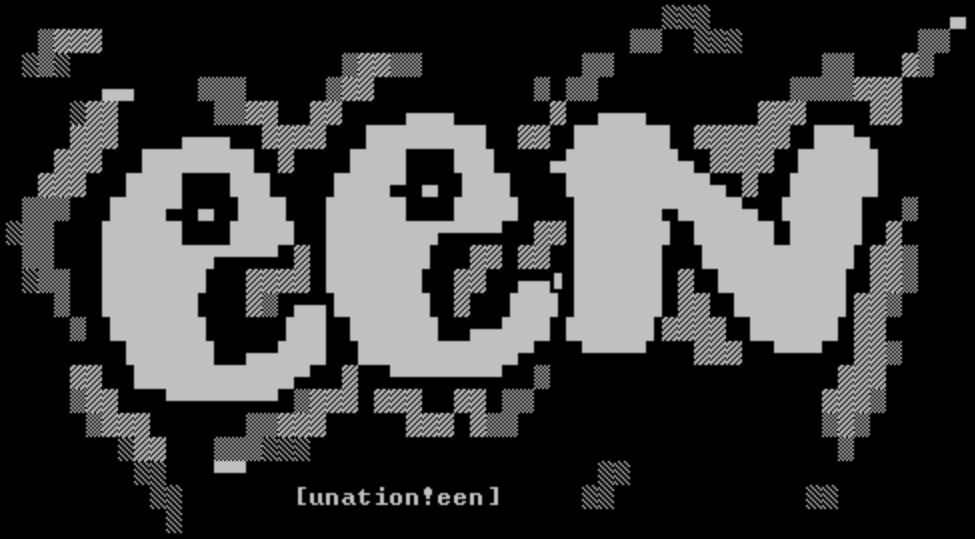


Enigma of Esoteric Nothingness

# The Roots of Witchcraft
**By**
**Michael Harrison**

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# The Roots of Witchcraft

MICHAEL HARRISON

Foreword by COLIN WILSON

"...finely illustrated piece of research"

Liverpool Daily Post

This book is unique in the literature of witchcraft. Many volumes record the tortures, confessions and executions of the witch trials; few examine the origin and beliefs of this remarkable subterranean cult which has survived almost unchanged through the centuries.

Michael Harrison, unrivalled in the field of historical detection, gives convincing answers to questions which other writers on witchcraft have persistently dodged—

What part did Man's earliest organised religion, the Old Fertility Cult, play in the development of witchcraft?

Where did the evil side of the Fertility Cult – Diabolism – evolve, and how and when did it enter Europe?

But the most important revelation in this book is the author's achievement in translating the ancient 'language of the covens', the 'gibberish' of the witch-trial records, the lost language whose identification holds the key to the very Roots of Witchcraft.

"A wide-ranging work which has achieved a remarkable breakthrough".
Yorkshire Evening Press

". . . profound chronology of the cult from pre-history, through Druidism, to Salem and the present day".
Evening News

## Inside Cover Blurb - The Roots of Witchcraft

'It may well be asked: Why yet another book on Witchcraft? ... I shall content myself with giving the three principal reasons which persuaded me to write this book.

'In the first place, I am not satisfied that any books on Witchcraft ... have clearly denned Witchcraft or have made sufficiently clear the essential distinction between Witchcraft and Diabolism. '... In the second place ... I am concerned with the origins of the cult; more particularly with the geographical situation of the region from which this ancient faith spread over Europe. '... In the third place, I shall produce evidence ... to shew that, whilst Witchcraft was not, after ... 1948, as widespread or as powerful as vested ecclesiastical and political interests found it useful to make it out to be, the Old Religion ... was far more established, far more widespread, until at least the year AD 1400, than the activities of the Inquisition would imply. '... I shall point out that the modern highly-publicised "revival of Witchcraft" is a non-fact; that Witchcraft - or the Old Religion - cannot be revived until the beliefs associated with natural ... agriculture be revived. I shall further point out that, in "extirpating" the Old Religion ... the Dominicans, Kramer and Sprenger, ... succeeded, not only in destroying the ancient, simple Fertility Cult ... but also in reviving and strengthening that Diabolism which ... had been, for political reasons, identified with the Old Religion ..."

Michael Harrison

## Quotes

What Song the Syrens sang, or what Name Achilles assumed when he hid himself among Women, though puzzling Questions, are not beyond all Conjecture.

Hydriotaphia

I have ever believed, and do now know, that there are Witches: they that are in doubt of these ... are obliquely and upon consequence a sort, not of Infidels, but Atheists.

Religio Medici

archaeologist, anthropologist and scholar with the creative imagination of the poet. With the intellectual detachment of genius she pioneered her lonely way against the ossified thought of entrenched prejudice. By bringing the light of science to bear upon what was then deemed the outworn superstitions of the vulgar and illiterate, she shewed the antiquity no less than the continuity of an ancient belief. If I have sought to follow in the path that she first opened up, I have gone the more eagerly in her footsteps because it was she who urged me to do so.

SLP

Nil tam difficile est quin quaerendo investigari possit.

## List of Illustrations

Line illustrations appearing in text

'Alexamenos Worships His God!' - Contrad Research Library
'Animal Magnetism' - Or Eighteenth Century Hypnotism - Author's collection
The Dawn Of Magic - Contrad Research Library
Cybele's Castration Forceps - Contrad Research Library
Great Mother Of The Aegean - Author's Collection
The 'Other People' - Contrad Research Library
The Horned God - Contrad Research Library
The Enduring Faith - Courtesy Of Routledge and Kegan Paul
The Agape: Feast Of Brotherly Love - Author's Collection
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The Good Shepherd - Contrad Research Library
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Christian Orphism - Contrad Research Library
More Eclectic Christianity - Author's Collection
Egyptian Masked Priest - Author's Collection
The Witch Of Edmonton - Contrad Research Library: from Caulfield's Wonderful Museum of Remarkable Portraits
Toads As Familiars - Contrad Research Library
Witchfinder-General - Author's Collection: from Hopkins's own work, Discovery of Witches, 1647
Shiela-Na-Gig - Courtesy: Routledge And Kegan Paul Ltd
A Conjuration - Author's Collection: From John Ashton's The Devil In England And America, 1896
Pan In The Seventeenth Century - Contrad Research Library
The Storm-Raisers - Contrad Research Library
Witches And Their Imps - Contrad Research Library
Mandrakes - Male And Female - Contrad Research Library
Hanged By The Neck - Author's Collection: From Ralph Gardiner's England's Grievance Discovered In Relation To The Coal Trade, 1655

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Half-tone (Plate) illustrations

Plate I

The Bear-Goddess - Chinese Artemis British Museum
Great Mother Of The Steppes - Novosti Press Agency (A.P.N.)

Plate 2

A Worshipper From Crete - British Museum
An Iberian Shaman - British Museum

Plate 3

The Formality Of Ritual - British Museum
The Eleusinian Goddesses - British Museum

Plate 4

The Horned God Of Ch'ang-Sha - British Museum

Plate 5

Cernunnos Of The Parish - Service De Documentation Photographique, (Through Contrad Research Library)
The Watcher Over Paris - Author's Collection

Plate 6

The Cernunnos Of Britain - The Verulamium Museum: Author's Collection

Plate 7

The Cerne Abbas Giant, Dorset - National Monuments Record

Plate 8

The Folkton Drums - British Museum

## Acknowledgements

One of the few pleasures of an author's life which never lose their savour is to be found in the honest recognition of the debt that he or she always owes to others. If no man is an island, entire of itself, then certainly no book is the work of any single mind, entire of itself. We not only need the help of others; it is right that we should have that need; and, if we are as fortunate as we could hope to be, we shall find ourselves needed as much as we need others.

