

The Ley Hunter (Number 100, 1985)

GENISIS – The First Book of Revelations, by David Wood; The Baton Press, 1985; 309pp; large format hardback; highly illustrated with many coloured photographs and maps/diagrams; £15.00.

Okay – I have to admit it: I have problems with this book. This is at least in part because when I first took hold of it it happened to fall open at a coloured photograph showing the author's colleagues leaning against a four-wheel-drive American vehicle, surrounded by rugged terrain, and which had the caption: “Negotiating the vaginal cavity of Nut, north of Serres”. It was difficult to take anything seriously after that.

David Wood's quest in this work is to find the true treasure, the real secret, at the heart of the evergreen Renne-le-Chateau [sic] enigma, popularised in this country by the TV programmes of Henry Lincoln and, more recently, ‘Holy Blood, Holy Grail’. Personally, I think the French account by De Sede of the whole business to be more meaningful and subtle than any of the British efforts (with the exception of Lincoln's first, best and least-known Renne [sic] TV documentary many years ago), and that goes for this book too, alas. Wood feels that the key to the mysteries lies in the landscape geometry that can be discerned in the region around Renne. [sic] In a carefully-worded foreword, Lincoln agrees with the exactitude of Wood's terrestrial geometry (Wood is a trained surveyor) but falls short of agreeing with his interpretation – a factor emphasised by Lincoln at the TLH Moot 85. Wood leads us through a mystic tangle involving Isis, the Ark of the Covenant, geometry, gematria and liberal examples of vulvic imagery. In fact, the book seems to exhibit a vagina-obsession at times.

A real problem with David Wood is, I feel, the obvious fact that he has pursued his quest in isolation from the large body of landscape geometry research that has been going on for years within Earth Mysteries. We have alleged Earth Zodiacs, a terrestrial elephant hidden in the Sussex countryside, a dog in the Somerset landscape, rings of churches in Wiltshire, a terrestrial circle centred on the Malverns, Behrend's terrestrial geometry in southern Britain (now disclaimed by Behrend), and many more examples. Some of these are more convincing than others, and we are now much more aware of the amazing ability of chance to

produce surprisingly convincing results in such configurations, thanks to the work of Behrend and Forrest. Wood does not seem to be aware of all this previous material, and stumbles on to re-invent the wheel. Thus it is he can put forward on p.176 “The Ass of Set” configured from the cartographic shading on a relief map of the Peyrolles region. Pure Rorschach. The animal is in any case legless. This cartographic phenomenon is truly a symbol of asininity...

But even if it is difficult to take the WHOLE thrust of Wood's research seriously, there is no doubting his sincerity and the fact that he does bring out some interesting material. The geometry may well be an ancient recognition of the natural disposition of the local landscape involved, augmented by artefact (though one wonders if another area so intensively studied might not also yield surprising patterns as the terrestrial imagery work in Earth Mysteries research suggests). Also, the book is lavishly produced, with stunning coloured, crisp map reproductions, black and white and coloured photographs, multi-coloured diagrams and artwork. Nevertheless, I feel Wood's book to be a stepping stone rather than the Philosopher's Stone. The veil of Isis has not been removed.

Paul Devereaux.