a whole lyre or the remains of one had been found at Vespasian’s Camp, then I would have been even more pleased. I would, however, have regarded it as “the icing on the cake” because in my view, there is

I've noticed this kind of thing cropping up more now on occasion, and it seems to be a suggestion from some quarters that I've somehow forced Stonehenge and Vespasian's Camp into being the locations mentioned by Pytheas and there also seems to be the suggestion that other sites are somehow slighted by their omission. The simple truth is that when I heard about the voyage of Pytheas and his mention of the wondrous temple and the city, I was fascinated by it all, while I was also taken aback that no one else ever seems to have looked into the matter in any great depth – certainly not to the degree that I've done, but as in all matters, I'm happy to be corrected on this if it proves I'm wrong.

The idea of a recorded city in Hyperborea inhabited by kings and priests of Apollo, who carried out their devotions at a wonderful round temple, was so alluring that I could not resist looking into it. If I genuinely thought that these places were situated in another part of the British Isles, then I would have written about the subject with equal enthusiasm, believe me. I'm not constrained to writing about Stonehenge, because I've also written about Silbury Hill, locations in Somerset and South Wales, and even North Sentinel Island in the Indian Ocean, among others.

Procopius or anyone else is perfectly at liberty to make their detailed case for this lost city being Callanish, Newgrange or anywhere else. They can write about it in a book, on their own sites, on other sites such as TMA or TMP, in academic papers or wherever else takes their fancy, while anyone is welcome to write a guest post and I'll publish it here, as I would love to see a compelling case for another location that proves superior to the evidence in favour of Stonehenge and Vespasian's Camp.

I may well have missed out on some huge piece, in which case I'm happy once more to be corrected, but as far as I'm aware, no one else has bothered to look into this matter and then write it up in detail. I think Robert Graves mentioned it in *The White Goddess*, while I'm vaguely aware of reading other mentions in *Citadels of Mystery* and in some book I have here on *Arthurian Britain*, but that's it. By way of contrast, I spent a long time putting this post and the two following studies together, then posting them in public for all to see and criticise, but as far as I'm concerned, it was time and effort well spent and I'm very glad I did so. The contributions are scattered all over this site, but others such as Aynslie have managed to add to the case for Vespasian's Camp by pointing out certain discoveries that have been there, while I'm certain that still more food for thought will come to light as a result of the intense interest the archaeologists have recently developed in the place.

In a little while, I'll try to write up the post I referred to concerning an aspect of Stonehenge that I believe went on to become a notable but previously unremarked-upon element in Arthurian lore. I might well find myself in a minority of one afterwards and this is not without precedent, but I think that the principle of being curious and open-minded about Stonehenge and its landscape will invariably result in something of genuine interest making itself known sooner or later.

 JohnWitts [March 31, 2012 at 6:01 am](#)

We all know finds have much to do with the accidental circumstances of preservation. There will be finds that give more importance to a site because of their specific context but many reflect more upon the society in general as opposed to an individual site. In the first instances, what is about this cave that the lyre was found there? <http://www.high-pasture-cave.org/index.php/home/>

 Procopius [March 31, 2012 at 11:32 am](#)

Forgive me for bringing this discordance to your website, I had no idea comments from dissenters were not welcome.

The work of Anne Macaulay, (1924 – 1998), first introduced me to the possibility of Stonehenge as Apollo's Temple in the island of the Hyperboreans, but alas we have no more than circumstantial evidence; we are dealing with mythical realms here. And there really is nothing to positively link an Apollo cult with Stonehenge or Vespasian's Camp.

And what evidence do we have for Apollo in Britain? Notably, there are four inscriptions to Maponos which refer to him as Apollo (Deo Mapono Apolloni) in Britain, all in the north of the country, evidence sadly missing from Stonehenge and the south.

Considering the lunar journey, the key point, I stand by my previous statement that Callanish makes a much better candidate for the Hyperborean temple. [See: <http://www.philipcoppens.com/callanish.html>]

I would love Stonehenge to be the temple, so show me some positive evidence and I'll sign up and denounce all others.