First and foremost - the trite phrase is unavoidable here - I have to thank the late Dr Margaret Murray for that inspiring encouragement to which I have alluded more than once in the book that she so warmly urged me to write. That she died as her last letter to me was being written only adds an unusual -perhaps unique? - force to the urgings of one of the most brilliant minds that this or any other period has produced.

Margaret Murray was fortunate in being born into an age of brilliant women, all as eager and competent to exploit Woman's new 'liberation' as any of these noisier contemporary 'Liberators' who, to flatter themselves, have managed to persuade many that Woman's almost complete liberation did not come a century ago - a fact which was proved, in the academic field alone, by such dazzling imaginative intellects as those of Margaret Murray, Jane Harrison, Jessie Weston and Janet Bacon: to all of whom I have often acknowledged my deep indebtedness.

It is the fashion, among some shallow minds, to dismiss Dr Murray's theories as - I quote one such opinion - 'vapid balderdash'. I am not sure, but I have the uneasy feeling that the reluctance to accept Dr Murray as a pioneer in the more speculative aspects of Anthropology springs simply from a far too common masculine prejudice (that I, thank Heaven, do not share!) against conceding the possibility that any woman could contrive to pioneer in any activity, physical or mental.

How may this indefensible prejudice possibly continue to exist in the age which has produced its Nightingales, its Garret Andersons, its Curies, its Meitzners, and so many other women pioneers!

Fortunately, as I have mentioned in the text, Dr Murray's warm supporters far outnumbered her detractors, and it is my hope that, in the not-so-distant future, all will agree with me that, in her literally epoch-making book, The Witch-Cult in Western Europe, Dr Murray shewed, for the first time, the true relationship of Western Witchcraft to that Primaeval Faith which sprang from Man's first important use of his differentiating and segregating mental superiority.

That first important use of his mind was demonstrated when he asked those three questions which lie at the beginning of all intellectual enquiry; which are, indeed, the origin of all intellectual enquiry: 'Who am I?', 'Who made me?' and 'Why am I here?'

In this book, encouraged by many a dead and living writer, I have endeavoured to state the conditions in which these essential questions were first asked - and (to a much larger extent than many think) were answered.

The several sources that I have used have been acknowledged both in the body of the text and in the

Bibliography at the end of this book. Such acknowledgement is not only the courteous and just admission of a debt to others, it serves, also, as a useful guide to further reading on the subject.

However, there are two writers on Witchcraft whom (with their respective publishers) I wish specially to thank for permission to quote from their books: the late Mr Pennethorne Hughes and Messrs Longman, for permission to quote from Witchcraft; and (the Executors of) the late Mr T.C. Lethbridge and Messrs Routledge & Kegan Paul, for permission to quote from Witches: Investigating an Ancient Religion.

I must also acknowledge my deep debt to two other books, both of which treat of the Fertility Religion only incidentally: the late Sir F.M. Stenton's Anglo-Saxon England, my opinion of which is sufficiently indicated, I trust, by the frequency and length of my references to it in my book; and - once again! -Professor L.R. Palmer's The Latin Language, the one indispensable handbook, in my opinion, to any writer whose work involves the subject of Dr Palmer's matchless book. Anglo-Saxon England is published by The Clarendon Press, Oxford; The Latin Language by Messrs Faber & Faber. To all authors (or their Executors) and their publishers, for permission to quote from the works mentioned above, my sincere fraternal thanks!

If no book, to go back to what I said at the beginning of this Note, may ever be entirely original; entirely the work of one single author; it must yet, to justify its writing and publication, contain at least one original contribution, by the author, to the history of, or the thinking upon, the subject of which the book treats.

In this book, my claim to originality lies in my having identified the language in which the Western form of the ancient and universal Fertility Cult first achieved sophisticated expression; and which language, over the millennia, 'fossilised' into a ritual and no-longer-comprehended speech, as has happened to the pre-Dravidian 'Elephant Language' of the Indian mahout; to the Sumerian of the Semitic rituals of Akkad; to the proto-Latin of the Carmen Arvale; and (so far as the general run of worshippers is concerned) to the Latin of the Roman, and to the Old Slavonic of the Russian Orthodox, Church. The identification, as well as the theories based upon that identification, are mine, and I take full responsibility for them.

## Foreword - By Colin Wilson

It was in Hastings, in the Summer of 1965, that I first made the acquaintance of the work of Michael Harrison. It was at the end of a heavy week of journalistic and lecture assignments, and I still had to give a lecture and seminar on existentialism to a class of foreign students. I was beginning to feel tired and sorry for myself. Long periods away from home always produce this effect; I begin to suffer from 'people poisoning', and even places oppress me. I long to be back home, sitting in front of the fire with a book. In this mood, I make straight for the nearest second-hand bookshop. In Hastings I was lucky; I've found many long-sought volumes in the Howes Bookshop, near the seafront. It was there that I found a book with the promising title of London by Gaslight, a history of the Victorian and Edwardian eras, from 1861 to 1911. I have the book by me now as I write, and it still falls open at page 133, an account of the strange series of occurrences known as 'the Vanishings' that occurred in 1881, seven years before the Jack the Ripper murders. This is the paragraph on which my eye lighted:

'The strange aspect of the disappearances, which were mostly centred about the London districts of East Ham and West Ham, was the absence of what we may call an "age pattern". Young girls, young boys, middle-aged men and elderly women - all appeared to be equally acceptable to whoever - or whatever - was whipping the victims away ..."

I can think of no paragraph better designed to make the casual browser read on. I did - throughout the weekend and my journey back to Cornwall.

Incidentally, I have never been able to find any more on the Vanishings, although I have looked and enquired fairly hard.

My old friend Harold Visiak, who was alive at the time of the Vanishings, told me that there was an account of them in Charles Fort; but I've never been able to find it. Apart from this, there is only (as far as I know), a chapter in a book by Elliott O'Donnell called, I think, Strange Disappearances,

There were nine vanishings in nine years; one might suspect Jack the Ripper, except that in the few cases where the victim's body was recovered (one in an empty house, one at the foot of cliffs at Ramsgate) there were certainly no characteristic Ripper mutilations; in fact, the body at the foot of the cliff bore no sign of injury, and the autopsy revealed no cause of death. Modern Flying Saucer enthusiasts will see all the signs of Aliens from outer space ...

What fascinated me about Michael Harrison was his cast of mind - the combination of scholar, antiquary, eccentric and detective; there is a certain resemblance to Charles Fort, except that Fort is hard to read, and Michael Harrison is incapable of being unreadable. I saw at once that Michael Harrison is a member of an increasingly rare breed: the genuinely dedicated writer.

In case that sounds like the conventional compliment of a writer of Introductions, let me elaborate. In the past, the distinction between real writers and commercial hacks was more interesting than today. Montaigne certainly qualifies as a true writer, since he wrote solely to satisfy an inner-impulse. Defoe was, by general admission, a commercial hack. William Blake was a true writer; Doctor Johnson was mostly a hack. (After all, he told Boswell that any man who writes for anything but money is a fool.)

Most of the Elizabethan playrights probably qualify as hacks. In the past, 'commercialism' - if that is the word - often produced good literature. Today this has almost ceased to be true. Of the thousands of books published every year, most are purely commercial, and most of them will be forgotten in a few months. In the Victorian age, best sellers were often writers of merit - Dickens, Thackeray, Trollope, George Eliot, Stevenson; nowadays, the production of best sellers has become a commercial affair, like the production of Cadillacs. I have remarked elsewhere that to say that (for example) L.H. Myers and Harold Robbins are both 'writers' is like saying that both Gladstone and Jack the Ripper were interested in fallen women. There is a yawning gulf between the men who write for money, and the men who write because literature is in their blood. The commercial writer may be a man who has a genuine talent for popularising - history or science or what-have-you - but you would never mistake his product for literature.

