

Lyonesse Oddments & Epiphanies

VIE Vol. 36, Suldrun's Garden, 2002

VIE Vol. 37, The Green Pearl, 2002

VIE Vol. 38, Madouc, 2002

In line with what I did with Cadwal Chronicles (click on link if desired), these are my notes from the saga.
<https://www.tapatalk.com/groups/jackvance/the-cadwal-chronicles-t4997.html>

Suldrun's Garden

(. . . and perhaps a neat Easter Egg)

Cadwal. Speaking of the name Cadwal, on p. 30 we find 'Cadwal' used as the name of a music fiddle.

Way out to p. 442, we find a Sir Cadwal of Kaber Keep. *"Sir Cadwal was one of [Carfilhiot's] most arrogant enemies [...] With only a dozen clansmen at his command Sir Cadwal had long defied Carfilhiot."* {p. 443}

Another note: I love such evocatory place names as the "Plain of Shadows", (p. 358). *Madouc* (p. 8) fleshes it out as *"a wasteland supporting little but thorn, thistle, brown sedge and a few spinneys of stunted black cypress"*.

An anachronistic error: page 134 *"Avallon, largest and oldest city of the Elder Isles: a place of great palaces, a university, theaters and an enormous public bath."* No, no . . . universities (as we know them) did not come into being until a half millennium later, with University of Bologna in 1088, but more so in the Twelfth Century and ever onward in time.

What might have been in place in Avallon – and note the double L for the actual legendary 'Avalon' – could have been a monastic school (*scholae monasticae*) since the *Lyonesse* story grants the incursion of Christianity into the Elder Isles. Naturally a greater Christian influx would've gravitated to the *"largest and oldest city of the Elder Isles"*. Monastic schools nurture learnedness through the centuries into the universities (as we know them), byproducts of Christianity. Moreover, the word *universitas* was coined at the institute's foundation, so cannot be at the time of Avallon many century's earlier. (see Wikipedia: University) <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/University>

For a center of learning strictly out of secular history, especially one in recognition of the 'new' Higher Education (as opposed to what was known to Athenians as "*gymnastike*" and "*mousike*") the Greek notion of the 'academy' (such as Plato's Academy) would have to replace 'university', although I can guess how that word might not have suited Jack. Better in keeping with Vance would be 'lyceum' (like

Aristotle's Lyceum). Cf. Wikipedia: Education in ancient Greece.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Education_in_ancient_Greece

Thence with that substitution: "*Avallon, largest and oldest city of the Elder Isles: a place of great palaces, a lyceum, theaters and an enormous public bath.*" Sounds much more like the ancient world since *Lyonesse* indeed takes place in Late Antiquity, and NOT the Medieval era of the first universities. If 'colosseum' replaced 'theaters', well then!, we'd even have Roman civilization!

The Danaan. *Lyonesse* cites the ethnic tribal clan of the Danaan many times. Of significance, Dhrun was named "*after a Danaan hero who ruled the worlds of Arcturus*", (p. 241). The Danaans are footnoted in connection to Old Street on p. 357, and cited as to their raiding battles against the Ska on p. 374.

But there's something curiously interesting about the Danaan! Glossary III, devoted to "Ireland and The Elder Isles", covers the influx of European tribes into both locales. Putting aside Jack's fictional Ska, the Celts find mention coming from Armorica and going to Ireland. Amorica is the historical name given in Roman times for that part of Gaul next to the Atlantic Ocean, and includes the Brittany Peninsula.

Then:

Q

{p. 579} A century later the Tuatha de Danaan, after an epic migration from central Europe through Asia Minor, Sicily and Spain, crossed the Cantabrian Gulf to the Elder Isles, and established themselves in Dascinet, Troicinet and Lyonesse. Sixty years later the Tuatha split into two factions, one of which moved to Ireland [...]

The first obvious observation is that, by how this unfolds, the peoples of the Elder Isles are descended from the Danaan. Ska stay self-excluded. This is how Jack has it in Glossary III.

