

SUBMERGED TERRITORIES

DOGGERLAND

AN ANALYSIS OF
RETRIEVED ARCHIVAL MATERIAL

There came into our possession a jumbled and incomplete collection of damaged and unverifiable artefacts. A quantity of faded 35mm slides and a single disc film of tourist locations in Venice accompanied by only partial notations.

Careful examination of this debris began to suggest to us the possibility of spaces both real and metaphoric. Further analysis began to uncover previously unimaginable topographies and trajectories. Notional, obscured territories simultaneously inhabiting the past, the present and perhaps even the future.



ABOVE US THE WAVES

In the middle of the North Sea about 60 or 70 miles from the nearest land, lies the Dogger Bank. This extensive shoal forms a wide irregular plateau with an area comparable to that of Denmark. Over much of it the sea has a depth of only 50 or 60 feet. Its edges slope abruptly into deeper water, about 150 feet in the south, east, and west, but much deeper to the north.



Stories of the existence of a mythical submerged land have long been told in the fishing communities around the North Sea. The bones of large, often extinct, land mammals had often been brought up from the sea bed, hidden in the peaty deposits known to the North Sea fishermen as 'moorlog'.



In 1913, the British geologist and palaeobotanist Clement Reid published a book entitled *Submerged Forests* in which he hypothesized a submerged land between mainland Europe and Britain. Reid's ideas had been formulated through observation of ancient root structures visible only at exceptionally low tides.



Although the possibility of a prehistoric human presence in the Dogger area had been suggested by Reid and others, it was not until 1931 that any hard evidence was found. A trawler named *Colinda*, captained by one Pilgrim Lockwood, hauled up a lump of peat whilst fishing near the Ower Bank, 25 miles east of Norfolk. The peat was found to contain an elegant barbed antler point possibly used as a harpoon or fish spear and dated to a time when the area was tundra, about 4,000 and 10,000 BCE.



Archaeologists studying what became known as the Colinda point, began to realize that hunter-gatherers could once have roamed across a vast plain that connected Britain to the rest of Europe. It has been suggested that this terrain of coastal lagoons, saltmarshes and rivers may have been one of the richest geographical resources in Europe at the time.

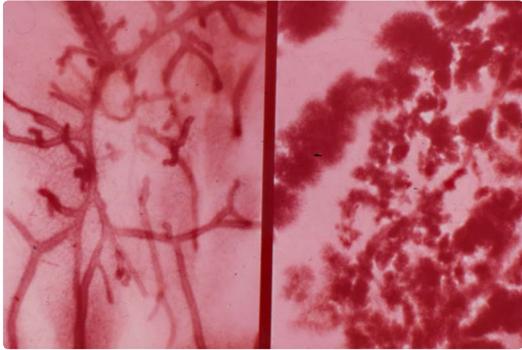


Could this abundant environment have enabled the Mesolithic harpoon makers who carved the Colinda point to begin to settle and form proto-agrarian communities? If so, Doggerland could be seen as a form of prelapsarian paradise. A lost realm.

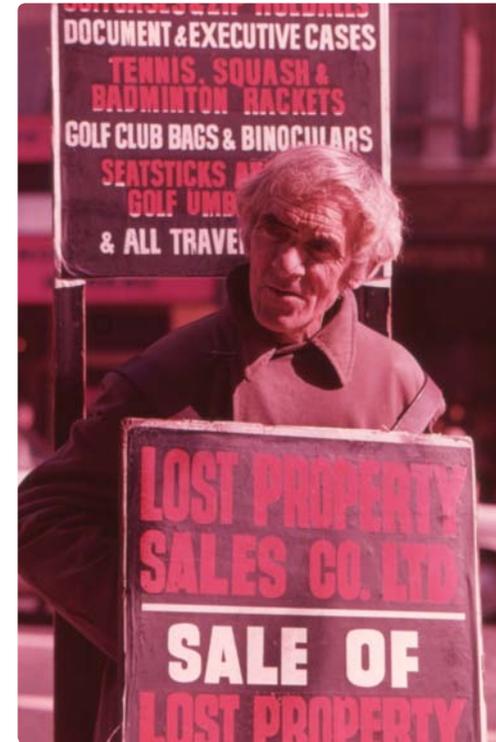


When the early trawl boats or 'Doggers' as they were known, first fished the Dogger Bank, it was common practice to break the large cakes of 'moorlog' found in the nets into pieces and discard the detritus in deeper water. Whilst a few of the blocks and some of the bones they contained were brought back to Yarmouth as curiosities, no reliable record seems to have been kept as to the exact details of the content or location of any of the finds.

They have been overwhelmed. And are now as hidden as the remains of King John's baggage train, which has never been seen again since it wandered off a flooded causeway during the disastrous spring-tide of 1216.



Despite advances in technology our knowledge of the region remains largely obscured, inaccessible and hypothetical. Doggerland remains effectively terra incognita.



In cartography uncharted or inaccessible areas are traditionally annotated with the phrase 'hic svnt dracones' and populated with the mythic and the imagined. Gaps in the schema become sites of unknown horror, spoken of only by oracles.



HIC SVNT DRACONES

According to the 18th Century writer Jacques Cazotte, located at the bottom of the Mediterranean sea, just off the Gulf of Tunis is a cavernous hall called Domdaniel. This submerged realm is said to be a meeting place for evil spirits; frequented by magicians, gnomes and other miscreant souls.