Now what interested me about Michael Harrison was that he so clearly belongs to that band of eccentric romantics who regard literature as a necessity, not a luxury, of civilised living; like Southey, he obviously finds 'the mighty minds of old' more interesting than the television news reports. There is a touch of the poetry of nostalgia about most of his books, whether he is writing about the indiscretions of Edward VII or the Duke of Clarence, or reconstructing Roman London, or speculating on the unrecorded adventures of Sherlock Holmes

- or, for that matter, inventing new cases for Poe's Auguste Dupin. When I went to live - and teach - in America for two years, London by Gaslight was one of the few books I took with me; and when I travelled about the country lecturing, it often went with me - together with a portable tape recorder, and tapes of the music of Delius and Elgar. It brought a pleasant sense of home to a great many anonymous motel rooms.

It was August Derleth - the friend and publisher of H. P. Lovecraft - who noticed my copy of London by Gas light, and told me that Michael Harrison advised him on Victorian London as described in his own Solar Pons stories - affectionate parodies of Sherlock Holmes. Derleth gave me Michael Harrison's address, and I wrote to ask him if he could give me any more information about the Vanishings. He couldn't - apart from recommending me to try Elliott O'Donnell; but we began to correspond. And it was shortly thereafter that he intrigued me by telling me that he had Jack the Ripper's death certificate on his desk ... In fact, I think I may claim a small amount of the credit for the remarkable theory of the Ripper's identity put forward in Harrison's biography of the Duke of Clarence

- Queen Victoria's grandson. Michael Harrison was already engaged on research for his biography when a doctor, Thomas E.A. Stowell, wrote an article in The Criminologist suggesting that Clarence was Jack the Ripper. Stowell had told me his theory as long ago as 1960, and I had introduced him to Nigel Morland, editor of The Criminologist. But here, I think, is an excellent example of the kind of 'detective work' that makes Michael Harrison so much more than a cultural historian. He read Stowell's article, in which the suspect is not actually named (but I had been able to confirm that Clarence was meant). Now Stowell had based his own theory on certain papers of Sir William Gull, Physician in Ordinary to the royal family, which had been shown to Stowell by Gull's daughter, Lady (Caroline) Acland.

He had obviously made notes from these papers on the career of Gull's suspect. And Stowell had no doubt that Gull's suspect was Clarence, for Gull had a number of shocked and cryptic references to Clarence in connection with the Ripper. Fortunately, Stowell summarised 'the Ripper's' career in his Criminologist article. Michael Harrison saw immediately that this description did not fit Clarence; for example, Clarence never resigned his army commission, as Stowell's suspect did. In that case, who was the mysterious suspect, referred to by Stowell as 'S'? And how had Stowell come to get the facts wrong? Unfortunately, Stowell had died not long after the article appeared - I suspect of the excitement of gaining sudden notoriety - and so could not be questioned. Clearly, Holmesian deduction was required. Why should Stowell think that Gull meant that Clarence was the Ripper?

Clearly, because the names had been linked in Gull's papers. (Stowell told me that Lady [Caroline] Acland had shown him these papers in the Thirties, and asked his advice on whether they should be destroyed, since they contained compromising material on Clarence - who was also involved in a homosexual scandal; whether Stowell advised that they should be destroyed I cannot remember; but he told me they were destroyed.) And if Clarence was not Jack the Ripper, then presumably he must have been somewhat associated with the Ripper - knowingly or unknowingly - for Gull to mention them in the same breath, as it were.

And so the problem resolved itself into the question: Which of Clarence's friends or acquaintances could have been the Ripper? That is, which of them fitted the description of the suspect 'S'. Michael Harrison soon located a man who fitted in every respect -fitted so closely that it could hardly be coincidence - James Stephen, Clarence's one-time tutor. Stephen died insane, in a mad house. Stowell assured me that Clarence actually died of GPI in an asylum near Sandringham (or Ascot - there seemed to be some doubt), and not, as the encyclopaedias say, in the flu epidemic of 1892; I took Stowell's word for it; but Michael Harrison established that Clarence had died at home, surrounded by his family.

At the time Stephen was Clarence's tutor (and, possibly, lover) it seemed likely that he would make a brilliant career for himself in law or the academic profession; his deterioration began after an accident involving a heavy blow on the head. Poems quoted by Michael Harrison show him to have had a streak of paranoid hatred for women (I found them perhaps the most convincing part of his theory). Does Michael Harrison's theory prove that Stephen was the Ripper? I think not; but I think it proves (as far as it can be proved) that Sir William Gull thought Stephen was the Ripper. (And why did Stowell refer to his suspect as 'S'? Was it pure chance - or did he use the initial that Gull used in his papers?) We still need to know why Gull thought so; and since his papers are, presumably, burnt, we never shall know.

However, Michael Harrison goes on to construct a theory worthy of Sherlock Holmes, involving a poem by Stephen 'to be sung to the tune of Kaphoozelum', a ribald song about the killing of 'ten little whores of Jerusalem'; he argues that Stephen killed a total of ten 'little whores', on dates determined by ... but this preface will become impossibly long if I continue. The theory occupies nearly half the Clarence biography, and readers should turn to the book.

It was in connection with his Ripper speculations that I finally met Michael Harrison - although by then we had been corresponding for two or three years. I presented an item on the Ripper - and on

Dan Parson's Druitt theory - on a local television programme, Format, and asked Michael down to argue with Dan. Later, when the Clarence book came out, the three of us appeared on BBC's Late Night Line Up to discuss the Stephen theory. Dan Parson was scathing about it - partly because he is committed to the notion that the Ripper was the unsuccessful barrister, Montague John Druitt, who committed suicide by drowning in December, 1888. But not entirely for this reason.

He objected that Michael Harrison's theory over-proved his case - and I mention this here because it has a certain bearing on the present book, and also on Michael Harrison's general 'deductive' approach to history. Quentin Bell's biography of Virginia Woolf had appeared after Clarence had gone to press; it confirmed Stephen's mental breakdown One anecdote was of particular interest; how Stephen rushed into the nursery at the 'Woolf' home and plunged the blade of a sword stick into a loaf of bread. On the BBC programme Michael suggested that a sword stick might explain how the Ripper had approached and killed his victims. Dan Farsor rightly pointed out that this was unlikely; medical evidence showed that a knife must have been used to cut the throats and inflict the mutilations.

He repeated the objection subsequently in an article in a London evening newspaper, and his readers might have been forgiven for assuming that Michael Harrison's argument had been completely discredited. But the fact is that the whole passage about Stephen in Quentin Bell's biography strengthens the theory that he was the Ripper; and whether or not the sword stick could have been used in the Whitechapel murders, the episode certainly suggests that Stephen's madness could express itself in the form of aggressive behaviour with cutting instruments.

I mention this because it is possible that readers of this present book may feel that his enthusiasm for his thesis may occasionally lead him to over-prove. (For example, my wife has expressed a doubt whether the name of our village - Gorran - is really of Basque origin, since it is named after a Saint Goran.) Having now read half a dozen of his exercises in historical detection - I am thinking particularly of The London That Was Rome — I am convinced that his inferences are usually pretty soundly based.

Because he is not an academic historian, writing for other academics, he does not hedge in his arguments with all the usual qualifications. But the fault, if it is a fault, is to be blamed on the vitality of his imaginative vision which continually reveals new vistas of possibility. And also, I think, upon the extraordinary variety of his interests. When he came down to Cornwall for the Westward programme, he stayed with us for about forty-eight hours, and I think I have never heard such an enormous variety of subjects discussed in such a brief space of time. For example, a chance remark of mine on Poe's obsession with death led to a discourse - in a pub at Ruan High Lanes - on Poe's life and work that contained some astonishing material - material that, if true, throws a completely new light on Poe's psychology.