Question: Since a majority of peoples in the regions of U.K. (*sans* England) & Ireland are Celtic (as is covered in *Lyonesse*), are the Danaan a Celtic people too? Were they one of the Seven Celtic Nations? These seven nations are Eire (Ireland), Kernow (Cornwall), Mannin (Isle of Mann), Breizh (Brittany), Alba (Scotland) and Cymru (Wales), and lately (new genetic evidence) Galicia in northwest Spain, today considered the seventh of the original Celtic nations. The answer could be YES, where to be considered as a Celtic people Jack would've had to have his Danaan of Lyonesse be the eighth Celtic nation . . . certainly not impossible for a fictional tale!

But Jack need not have addressed the Celtic situation in that particular way (Celtic nations); it would be sufficient just to grant to them that they were part of the Celtic family at large.

A bit of fuzziness comes into play about specifically the 'Danaans' because while "*In Homer, the term Achaeans is one of the primary terms used to refer to the Greeks as a whole, [...] Other common names*

used in Homer are Danaans" (Wikipedia: Achaeans (Homer).)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Achaeans_\(Homer\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Achaeans_(Homer))

We can disregard that as a coincidental fluke. The Lyonesse people, culture & kingdoms are not of a Greek heritage, they match without question – in all aspects culturally, governmentally (monarchy), and by physiognomic stature – the Celts.

HOWEVER, that is IF Jack had stayed with his term 'Danaan'! BUT in Glossary III Jack pulls sort of a stunt! Ho ho! On this very last page{!} of the entire novel – VIE p. 579 – suddenly Jack introduces a surprising new name to fit along with the real-world Celts!

For now, Jack calls them the Tuatha de Danaan! Yet the Tuatha de Danann are something else!

Catch that? No? Note the spelling difference: Jack's 'Danaan' VS. a folklorically manifest 'Danann'.

How many readers discriminate that, I wonder???

It would seem I shouldn't belabor this apparent trifling & innocuous quirk of spelling . . . except that the difference opens a hidden door, behind which is tantalizing meaningfulness! For me (as JVMB can guess), it leads to a quite enchanting conjecture.

On the Danann, most settled sources have them as a supernatural race from Irish mythology. Tuatha Dé ("tribes of the gods") Danann means People of the goddess Danu.

- (Another source implies them to have been a real tribe from history, who ruled Ireland from 1897 B.C. to 1700 B.C. Cf. Ireland-Information Irish-Mythology.)

<https://www.ireland-information.com/irish-mythology/tuatha-de-danann-irish-legend.html>

Concerning the Danann, *"The Tuatha Dé Danann are described as a supernatural race, much like idealized humans, who are immune from ageing and sickness, and who have powers of magic. The powers most often attributed to the Tuath Dé are control over the weather and the elements, and the ability to shapeshift themselves and [...] control the fertility of the land"* (Wikipedia: Tuatha Dé Danann).

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tuatha_D%C3%A9_Danann

Nota Bene: another name for the Tuatha de Danann is the *Sidhe*. Who are the *Sidhe*?

Well, well! *Sidhe* is the collective term for Irish fairies{!!!}, and includes the Leprechauns, all of whom can work magic! I addressed a bit about *Sidhe* in my review of the book *Johnathan Strange and Mr. Norrell*, cf. my post "John Strange alee Johnathan Vance":

<https://www.tapatalk.com/groups/jackvance/john-strange-alee-johnathan-vance-t4985.html>

Q

Clarkean fairies she also terms as *Sidhe* from Gaelic folklore, the Irish name for a supernatural race in Celtic mythology. [...] *Sidhe* are said (from online) to descend from either fallen angels or the Tuatha Dé Danann of the Celts, "People of Danu", depending on the Abrahamic or pagan tradition one subscribes to [...] Are the Tuatha Dé Danann the same as the *Sidhe*? Celtic myth (online) has it that at their defeat, Tuatha Dé Danann chose to "go underground" and live in barrows and cairns, and this new habitat led to a new name for the Tuatha Dé Danann, whence they became known as the *Sidhe*.