[Dennis March 31, 2012 at 1:05 pm](#)

Procopius, there has been a terrible misunderstanding here, but it's one that occurs frequently in our age of the internet, when people engage in conversations via the printed word. I do not consider that you've brought discordance to my site, while contributions from dissenters are positively welcome here, because I'm simply interested in the truth of any given matter. However, it is all too easy to misread the tone in which something is written, while I've written many posts, comments and emails in my time that I thought were perfectly reasonable, but which others objected to because they read into them an animosity that was not there. It is the way of things and it's just something that we'll all have to get used to, until such time as someone comes up with a magical solution.

I wasn't aware of Anne Macaulay, so I'm very grateful to you for bringing this to my attention and I shall try to look her up. Having said that, I don't believe we're dealing with "mythical realms" here and even if we were, I would not discount any story or account for this reason – far from it. I don't expect you to read Eternal Idol from start to finish, but if you were to do so, I think you'd find that a very sizeable portion of all the contributions on this site deal with mythology, folklore, legends and the facts that lie behind many of these tales.

A similar principle applies to the matter of Apollo, although once again, the contributions are scattered all over the site. I think there's a huge amount of evidence for the worship of either Apollo or else a prehistoric British equivalent at Stonehenge, while this is something that others such as professor Timothy Darvill are now writing about, even if I'm not inclined to agree with everything else this gentleman has to say on Stonehenge as a healing place. I gather that he's embarking on an excavation in Wales soon, so it may well be that something new and interesting comes to light as a result of his work on the bluestone quarry there. We'll see.

I would not want or expect you to denounce other sites that are potential candidates for Pytheas's temple and city, but I'd just repeat that there's a great deal of writing here – from myself and from others – providing evidence or at least food for thought concerning Stonehenge and Vespasian's Camp.

And finally, as for your question concerning my views on the Royal Family, I don't believe that they came from outer space, nor do I believe they're *all* reptiles.

[DanJ March 31, 2012 at 3:53 pm](#)

as the sacred temple to... frustrating lack of evidence. From a logical point of view, considering the paltry references available, neither Stonehenge nor Callanish can be considered the winner in this debate about the past. Hell, there probably never will be a winner no matter what new discoveries are forthcoming. That doesn't mean we will ever stop discussing and debating and enjoying new insights as they come along.

Like most of the material on this site, this thread is a discussion of alternative realities that have just as much substance as the theories of Anne Macaulay. I have read *Megalithic Myths and Rhythms*, but found it without substance, mainly because Macaulay fails to connect any dots with facts and uses pentagrams instead. Contributors to this site are asked politely by Dennis to provide some factual basis for their claims or at least a compelling chain of logic that supports their destination. Whether other readers support or deny any given claim or idea is, to a great extent, immaterial.

The discovery of a harp on Skye is a great step forward for the history of complex music in the British Isles as it establishes another verification of a higher level of society than previously thought. Whether it supports either Stonehenge or Callanish is strictly a matter of opinion. Getting back to the bog, I have to point out that peat started forming at Callanish sometime around 1000 BC and some 5 feet were removed from around the stones in 1857. This would mean that almost 1.5 feet of peat surrounded the stones at the time of Pytheas. This is certainly poor maintenance on the part of the Boreades who guarded the sacred temple and, more than any other fact, argues that Callanish as a sacred temple was long abandoned when Pytheas sailed.

JohnWitts [March 31, 2012 at 7:51 pm](#)

There will always be discordance on this site – it cannot be otherwise when looking through the fogs of time. I think in this case the harp is a find with general importance, but it does not favour one site over another in any aspect anyone cares to debate.

Procopius [April 1, 2012 at 10:20 am](#)

I decided to have a good look around this site last night and as promised, I found a wealth of information in the form of original posts and comments from others. They all bolstered the case for Vespasian's Camp being the city that Pytheas wrote about, at the same time impartially examining the evidence in favour of other candidates such as Silbury Hill and Newgrange. I had chosen to lay off the whiskey for once, so it was a doubly sobering experience to read all this information and enlightened discussion.