Basically, I would say that Michael Harrison is a 'bisociative' thinker - to use Arthur Koestler's term; that is to say, his mind suddenly perceives the relation between his thesis and some apparently unrelated subject, which gives his work a continued element of unexpectedness. I open The London That Was Rome, and come upon an example almost immediately. He is arguing that there was no great gap - in time - between Roman London and Anglo-Saxon London, and that this can be seen in the Roman origin of many London place names.

He traces back the history of the name 'Cannon Street', pointing out that it has been called, at different periods, Candle-wick Street, Candlewright Street, and Candelwrichstrete. He then points out that in Martin Chuzzlewit, Mrs Gamp pronounces 'candle' as 'cangle', and goes on to argue that the form 'Cangellawr wic' (Old Welsh) developed from the Latin 'cancellarius vicus', 'fenced off area' (or 'out of bounds save to military personnel'). Scholars may quarrel with his etymology; but for me, it is a typical and characteristic touch to bring Dickens into the argument.

His detractors will argue that Dickens has no place in an argument on Roman place names. But on re-reading the passage, I see that Dickens is by no means an essential step, for he mentions that the Latin cancellarius became cangellawr in Welsh, and that in London this became candellawr - enough to establish his point; Dickens is thrown in as a bonus; a typical Michael Harrison bonus which is, for me, one of the most delightful things about his books.

This vein of historical detection - which seems to express so much of his essence - is a fairly recent development in Michael Harrison's work. Due partly to the Second World War and other historical accidents of our century, his literary career has pursued a somewhat zigzag course. From his descriptions of his childhood when he first stayed with us, I gathered that his family background was upper middle class, with vague connections with the aristocracy. Now, where writers are concerned, this is a distinct disadvantage; for a writer is best left to find his own salvation through the pen, and the less he is distracted, the better.

I suspect that this explains why so many of the major writers of the past century or so have been from fairly poor backgrounds - Dickens, Carlyle, Wells, Shaw, Bennett; middle class writers - Proust and Orwell will serve as examples - seem to carry their origins like a ball and chain; and as to upper class writers, they seem to be almost non-existent. Middle and upper class families are too interfering to allow a writer to develop unhindered. Michael Harrison's father decreed that he should be an architect, although all his inclinations were towards writing. (The chief influences, he says, were Sax Rohmer and Rider Haggard.) But in 1932, when he was in his early twenties, the opportunity for escape presented itself; like the hero of Waugh's Vile Bodies, he was asked to write a column of 'white tie gossip' for the Sunday Referee.

The work was hard; the pay minimal; but the smell of printer's ink aroused the half repressed romantic in him, and he decided that it had to be a literary career or nothing. While writing for various 'posh' journals and magazines (including Horse and Hound and Polo Monthly) he produced his first novel, Weep for Lycidas, which was an immediate success. (He now calls it 'a jewelled, meretricious hotchpotch of Harland, Dunsany, Arlen, Firbank and Huxley', but this is less than fair.) But it was, he says, 'stopped in its ninetyish tracks' by a murderous review from James Agate, who was, at the time, quarrelling with the book's publisher, Arthur Barker. Shaw once said that he blessed his stars that his early novels were all failures; Michael Harrison was less lucky.

Having had one success, he continued to try to make a living as a novelist, and discovered that it was heartbreaking work. Unlike Shaw, he had no chance to 'find himself; he was too busy keeping himself alive with journalism, 'film novels' (like The Bride of Frankenstein) and commissioned books. (At one point he decided it might be fun to learn Turkish, and write a 'Teach Yourself Turkish' book as a by-product - until he discovered that the publisher was only willing to pay an outright £25 for the book.)

His second novel made him £28. A later novel, So Linked Together (1944) obviously has strong autobiographical elements; its description of the career of a writer makes it painfully clear that the Grub Street of Defoe, Goldsmith and Gissing still existed in the 1930s - as it probably still does. I open it at a typical sentence:

'"I am nothing at the moment," said Tancred. "A few months ago I thought I was a writer, but no one seems to want the things I write".'

Michael Harrison's situation was not quite as bad as this - three novels written during the war (when he was in the army in the Middle East) sold a comfortable 20,000 each - but he was not satisfying the impulse that had made him choose the problematic career of a writer. He was making no use of his strong feeling for the past, of his Huxley-an variety of interests, of his liking for the science of historical .deduction. Fortunately, publishing fashions changed in the fifties; fiction was out, non-fiction was in. His earlier non-fiction (apart from travel books) had been confined to a book on Cagliostro and one on the gambler John Law.

In the Footsteps of Sherlock Holmes (1957) was an exercise in the amusing game of reconstructing Holmes's biography as though he were a real person. I happen to be a Holmes addict (so was T.S. Eliot, as I discovered when I met him) Holmes addicts read books about him because the cases, as chronicled by Watson, do not satisfy their appetite; they want more of the same kind. In my own view, the 'Holmes stories' of Adrian Conan Doyle and John Dickson Carr are poor substitutes; and Derleth's Solar Pons stories are simply not the same thing at all. But Michael Harrison's Footsteps is a genuine piece of Holmesiana, for it captures the qualities that make the Holmes stories so re-readable: not only the nostalgia, the atmosphere of London in the Eighties and Nineties; but also the Holmesian delight in facts - often bizarre and remote - and in deducing their consequences.

I think I am right to say that In the Footsteps of Sherlock Holmes was the book in which Michael Harrison discovered the true direction of his talents, and began to utilise his own highly individual combination of learning, bold speculation and nostalgia for the past.

This brings me to what is his boldest, and perhaps his most important, venture into historical detection, The Roots of Witchcraft. When Michael Harrison mentioned to me that he was writing a book on witchcraft, I experienced a certain misgiving. I had just completed a large book called The Occult, which had involved reading everyone from Margaret Murray and Trevor-Roper to such dubious exponents as the Reverend Montague Summers and Gerald, Gardner.

The great witch persecutions, which may be said to have ended with the trials of the Salem witches in the last decade of the seventeenth century, began with the Church's persecution of the heresy known as Catharism in Languedoc around the year 1200; the 'witches' rooted out and burned by the Church's inquisitors were actually Cathars. Almost everything that is known about those five centuries of persecution can be found in Rossell Hope Robbins's Encylopedia of Witchcraft and Demonology. I could hardly see the need for another book on witchcraft. I should have known better. In this book, Michael Harrison makes hardly any references to the five centuries of witch persecution; he is interested in a remoter period. His Roots of Witchcraft should rather, I think, be classified with Robert Graves's The White Goddess - a poet's investigation into the language and mysteries of a pre-Christian

religion.

Michael Harrison mentions the 'origin' of his book on page 43 - perhaps it would have been better to do so earlier. He explains that he talked to Professor Geoffrey Webb after the Second World War about some curious discoveries he had made in churches. A bomb had displaced a great stone slab covering the altar of an old church; inside the altar, Professor Webb found a stone lingam or phallus. Webb found that 'ninety per cent of all churches examined, of a date up to, say, the Black Death of 1348 ... had The God (i.e. a ritual phallus) concealed within the altar ..." As long ago as 1921, Margaret Murray had suggested, in The Witch-Cult in Western Europe, that the 'witches' who were persecuted were actually adherents of a pre-Christian fertility religion - a suggestion that had already been made in the eighteenth century by an Italian, Girolamo Tartarotti.