Interestingly, in Jack's history via Glossary III he describes a two-way split of his Tuatha de Danaan, such that he has a faction going to Ireland! Ahem, are they there to comprise the *Irish* Tuatha de Danaan? Would that intermix in how there is an Irish Tuatha de Danaan out of Lyonessian legend alongside a Tuatha de Danann deriving out of Gaelic mythology???. This seems very intriguing.

It amounts to a conflation between Danaan with Danann. IF intended, Jack subtly nudges the idea of *HIS* Danaan into affiliation with the mythological, magical Danann! How brilliantly fitting an allusion for a saga that concerns itself with magic!

Suggestively transmuting those who are a migrating tribe of Indo-Europeans (fictionally) into potential fairies themselves (real mythology) via this literary insinuation – all of it inside what is a fairytale – is Clever! Clever! Clever!

Using 'Danaan' in place of the homonym 'Danann' is sweetly astute and elusive!

In fine literature, such recherché connection fashions a *valid* allegiance; it is artistic, not to be taken too literally. Nothing proscribes doing that inside Great Literature: for it is the Tall Order of Genius!

Did Jack really do this with sly deliberation? Perhaps so, perhaps not. If he did, it is utmost a glittery bejeweled Easter-egg! Without a single doubt Jack was eruditely knowledgeable and did all kinds of due diligence in preparatory research for *Lyonesse* (anyone can see that), and easily could come across the word 'Danann' out of Irish folklore. How can we surmise that he did? Because he knew their preceding moniker "Tuatha de"!

In addition, we squarely know that Jack hunted for words.

Taking that as a reliable given, my conjecture is Jack transmuted an extant mythology word 'Danann' into his own word 'Danaan', to do with as he pleased as his own creation, just as he revamped 'Avalon' into his own 'Avallon'. His own 'Avallon' in time becomes annihilated, thence enabling it (and The Round Table) to have been the precursors to the legendary 'Avalon' (and Round Table) in fables of the real-world.

All of this is truly a magnificent conceit for the saga of *Lyonesse* to gift to the world in relishing!

(That is, unless that later was a ‘marvelous’ / ‘marvellous’ penchant. So gosh, who knows? Ha ha? But I stand by my conjecture on Danaan/Danann. I opine that it is indeed a Vance Easter Egg.)

The Green Pearl

Lyonessian magic

Lyonessian magic is summarized by Tamurello to Melancthe on p. 177. Which is to say, magic by humans is explained. Vance pushes explication of magic back a step in causation to other entities. Never is there an explanation of how such entities themselves accomplish magic, other than by some suspected connection (perhaps) to *materia magica* – itself never explained.

Plus, we are to understand that what halflings, sandestins and demons do in magic is different each in character, but no more is clarified than that superficial small point.

Q

{Tamurello:} “It is all very will to ordain tasks by magic, but some intelligent or skillful agency must ultimately do the specified work. In such remedial work as this [fixing Melancthe] no entity, be it man, sandestin, halfling, demon, or other creature of controllable power, understands all the intricacies.

Dreuhwy (Feel free to skip this subheading.)

This notion of ‘dreuhwy’ interests me, but your mileage may vary. On p. 207 is a footnote about ‘dreuhwy’, Jack’s neologism (sounding like but not specifically having to do with druidry) for “*a self-induced mood of morose extra-human intensity, in which any grotesque excess of conduct is possible; full identification of self with the afflatus which drives the eerie, the weird, the terrible.*”

It is interesting to use a word for ‘inspiration’ – afflatus – for this definition, as ‘afflatus’ fairly commonly connotes ‘divine inspiration’ (in many religions), but otherwise “*generally refers not to the usual sudden originality but the staggering and stunning blow of a new idea, which the recipient may be unable to explain*” (Wikipedia, UL added), i.e., the emotional reaction in having an epiphany. (In Judeo-Christian and Islamic-Sufi beliefs this accounts for Revelatory – or ‘Revelatory’ – Knowledge, held to be the epistemological coequal to Empirical Knowledge.)