I realise now that it demonstrated appalling manners on my part to appear from out of nowhere, writing under a pretentious pseudonym that I vainly hoped would give the impression that I and I alone was privy to some kind of 'secret history'.

On what is clearly a site set up for friendly and civilized discussion, where all points of view are demonstrably welcome, I nonetheless stated a blunt opinion in a churlish fashion without any evidence whatsoever to back it up, then expected others to go along with it all without so much as a murmur of protest or dissent. When others chose to politely differ with me, I took umbrage instead of making any effort whatsoever to see their point of view, while my personal contribution to the sum total of human knowledge on this subject hovers somewhere around the zero mark.

I now realise that losers and deliberate troublemakers such as myself shouldn't really be allowed access to the internet at all, so at the very least, I shall not be troubling visitors to this site again with my ill-informed views,

JohnWitts [April 1, 2012 at 6:07 pm](#)

All I know of Procopius is his writings about Britain are on the whole largely ignored. I have seen one reference to Britain being an Island of the Dead. The other time I came across him was his report on the defeat of the Vandals in North Africa, something which may have connections with the “King of Africa” as referenced by GOM.

As for the other Procopius, it is a free world, but if you have a viewpoint which you feel should be aired then it will be read and dealt with in the normal manner on this site. I have yet to see any one called ill informed or to be the subject of ridicule. However, I think you were bordering on this yourself with your earlier post addressed to me.

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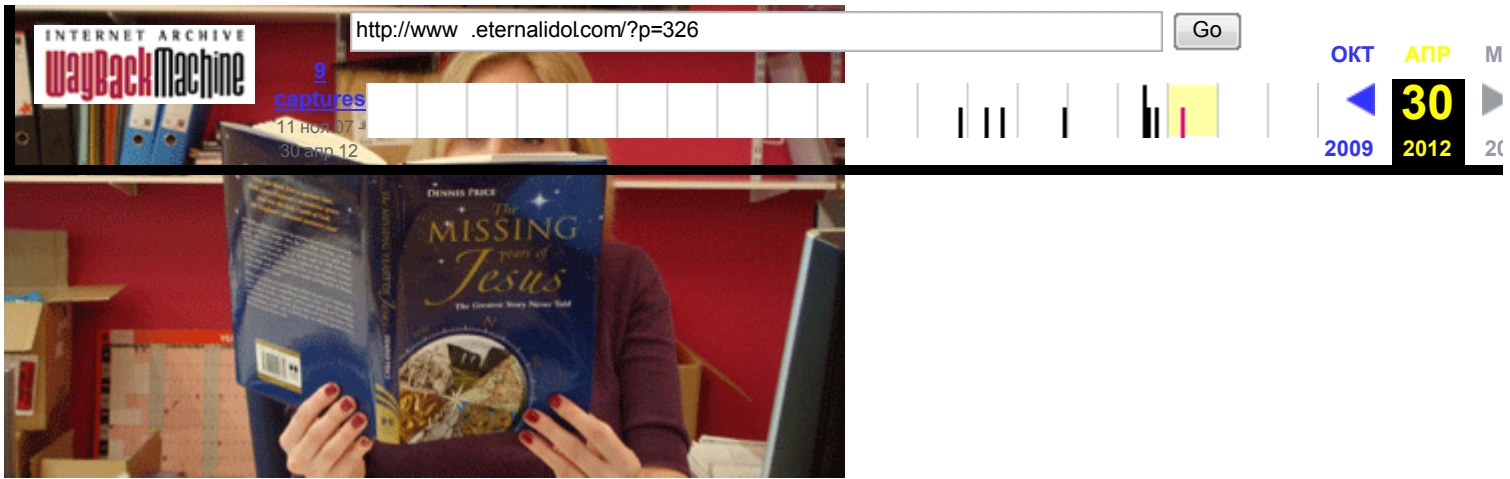
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