Her book, although found unacceptable by many scholars, is still regarded as a serious work of scholarship. This is not true of her later works, The God of the Witches and The Divine King in England, the latter of which argues that many kings of England met their deaths in order to fulfil rituals of this ancient religion. At about the time Michael Harrison was learning about the phalluses concealed in Chris-30

tian altars, my old friend Hugh Ross Williamson was writing a book called The Arrow and the Sword, which accepts Margaret Murray's arguments about the 'Old Religion', and contends that King William Rufus and Archbishop Thomas a Becket were both 'ritual victims' - a view accepted by Michael Harrison in this book.

So the basic viewpoint of The Roots of Witchcraft is close to that of The God of the Witches, The Arrow and the Sword and T.C. Lethbridge's Witches: Investigating an Ancient Religion; and Michael Harrison makes full acknowledgement of the debt. But Margaret Murray's theories are only used as the basis of one of his typical investigations - the kind of thing, I feel, that Sherlock Holmes might have written for a diversion between more narrowly specialist works like the monograph on tobacco ash or the study of the Motets of Lassus.

The amazing variety of information certainly sounds as if it came from Holmes's files: for example, on pages 69-70 we learn from two footnotes that the Egyptians split the granite for the pyramids by drilling small holes in the rock, filling them with water, and allowing the water to freeze by night, and that the actual date of Jesus' birth is May 17, 8 BC, at about 2 in the morning ... I find it almost as much pleasure to read him for the footnotes - and snippets of historical gossip - as for the actual argument of the book, which is absorbing enough. As one would expect from him, there is an enormous amount on ancient Greece and Rome - I can think of no writer since Anatole France who takes such a delight in exploring the classical by-ways and seasoning his work with strange fragments of erudition. But I think it would be fair to say that the originality of the book lies in its linguistic investigations, the attempt to trace the origin of words used in witch's spells.

I have no idea whether he has been influenced by Levi-Strauss and the Structuralists - I have no doubt he has read them, as he seems to have read everything - but the method of The London That Was Rome and the present book could certainly be described as an attempt at 'an archaeology of knowledge'. I confess that I lack the qualifications to judge his thesis, although I am reasonably

certain that there are many points at which Professor Trevor-Roper - and other 'atomist' historians - would accuse him of building castles in the air. No doubt the Namier method - examining every fragment of 'historical evidence" under a microscope - is admirable; but it takes so long that the castles never get built. History is too important to be left to historians - to adapt an epigram.

Michael Harrison has brought to the writing of this book the qualities that he has spent a lifetime accumulating: the novelist's eye for human behaviour, the poet's love of the past, the journalist's delight in strange stories (like the one about the modern Arab doctor who killed his patient trying to beat a genie out of his body). In a letter to me, Michael Harrison wrote: 'Where from here ...? Well, given life and continuing health, I see the possibility of a complete emotional release in the type of writing to which the experiments of forty years have, I now realise, inevitably been leading.

My present type of writing gratifies and satisfies, first, that obsessive need to write that I share with every other dedicated writer; second, that desire — now recognised by me as having been evident from earliest childhood - to solve puzzles and to demonstrate the solution's proof; and third, that nostalgia which used, throughout my childhood, boyhood, and indeed, the first half of my life, to trouble me so deeply - but that I now can convert into the richest material of my creative work.' The Roots of Witchcraft seems to me the fullest expression so far of his creative desires; I trust it will be the first of many works in the genre.

In Granada, in the southernmost part of Spain, where the seven-hundred-year rule of the Moorish kings is still recalled in architecture, tricks of speech and the dark North African beauty of the Granadese, there is the impressive relic of a time immeasurably more ancient.

Not long ago, another of those prehistorically inhabited caves was found; those caves in which the whole Spanish peninsula, from the mountain barrier of the Pyrenees to the sea-barrier of the south, so richly abounds. This cave, known colloquially as the Cavern of the Bats, is unlike those other archaeologically famous caves much farther north, in that it has no millennia-old frescoes of Palaeolithic art.

Instead it has what is probably a much more impressive memorial of our ancestors who died perhaps as many as 25,000 years ago. The art of the men who painted the caves of Northern Spain, Southern France, the Atlas Mountains, Rhodesia, Siberia and elsewhere, has much to tell us of their mentality, their hopes and fears. These paintings tell us a lot, not only of their physical activities, but of their spiritual, even of their religious, views.

The Cavern of the Bats, though without 'the illustrated text' of wall-paintings, not only supports the conclusions that we have already drawn concerning the religious beliefs of those who painted their dreams and hopes on the unlighted rock of Altamira. Ariege and Les Trois Freres; the evidence of the Cavern of the Bats permits us to draw conclusions much more detailed.

In the cave, twelve skeletons were seated about a thirteenth - a Master, a Leader, or (as we shall see in this book) a God. He, too, is seated, and he is the dead but surviving human counterpart of those leaping figures from Ariege and Les Trois Freres who wear animal skins. He, too, wears the skin of an animal. The thirteen have died sitting; the floor around them is covered with poppy-heads.

This is a coven of twelve and a Master. It is no different from that described in numberless witch-trials of the fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and illustrated in chap-books of the period. In the Cavern of the Bats we have, preserved by an accident, the actual ceremony from a religion which is one of the most ancient in the world. How that religion began, and how it ended, is told in this book.

## In the Beginning A Sense of Wonder

Some six thousand years ago, they say - but I should rather suppose a span of centuries far greater - a people (for this aggregation of human beings was much bigger than a mere tribe) lived out its simple collective life in one of those mountain-girdled plains where Europe insensibly becomes Asia.

This people, whose existence and mode of life were deduced, just on two centuries ago, from that common language which is the parent-tongue of so many others - from Russian to English; from French to Hindustani; from Greek to Welsh -we have agreed to call the Indo-Europeans. The other name given to this now positively identified but long-vanished people was 'The Aryans' - but tendentious political and ideological 'loading' of this name has rendered it, at least temporarily, unacceptable to many. All modern books on etymology, philology and other sciences which mention the parent-tongue that these people spoke refer to it, without exception, as 'Indo-European'. The Indo-Europeans bequeathed us much of their blood; they bequeathed to the world the majority of the languages which are spoken today.

The existence of this people, now so distant in time, was first deduced at the end of the eighteenth century, when, not only was it noted that certain 'basic' words, such as mother, father, brother, sister, horse, sickle, fire, water, (to) sow, etc., were common to many, if not all of a group of widely scattered languages, but also that this fact implied the existence, at some time in the remote past, of a language which must have been the parent of all those modern or vanished languages having many basic words in common.

The first man to realise in full the implications of a number of words common to many languages was Sir William Jones, a judge on the establishment of the East India Company. Sir William, who had made a deep study of Sanskrit, the ancient language of the Hindus, was struck by the fact that many words in Sanskrit appeared to have congeners in Greek and (though to a lesser extent, for reasons not then understood by Sir William) in Latin, also.

On his calling the attention of scholars to this fact - but was it fact, and not merely coincidence that the Sanskrit and Greek words for five, mother, father, brother, fire, God, etc. so strikingly resembled each other? - study of ancient texts and the careful comparison of seemingly identical words began throughout Europe. Within thirty years of Jones's literally world-shaking discovery, English, Danish, German, French and Italian scholars had not only proved the common descent of Europe's principal languages, but had demonstrated beyond argument both the existence and much of the nature of the once hypothetical parent-tongue.

Now, in collecting the long list of words which had descended from the parent-tongue - now called Indo-European - to the many languages of Europe, of India, Persia and even (it was discovered only in this present century) China also, a fairly accurate picture was made possible of the mode of life and thought of the ancestor-people who spoke 'Indo-European'. They had domesticated many of the animals which are the staple of farming-stock today - notably, the horse, the ox, and the sheep. They practised what at any rate was a primitive form of agriculture, and their word for 'sickle' or 'reaping' is found in many Indo-European languages, Russian, Welsh, Lithuanian, Greek, etc.