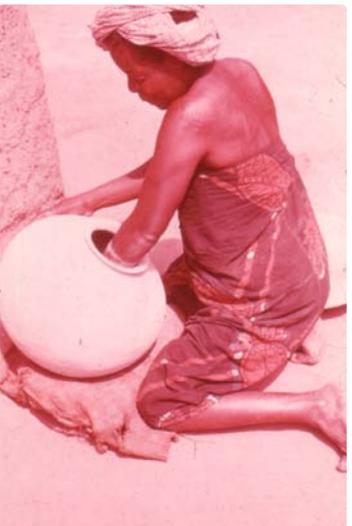
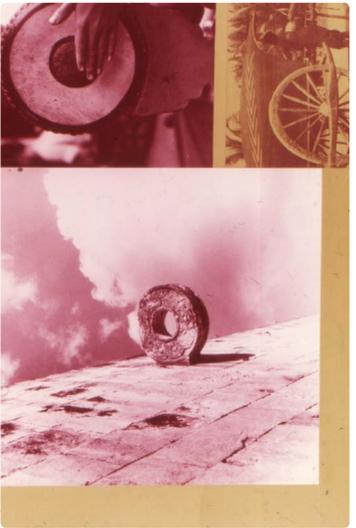
For a fairly long time the dead limited themselves to uttering more or less confused oracles, but as education became obligatory and the number of illiterate people diminished they finally dictated their messages clearly to the very people who questioned them.



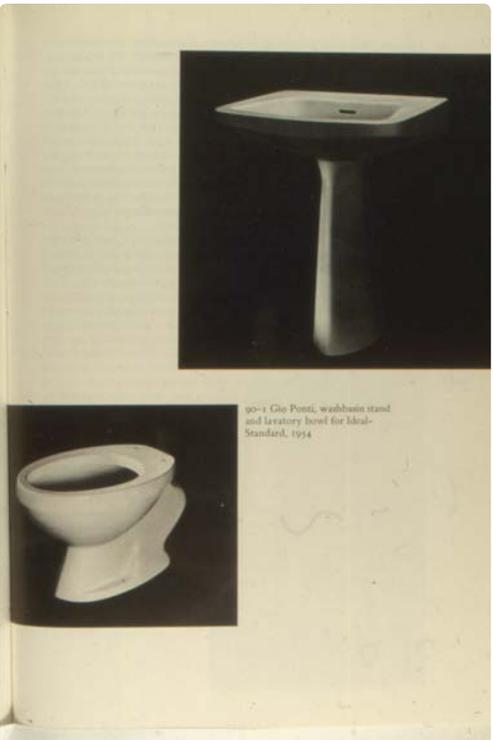
They said 'the present is undefined, the future has no reality than as present hope and the past is no more than the present memory. The whole of time has already happened and our cosmos is but a vague memory, a distorted reflection. Fragmented, flawed, perhaps even false'.



Proponents of the theory of Paleocontact maintain that the development of human technologies and religions is the direct result of interventions by extraterrestrial intelligence. Some have gone as far as to suggest that the deities of most, if not all cultures are in fact extraterrestrial and that sudden advances in our technologies provide evidence of their influence. They argue that it is precisely the gaps that we see in historical and archaeological records that provide the evidence for these ancient extraterrestrial interventions.



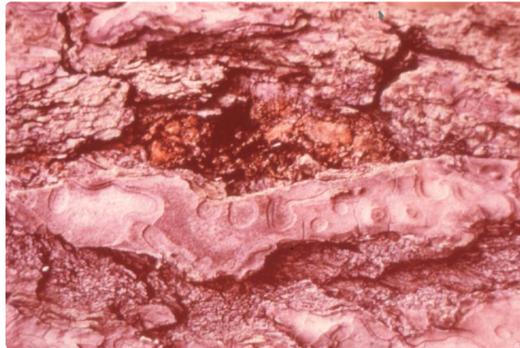
THE MIRROR IS HERE





EXTRAORDINARY CLAIMS

Noble prize winner Francis Crick, attributed with discovering the double helix structure of DNA, proposed a counter theory that he termed 'panspermia'. He believed that the earth was 'seeded' with life, probably in the form of bluegreen algae, by an unknown intelligent extraterrestrial species, for the purpose of ensuring life's continuity. He believed that this could have been done on any number of suitable planets.



However Professor Gold, one of a trio of scientists to propose the now largely abandoned 'steady state' hypothesis of the universe, suggests instead a 'garbage theory' for the origin of life, proposing that life on earth was not planned, but had spread unintentionally after contamination with extraterrestrial detritus.



In 1788, after falling under the spell of the Illuminati, Jacques Cazotte declared himself possessed of the power of prophecy. With political unease hanging in the air, Cazotte unleashed a volley of unsettling and brutal predictions to an audience of dinner party guests. Proclaiming that many of those present would meet their end at the guillotine, Cazotte walked amongst the assembled dignitaries describing in minute detail the grim destinies that awaited them.



CATACLYSYM

Although there is no agreement on the exact sequence of events that led to the disappearance of Doggerland, a recent hypothesis suggests that coastal land was flooded by a tsunami around 6200 BCE. The tsunami, caused by a submarine landslide off the coast of Norway known as the Storegga Slide, would have had a catastrophic impact on coastal populations.



In 1792 Jacques Cazotte was caught in possession of counter-revolutionary letters and subsequently guillotined.



The tools and apparatuses we use to interrogate both the past and the present are unstable, mutable and often inadequate. They are not neutral – they create noise, and in the process of communication, the observer may read these noises as patterns or signals. These chance events have no provenance but are merely produced through noise and only perceived as meaningful.



Geographies and the territories that opportunistically spring up to inhabit them, to populate their landscapes and exploit their riches, are merely superficial manifestations of more substratal tendencies of movement. What appears stable and static is in fact volatile, mutable, unstable.



Perhaps the garbage in which Gold saw the hand of a higher power was in fact just detritus after all. Perhaps the world contains no meaningful convergences, but is instead a network of haphazard acts. Apparently isolated yet in fact interdependent, atemporal, paralactic and hyper spatial.

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