What dreuhwy suggests in place of ‘inspiration’ is the self-induced state of “*extra-human intensity*” of ‘amok’ – to behave uncontrollably and disruptively (or where “*any grotesque excess of conduct is possible*”), as derived from the Malay word ‘mengamok’ (meaning to make a furious & desperate battle charge), but now tinged with these qualities of eeriness, weirdness and terror. Dreuhwy would seem apt to Howard Alan Treesong!

Please don’t misunderstand me, for I am not saying Jack used the wrong word. Truly I am saying the complete opposite! Via the common context for ‘afflatus’, but translated in the way Jack puts it, is itself

an 'afflatus' in intensity and level of inspiration, for it is brilliant{!} to maintain "full identification of self" goes hand-in-hand with "the eerie, the weird, the terrible". A shocking revelation! Treesongian!

Arithmetic Error

Taussig, a Ska slave trustee-supervisor, needed only three years more for his due reward of retirement from Ska thralldom, which lasts for a term of 30 years (SG, p. 369), but he says "Seventeen years I have toiled for the Ska", (GP, p. 272). He must have meant twenty-seven! N.B.: the VIE was not out to correct errors.

Ska Steel

On p. 275, "Ska steel, forged with infinite patience, equaled the best in all the world, including the fabulous steels of far Cipangu, and the lessor blades of Damascus."

Marco Polo called Japan 'Cipangu' in circa 1300, based on the Chinese name, 'sun source country'. [Online]

Today, 'Damascus steel' is "characterized by distinctive patterns of banding and mottling reminiscent of flowing water, sometimes in a "ladder" or "rose" pattern"; I strongly urge clicking on iStock Getty Images for photos of the beautiful enfolding of the many layers of steel! I collect Damascus steel knives & occasional swords. Invariably they run more expensively!

<https://www.istockphoto.com/search/2/image?phrase=damascus+steel>

'THE' Axial Footnote

Only upon subsequent readings does the curious footnote on p. 314 stand out. This footnote explains that "Torqual survived both his wounds and his fall. He managed to crawl to the trail, where he was rescued by a pair of his henchmen. They took him to Castle Ang where in due course he recovered his strength."

What is so peculiar about this ***as a footnote*** is that it is utterly ***axial*** to the full Lyonesse storyline! It constitutes a pivot point! Torqual, having already played a large antagonist's part in the story, now upon his 'recovery' becomes ***veritably instrumental*** to the end of the saga by being the instrument (coerced) of Desmei's against Murgan!

It is just so curious that Torqual's non-death & recovery should be squeezed into a mere footnote! For, a footnote is nothing but an 'aside'. There are many readers who never read footnotes! But you CANNOT skip this one! This is crucial information! Certifiably, it simply is NOT an aside!

Since I know of it and wait for it, on some readings I ponder if Jack didn't insert this survival information as an afterthought! He might not at that point in writing have figured out the role Torqual would later play in the saga. But when Jack determined to continue using his magnificent black character Torqual in

the grand plot, he jumped back to fix the previously written storyline with this footnote. Just my supposition: it is a Jack Vance 'patch'.

Pagan Religious Allusions

An echo back (p. 341) to the Oikumene:

- *Star King* = "The Great God of Destiny, who carries a flower and a flail, and walks on wheels."
- *Palace of Love* = "The Sarkoy pantheon is ruled by Godogma, who carries a flower and a flail and walks on wheels. Everywhere along the Sarkoy steppes may be found tall poles with wheels on high, in praise of Godogma, the striding wheeling God of Fate."
- *Green Pearl* = Aillas replied: "We have come a goodly distance, over the moors from South Ulfland. Our destination will be decreed by Tshansin, Goddess of Beginnings and Endings, who walks on wheels."

Yet, as to the foregoing (a god who walks on wheels), I additionally enjoy the notion of a 'Tricosm':

Q

The fisherman showed a smile of mildly amused contempt.

"That is pagan superstition. I am not by nature a proselyter, but, truly, a unified wisdom rules the Tricosm, seeping from the roots of the Foundation Oak Kahaurok, to form the stars in the sky."