This means that they had passed out of the truly primitive stage of food-gathering, where the men hunt

wild animals and the women, children and weakly men gather nuts and berries; and this decided advance towards a sophisticated culture is made evident by some other facts -that they had a society based on a tightly-knit and elaborately classified family unit (they even had words for 'wife's brother' and 'wife's brother-in-law'), and that they worshipped a god whose character is such that he can belong only to a relatively sophisticated stage of human culture.

The Indo-Europeans called this god, 'Sky-Father' - a title which was retained by the immediate ancestors of Greeks and Romans for their Supreme God, but which did not descend, with the Indo-European language, to the ancestors of the English, Germans and other Teutonic peoples.

It is clear that the concept of a 'Sky-Father' could have come to a people's religious sense only after that people had progressed, over how many centuries or even millennia, from the pure sense of uncritical wonder which is the well-spring of all mankind's religious views.

Those earlier stages of religious thought - animism, shamanism and all the other classifications of primitive man's attempt to adjust himself to the Unseen World - are stages through which our Indo-European ancestors must have passed; since no people, however intelligent, however 'spiritual', can arrive at a 'Sky-Father' without having encountered many another more earthly god on its way.

In fact, as the Indo-Europeans advanced towards the refined concept of a monotheistic, perhaps only slightly anthropomorphic divinity, they retained many of the primitive beliefs through which they had passed, and they retained, too, those divine and semi-divine beings which were the product of earlier stages of religious speculation.

What is more, when the Indo-European community broke up and scattered, to become the ancestor people of so many other races, east and west, north and south, it bequeathed its primitive as well as its sophisticated beliefs to those peoples whom it fathered, though mostly this fathering was done by giving conquered peoples the Indo-European speech, and not by creating new nations in the sense of procreating them. Thus, With the sublime concept of the 'Sky-Father' inherited from the Indo-Europeans, the Romans and Greeks had also been bequeathed a whole menagerie of gods and godlets whose names most clearly reveal that original animal character so skilfully hidden beneath the elegances of Greek and - though much later - Roman sculpture.

Artemis was the Bear-Goddess, Apollo (her divinely born twin), the Mouse-God; Demeter - the Corn-Goddess in later times - was originally, as her name shews, the Pig-Goddess; her function, changing from a protector of pigs' natural increase to a protector of crops, demonstrating clearly the change of the community from a predominantly pastoral to a predominantly agricultural one, and in passing we may note that the status of gods rises with that of their worshippers.

*'Alexamenos worships his God': Scratched on a guardroom wall in the Domus Gelotiana (or Paedogogium), ibis graffito, with its badly written Greek inscription, 'Alexamenos worships his God!' is generally considered to be, not only 'the oldest picture of the Crucifixion in the world', but also a caricature. I doubt that it was a caricature; the dual-natured 'animal god' was a stock figure of Mediterranean religious thought at the time that this rough drawing was made - c. AD 30.*

All religions, I have said, spring from a sense of wonder in man. As he emerges from that almost purely animal condition which has spanned the millions of years between his sea-life as a fish and his environment-controlling existence as homo sapiens, we may think of him as dazzled with the wonder of the world that he can now realise for the first time. For millions of years he has reacted to his surroundings in a purely instinctual way, hunting his food no differently from, and almost certainly with less success than, the commoner animals.

But now, something has happened. A mutation has occurred, and Man, who has been producing man for millions of years, has now produced something subtly different - perhaps not noticeably in appearance, but certainly in the matter of mind.

And it is this change in mind which produces that from which all human progress is to stem: self-consciousness. For the first time in his slow and painful upward climb, Man is aware of himself as no animal can ever be, and certainly as Man, whilst still an animal, never was.

But now, aware for the first time of himself, he is aware, too, of that world which is at once his constant threat and promise; where every brake conceals a possible enemy, yet whose hostile forests harbour the animals which are Man's prey.

With mind came memory - the Latin words for 'mind', 'intellect', 'reason', 'judgement', 'memory' and 'correct, precise measurement' all come from the same ancient Indo-European root, men-men - and with memory came the ability to recall that, the other side of that terrible winter just passed, there was another splendid summer like this; after a time, perhaps a little hesitantly, a little fearfully, to believe that summers would come round, again and again and again. Man noticed that the trees put on their leaves when the winter had given place to milder weather, and that, with the burgeoning of the trees, the animals shewed signs of wishing to couple - and that, after animals had coupled, they bore young, even as the trees, after having leaved and flowered, bore fruit.

No one can now say how long the implications of these observed facts took to arrive in Man's hardly developed mind; but arrive they did, and that sense of wonder which had first inspired the close observation of natural phenomena did not pass as Man began to understand that the conduct of the world was not a haphazard thing; that seasons followed each other in order, crops in rotation, and that, though there was no tree without a seed from which to germinate, there was every chance that a carefully buried and tended seed might well produce a tree.

Man, with his new consciousness, first became aware of himself; then of the world about him; then of his relationship to that world; and, lastly, to an awareness that within him lay the power to effect some sort of control over the forces that he still only dimly perceived and even more dimly understood.

The earliest religious object so far upturned by the archaeologist's spade is the crude clay figure of an animal with pronounced female characteristics, rather more human than animal. Yet the image is obviously that of a bear - and so, until we find an object of earlier dating, we may say that the worship of Artemis the Bear-Goddess is the oldest religion of which we have record. (1)

What makes this discovery so significant is that the dead man with which the Bear was buried represents by no means the highest physical type towards which evolution was directing the humanoid. If the anthropologists are not in error, the man crouched in the grave was no six-foot-six Cro-Magnon - the first true homo sapiens - but a dwarfish, beetle-browed, shambling proto-Man of the Neanderthal type. Yes, even to this brutish creature had come the awareness, perhaps not of what lay about him, but of what might lay about him; numinous influences to ensure good and ward off evil.

What the symbolism might be which is expressed in putting the dead man to his eternal sleep with the crude image of a female Bear to keep him everlasting company, no man now can say. But that we have here, in a grave perhaps fifty thousand years old, the undeniable evidence of a burial accompanied by a religious rite, permits us to realise how soon after his tremendous intellectual awakening - I speak here in relative terms, of course - Man came to that uneasy persuasion that he was not alone in a world, a universe, peopled with things both visible and invisible.

Religion had sprung from that first sense of wonder. But from religion had sprung both hope and fear - and the fears and hopes so intimately associated with the religious sentiment are with us still, and will remain with us until everlasting.

In this book, I shall explain how Man the Ambivalent is at once the most adventurous and most conservative being of all. Magpies and squirrels are acquisitive; but Man is both as acquisitive as

magpies and squirrels, yet spendthrift in a manner which would be unthinkable to both these famous hoarders from the animal creation. Man wants both to eat his cake and have it.

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[1] The great antiquity of bear-worship and its survival, even though in a degenerate form, until the nineteenth century (to this century, if we include the bears of Bern amongst sacred animals) is described in some detail in my The London That Was Rome; London, George Allen & Unwin, 1971.

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His adventurous mind is always seeking, finding, accepting, believing, doubting - which explains why he hangs on to the religious beliefs from the very night of our race's forebeing, before, during and after what he thinks is his intellectual freeing himself from 'outworn superstitions'. Modern Man is no different from the Romans who paid reverence to such ancient Fertility Gods as Semo (2) Sancus Dius Fidius even as they raised splendid temples to the more exotic gods imported from the highly civilised East. Or from Redwald, King of the East Saxons, who, the chronicler tells us, 'in the same temple had an altar to sacrifice to Christ, and another smaller one to offer victims to devils'. (3)

The law of the conservation of energy applies notably well to that energy which has been expended in pondering on the nature of the universe; especially on the nature of those rules by which it is governed. Not a speculation, from even before Man was truly Man, but has not affected the present structure of Man's philosophy; not an idle reflection but has not been powerful enough to leave some trace on the intellectual - nay, even on the neuronic and synaptic - pattern of the modern mind. Great efforts have been made to efface the residual memories of ancient beliefs - the later chapters of this book will describe the most organised, longest-lasting and most successful effort. But, as Lamb pointed out, our beliefs are too deeply imbedded in every human consciousness to be eradicated. They were not put there in our earliest childhood; they were implanted there in the earliest childhood of our human race.

