



# Paganism in Arthurian Romance

*John Darrah*

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## **Paganism in Arthurian Romance** John Darrah

John Darrah makes the valid point that episodes in the Arthurian romances read like motifs from the ancient mythologies... (he) reconstructs a lost British paganism, grounded in the rivers, hills and woods, and especially those grey monoliths... reminders of a cosmology vanished from this island. NIKOLAI TOLSTOY, DAILY TELEGRAPH 'Contends, with a good deal of evidence, that the impact of pre-Christian Welsh, Irish, Scottish, Cornish and Breton religion is greater than has been previously thought... Extensively researched and well written.' CHOICE The origins of Arthurian romance will always be a hotly disputed subject. The great moments of the legends belong partly to dimly-remembered history, partly to the poets' imagination down the ages, yet there is another strand to the stories which goes back deeper and further: the traces of ancient pagan religion, found both in Arthurian heroes who have inherited the attributes of gods, and in episodes which reflect ancient religious rituals. Darrah's careful study of the thematic relationships of, particularly, the more obscure episodes of the romances and his identification of the relative geography of Arthurian Britain as portrayed in the romances will be valuable even to those who differ with his conclusions. His most original contribution to an unravelling of a pagan Arthurian past lies in his appropriation of the fascinating evidence of standing stones and pagan cultic sites. This is dark and difficult territory, but building on elusive clues, and tracing a range of sites, especially in south-west Britain, John Darrah has added a significant new dimension to the search for the sources of the legends of Arthur and his court. JOHN DARRAH has also written *The Real Camelot*.

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