"That is the belief of the druids," said Aillas [...]

Demi-Witch

On p. 405 I am pleased – even elated! – to hear Melancthe categorized as a demi-witch. As a personal whim I'd have liked Jack to have used 'demi-witch' in reference to Melancthe more than only once in the entire saga; just a few more times, say, once (or twice) in each volume. It so perfectly designates her magical standing: she is not a witch; simultaneously she is more cogent than a mundane human.

Two Tanjeterly Guys

We have 'syaspic feroce' given on p. 419 . . . and 'hespid batrache' on p. 485. Just colossally superlative names! Untouchably so!

. . . Just saying.

(No . . . just raving!)

Color Matchups

It is curious, and I haven't the substantiation assembled to establish it, but I tend to note that whenever Jack pairs colors, these two duos do seem to reoccur:

Q

{p. 519} [...] the sight of two knolls, each crowned by a fortified castle [...] As the wole ran past, a pair of enormous knights, each taller and more massive than Kul, rode down from the first two

castles. One knight wore splendid purple armour with a crest of green plumes, while the other wore blue armour and orange plumes.

Madouc

An anachronistic error: We hear about *"the doctrines of chivalry"* on p. 7, and there in fact were antecedents of chivalric behaviors (soon below) in the era of Late Antiquity. Likewise exactly 400 pages later (p. 407), we find *"dedicated to the ideals of chivalry"*. As to forerunners, in *Lyonesse* Jack did a similar thing with early glimmerings of sportive jousting, providing a clear understanding in exposition that jousting evolved into the sport we commonly think about that epitomizes the later Middle Ages.

All well and good, but it goes too far to say *"the doctrines of ..."*! As covered in Wikipedia: Chivalry (click link if you're chivalric), *"the 'chivalric code' s an informal and varying code of conduct developed between 1170 and 1220. It was associated with the medieval Christian institution of knighthood."* It is indeed connected to the *"legendary companions of Charlemagne and his men-at-arms, the paladins"*. *"The code of chivalry, as it stood by the Late Middle Ages, was a moral system which combined a warrior ethos, knightly piety, and courtly manners, all combining to establish a notion of honour and nobility."*
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chivalry>

Historically in place of *"the doctrines of chivalry"* prior to 1170 was **'noble habitus'**, or a recognized Noble Habit: *"prior to codified chivalry there was the uncodified code of noble conduct that focused on the preudomme {Old French = the noble, valiant man} which can be translated as a wise, honest, and sensible man."* Pre-chivalric 'noble habitus' attributes were: Loyalty, Forbearance, Hardihood, Largess (non-avarice), The Davidic Ethic (protection of the weak and helpless), and Honour.

[Note the oxymoron *"uncodified code"*. Better to say "uncodified custom" or "uncodified practice", or such like.]

Poëlitetz

"The Danaans had named the fortress 'Poëlitetz': 'the Invulnerable'; it had never been taken by frontal assault", {p. 8}. This adds in substantiating that the Danaan considerably peopled Lyonesse.

There was a place called 'Pöllnitz' in former West Prussia, and there's a German surname 'Poellnitz' .

Lough Corrib, Ireland

Recall that the Vance family stayed near the shores of Lough Corrib when they lived a time in Ireland. It finds mention in Jack's autobiography. I discuss it's different spellings in my article "Skay: Xiueuv":
<https://www.tapatalk.com/groups/jackvance/skay-xiueuv-t4967.html>

Q

Nearby [Lock Maske] is Loch Corrib, which is significant because during an overnight stay at Ashford Castle on the shores of Loch Corrib the Vances learn of a cottage available for rent from the Molloys, and this becomes a base for the writing that Jack accomplished in Ireland! Jack

explains Corrib is spelled Coirib in Irish; the spelling is conflictual because p. 199 *Illustrated Edition* uses 'Corrib', as does the caption from the 1969 photo of Jack The Author in Ireland on p. 201, whereas on p. 222 it is spelled the Irish way 'Coirib' in the sentence just previous to the one mentioning Loch Maske.