It may well be asked: Why yet another book on Witchcraft? Are there not already books on this subject in abundance and over-abundance? What excuse have you for giving us yet another?

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[2] From an ancient root, sa, 'to sow,' which gives both Latin semen, 'seed, that which is sown,' and our English word seed. The name sufficiently indicates the antiquity and primitive nature of this old Roman god.

[3] 'Devils' because a Christian, Bede, is the chronicler.

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Well, I have several excuses for adding to the admittedly large number of books on the subject of witchcraft, but I shall content myself with giving the three principal reasons which persuaded me to write this book.

*'Animal magnetism' - or eighteenth-century hypnotism: This is a caricature - of 'animal magnetism', on the system of Anton Mesmer, or Mersburg (1734-1815), who introduced his hypnotic methods into Paris in 1774. But note how ideas of immemorial antiquity persist in this late eighteenth-century drawing - compare it with that of Alexamenos worshipping his God. The two drawings - separated by nearly 1800 years - are strikingly similar, for they draw upon the same remote inspiration.*

In the first place, I am not satisfied that any book on Witchcraft - not even excepting the admirable works of the late Dr Margaret Murray, who died urging me to write this book - have clearly defined Witchcraft or have made sufficiently clear the essential distinction between Witchcraft and Diabolism - two completely different disciplines, for all that it suited the Rome-directed branch of Christianity to blur the distinction and finally to persecute witches as diabolists.

In the second place, my interest in Witchcraft is rather historical than exegetical; I am concerned with the origins of the cult; more particularly with the geographical situation of the region from which this ancient faith spread over Europe. As with any other faith, Witchcraft - the Fertility Cult is a better, but 'witchcraft' is a more popular, name - is a syncretism of beliefs, though, unlike many other syncretic religions, the original, the basic dynamism remains remarkably free of the influences of the acquired 'trimmings'.

In the course of discovering the origins of Witchcraft, I shall demonstrate that the 'gibberish' of the

various rituals, recorded (not always correctly), by nervous ecclesiastical and lay note-takers at the witch-trials, consists of words in a language which was, to the organised Fertility Cult, what Old Slavonic is to the Russian Orthodox Church and what Latin, until recently, was to the Church of Rome.

The language, as recorded in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was, as I shall shew, greatly corrupted, and the recovery of the correct forms from the parroted and degenerate late rituals has always taxed and sometimes outwitted my ingenuity as an etymologist. However, as I shall shew, I have translated the more important of the surviving invocations, and in doing so, have proved both the facts of the Cult's origins and the philosophy preached by the founders of the faith.

In the third place, I shall produce evidence, not so far revealed in any book on Witchcraft, to shew that, whilst Witchcraft was not, after the famous Bull of 1484, as widespread or as powerful as vested ecclesiastical and political interests found it useful to make it out to be, the Old Religion (4) (as I shall often call it in this book) was far more established, far more widespread, until at least the year AD 1400, than the activities of the Inquisition would imply. I shall endeavour to demonstrate that, far from the Black Death's having 'given a boost' to the old Religion (at the expense of the New), the facts rather indicate that the opposite occurred; that the freeing of the serfs by the economic results of the Black Death divorced the parish church from the Old Religion - and, henceforth. Church and Old Religion took their separate and (as it turned out, their) disastrous ways.

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[4] The Cult retains its name in Italy, where is it known as 'La Vecchia Religione'. This aspect of Italian (rural) conservatism reflects the fact that Italy, despite its important industrialisation, is still a pastoral and agricultural economy.

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At the end of the long history of Witchcraft, as I shall shew, two mutually hostile 'religious' opinions amalgamated to oppose, in deadly enmity, two separate 'religious' opinions; to the almost inevitable fact that, confused by the aggressors, the two victim 'religions' ended by being themselves unaware that they were not one. Catholic and Protestant, however much they disliked and - by the Divine authority of Sacred Writ - sought to injure each other, were yet united in their detestation of Witches.

Mr H.R. Trevor-Roper deplores the historical fact that the Witches were persecuted for over two centuries, less than a quarter of that period by the Roman Catholics alone. One may well speculate that, had the persecution - actively prosecuted by both Roman Catholics and Reformed - continued for at least another century, this alliance of Roman ,and Protestant would have made for an oecumenical healing of doctrinal differences, and the Reformation would have been reversed by 1750.

The Pantheists say that there is - can be - no fundamental difference between one religion and another; that all men, however they worship, and whatever they worship, are (even though they be unaware of this fact) worshipping the same Divine Essence - the same Prime Mover - in the same act of worship; that all men are, whether they worship Buddha or Christ, Mithras or Mohammed, thanking the Maker

of All Good for His Gifts - for Life and for 'all those other gifts which make the support of life possible.

But, if the differences between religions are not important to the Prime Mover, they are of essential importance (not so much to the worshippers as) to the organisers of each selfconsciously 'different' cult. It has always astonished me how many persons, men and women, have spent so many lifetimes, writing so many books, defending or attacking this religious 'truth' or that, when those who rule and govern a religion are concerned with only two things - neither of which has anything to do with 'truth' or otherwise: orthodoxy and heterodoxy.

'Orthodoxy' does not mean the support of the tenets of the religion, it simply means the support of the religion itself - that is to say, its organisation. 'Set a seal upon my lips, O Lord!' is a cry which has been interpreted in far too literal a sense by those who have a vested interest in organising and profitably conducting religions.

'Heterodoxy', on the other hand, simply means, in the simplest interpretation, not attending the services of a Church which knows that it has the 'truth'. In times of ecclesiastical tyranny - rather than in those times of political and fiscal tyranny in which we now live - 'heterodoxy' or mere non-attendance at church could involve the backslider in perilous difficulty.

The witch-trials which, beginning sporadically (and always politically) in the thirteenth century, progressed to the sado-lunatic pogrom of the late fifteenth, sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, were a skilfully organised attack on heterodoxy, or, to choose a perhaps more definitive word, 'non-conformity'. As I shall attempt to prove, Reformation and Counter-Reformation sought to close the gap which was threatening to divide them for ever by finding a common enemy, so that, in this forced though close alliance, reasons for division might be forgotten.

Let us go back for a moment to the Pantheists, and ask a question of all importance in a book which concerns itself exclusively with religion and religious beliefs. The question is this: Is there any fundamental difference between any religion and all the others, living and dead? And - as a corollary - we might ask the question more specifically: Was there any fundamental difference between the Oecumenical Christianity of the late fifteenth century and the Old Religion that the New Faith (now some fifteen hundred years established) set out to attack and destroy?

The answer is: Yes. But this plain answer may not be given without the warning that, though the answer was 'yes' in 1484, the answer would have been a decided 'no' only, perhaps, a century earlier.

Religious differences come first; the doctrinal differences which 'justify'' those religious differences come, inevitably, later. All the subtly incomprehensible dogmata which now set the Church of Rome apart from the rest of the One, Holy and Apostolic Church have been 'revealed', one by cautious one, over the centuries, the Holy Ghost revealing them to Christ's Vicar evidently in answer to a plea that the Church remain separated from the other Christians by virtue of her being always in sole possession of 'the revealed truth'.