Of the two mentions of Lough Corrib in *Madouc*, the first (p. 211) is where Father Umphred relates to King Casmir that the Holy Grail was brought *"to Glastonbury Abbey in Britain; thence it was taken to a sacred island on Lough Corrib in Ireland. Thence it was brought to the Elder Isles to preserve it safe from the pagans, but its present whereabouts in unknown."*

How fantastic that Jack and son John boated themselves (I believe) out to that island!

The second (p. 252) is spoken by Umphred to Queen Sollac (with King Casmir listening) in more detail:

Q

Father Umphred pursed his lips. "The reports are not exact. We know that it was brought to Glastonbury Abbey by Joseph of Arimathea, then carried to Ireland and housed in a chapel on the islet Inchagoill in Lough Corrib; thence it was brought to the Elder Isles by Saint Porroig through fear of the pagans, and now it is deemed to be in secret custody: a mysterious place to be dared only by the most gallant of the most foolhardy!"

First, island **Inchagoill** is a real island in Lough Corrib, Ireland! There was indeed a Christian chapel on the island! Its Christian ruins today constitute an Irish National Monument. The island's name means "Island of the devout foreigner." Cf. Wikipedia: Inchagoill

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Inchagoill>

Second, Joseph of Arimathea is a very astute reference: *"Medieval interest in Joseph centered on two themes, that of Joseph as the founder of British Christianity (even before it had taken hold in Rome), and that of Joseph as the original guardian of the Holy Grail"*

(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joseph_of_Arimathea).

Third, my google search did not recover any Saint Porroig; but there is a Porroig location: an oft bypassed vacation destination off southern Spain on the Mediterranean.

Cities, Countries, 'Otherwheres'?

The efferents from Mang Seven make curious references (p. 275). Speaking conversationally to each other of "Carpiskovy" and "Margaunt":

Q

At once he [Shimrod] heard their voices; they seemed to be discussing the weather in places beyond his acquaintance: " – almost a record cycle for interstitials, at least along the upper miasma," said Skel. "However, just past the kickfield of the Living Dead the modules have not yet shifted phase."

"I know little of Carpiskovy," said Voner. "It is said to be very fine and I am surprised to hear of conditions so insipid."

"Margaunt is worse, and by the hour! I found a delicate bang-green along the flutterway."

" 'Delicate' you say! "

"No less! The Gray-pines are on regular duty, and there is never a tweak from the rubants."

Out of my own sense, 'Carpiskovy' sounds very much like a city name. If not a city, then a region or country. 'Margaunt' sounds to me as a very swell 'otherwhere' name (like a demonland), but I prefer to match it to the same scope as 'Carpiskovy' going by their conversation, and so I count it either as a city name, or a region or country. Notwithstanding, either category could be in some still unnamed 'otherwhere'!

We should be glad, however, that the Gray-pines are on regular duty, and the rubants are quiet. Whoever wants to deal with disturbed rubants?

Iron & Fairies

How exceptional that Jack goes his own way with one particular old synecdoche about fairies.

Commonly but not universally, iron is antipathetic to fairies, spirits, devils. Please confer Wikipedia: Iron In Folklore. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iron_in_folklore

It is the reason for putting a horseshoe above a doorway; why cemeteries were oft surrounded by iron fencing (to keep souls gathered within); how burying an iron knife under the entrance to one's home allegedly kept witches from entering.

Pointedly, it is a movie trope used by the 2014 film *Maleficent*. It goes along with silver being lethal to werewolves; that Vance's Wizard Zaraides knew Firx was antipathetic to zinc; that Susanna Clarke had lead (element Pb) be the toxoid miasma to her fairy magic as I had reported in "[John Strange alee Johnathan Vance](#)".

Here is Jack's flout on iron & silver with Vancean fairies:

Q

[p. 362] Madouc looked across the meadow and now everything had changed. The swirl of fog above the hummock had become a tall castle of twenty towers with long banderoles streaming from each spire. In front of the castle stanchions of twisted silver and iron were linked by festoons of flowers; they surrounded a long table heaped with delicacies and liquors in tall bottles.