Transubstantiation, the doctrine which was so greatly peculiar to the Church of Rome that it set both

Sacrifice and Church apart, was no dogma of Early Christianity, whose members ate bread and drank wine at the agapai - the primitive, innocent 'love feasts' of primitive, innocent Christianity -'in commemoration of Me'. 'Take ye and eat, for this is My Body and this is My Blood' was a hallowed injunction accepted (as it had been said) only in a reverentially symbolic sense. Those feasters in the catacombs would have been astonished to learn that, generations hence, Christians would expose themselves to hell everlasting did they not accept the injunction in a completely literal sense.

The dogmata which were to test the credulity of even the most doctrinally subservient of Roman Catholics were left, curiously enough, until the regretted 'Ages of Faith' had demonstrably passed away. The Immaculate Conception, the Infallibility of the Pope when speaking ex-cathedra, (5) the Assumption into Heaven of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Her Bodily Form - all these not-immediately-credible religious truths were not amongst those that a fifteenth century Christian was forced to believe under pain of mortal sin and eternal damnation. They were left to the Faithful of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, whom, presumably, the Church considered to be more credulous than the Faithful of five hundred years earlier.

But even by the end of the fifteenth century, the Roman Church - which, then, was the monopolistic Faith of Christendom - had evolved a doctrinal structure which set it apart - as was intended - from that Old Religion whose fundamental tenets, at least, the Christian religion had once shared.

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[5] In fairness to the Pope, it should be borne in mind that it is only when pronouncing upon Faith and Morals in his capacity as Vicar of Christ that the Pope claims to be infallible. Speaking as an ordinary mortal, the Pope is as vulnerable to the human propensity to error as is the author of this book.

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Pared of all the 'wasteful and ridiculous excess' with which the ingenuity of dogmatists and exegetists had dressed up, so as to disguise, an originally simple faith, the difference between Christianity and the Old Religion, by 1484, the year of Pope Innocent VIII's famous Bull (6) may briefly be stated as follows: Christianity, like all other religions, postulated a sacrifice to its God. But, in the person of Christ, a God-turned-human-but-still-retaining-all-His-Godlike-attributes, a sacrifice had been made of such worth that no further sacrifice was necessary.

The inexhaustible 'grace' (spiritual credit) 'earned' by Christ's sacrifice was, obviously, sufficient to offset the debt of sinful mankind towards its Creator - that is, in the way of payment for incurred guilt. In other words - and these were significant words - Christianity was a religion in which the necessary sacrifice had occurred once and for all time. With other religions (and Rome had the Old Religion well - almost exclusively - in mind here) the sacrifice had to be repeated again and again; though, with the Old Religion, as with those earlier Faiths to which Christianity could look back as ancestral, the 'savagery' of the sacrifice had become greatly modified over the centuries.

But, as Montague Summers said, in his preface to his translation of the Malleus Maleficarum, 'Witchcraft was inextricably mixed with polities', and to this observation we may add that of T.C.

Lethbridge: (7) 'It is a curious piece of irony that the Church, which had suffered so much from persecution itself, should have been the organisation which treated witches with even greater brutality, and shews how terribly it had wandered from the teaching of its great master. It is only fair to add that it was quite as ready to burn its own members at the stake, if they happened to differ slightly from the official view in dogma'.

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[6] Summis desiderantes affectibus, dated and published, 9th December, 1484. It gave retrospective authority to 'the ecclesiastical authorities', specifically the Dominicans, to apply generally the restrictive intentions of the Bull of Innocent IV (1252), which earlier charitable proclamation begins with the significant words, Ad Extirpandum.

[7] Witches: Investigating an Ancient Religion; London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1962.

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I shall argue, in its proper place, that the Church's persecution of the Old Religion was eminently successful, as persecution, despite the romantic sighs of those who think that there's any justice in this world, so often succeeds - and succeeds completely. I shall point out that the modern highly-publicised 'revival of Witchcraft' is a non-fact; that Witchcraft - or the Old Religion - cannot be revived until and unless the beliefs associated with natural (not internal-combustion tractor) agriculture be revived.

I shall further point out that, in 'extirpating' the Old Religion, consonant to the pious exhortation of Popes Innocent IV, and VIII, the Dominicans, Kramer and Sprenger, launching an all-out attack on what remained of the Old Religion, succeeded, not only in destroying the ancient, simple Fertility Cult, as it survived into fifteenth-century Europe, but also in reviving and strengthening that Diabolism which, though completely distinct from the Old Religion, had been, for political reasons, identified with the Old Religion by these conscienceless monks.

It is of no worthy chapters in Man's oddly contradictory history that I shall have to write, though, in the ecclesiastical persecution of the fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the human spirit seized its chance to exhibit its nobility, just as it did in the lay and religious persecutions of the twentieth century.

I feel, in embarking on this examination of the anatomy of Witchcraft, that identification with either the worshipper or his enemy has, hitherto prevented the historian from seeing the truth of Witchcraft. Though natural human charity shrinks from approving the calculated cruelty of those whom Kramer and Sprenger led in their over-two-centuries-long Sadists' Sabbath, it is just this indignant repudiation of cold ecclesiastical savagery which has militated the calm presentation of the truth. One may well sympathise with the simple worshippers of 'The Giver of All Good', snatched up from the innocent expression of that ancient 'sense of wonder' to face the literally diabolical enmity of the hired examiners, whose ears were conditioned to hear only one plea - Guilty! - and whose sense of 'justice' could be satisfied with only one punishment: Death!

But sympathy for one side and loathing for the other are no sure guides to an objective assessment of the rise, development, continent-wide influence and gradual decline of what must be the oldest Faith by which Man has sought to leave the sole consideration of self and seek, first, to approach and understand the phenomena of that Nature of which he knows himself to be a part, and, second - and much more importantly - to control the forces of which those phenomena are but the visible manifestation.

## 1 - The Gods of Sky and Field

The nature of God is conditioned by the physical surroundings in which the mind of Man first encounters Him. That this must be so is evident from the fact that, as the Creator of what is seen, God's powers may be deduced only from what is visible to the man seeking communion with the Godhead. And, in a like manner, the hypothetical omnipotence of an omnipotent God is imagined through the imperative wants of the worshipper. It is understandable that the paradise of the desert-dwelling Bedouin is eternally cool and melodious with the chuckle of ever-flowing fountains ....

In the beginning, as primitive Man realised, God had created that Man in His own image and likeness, as Man, in his idle moments, fashioned images of himself and his fellows out of lumps of clay. Not for nothing is the symbolism of Man's creation from earth or clay so widespread. Early Man knew well that, for him, as for all other created things, the inevitable pattern of life was 'earth to earth; ashes to ashes; dust to dust'. But, if Man, in his first 'religious' imaginings, believed himself to be created of God, and that, too, in God's image and likeness, how did early Man conceive the God who had made him? In the answer to that question - and it may be answered - we can state positively what were Man's first religious beliefs.

Man's - that is Early Man's - knowledge of God, the Gods, the World-Behind-This, was acquired, over what must have been a seemingly immeasurable period of time, empirically and pragmatically. But, at some point in his long ponderings, still illiterate Man must have 'listed' the obvious and main characteristics of God-Nature-the-Unseen as follows:

1. I could not make trees, animals, rocks, but He can.

2. I could not make it light, with the bright thing shining overhead; nor could I take the brightness away, so that it is hard to see. But He can.

So comes, to the primitive human mind, the two impressive characteristics of God/Nature: His power to make beyond any human power to make; and - with this power - a power to regulate, to control, what He has made.

3. This world in which I live seems to have a two-way, backwards-and-forwards pattern. It's bright, with that shining thing up above; and then it's not bright. And then it's bright again, and then it's not-bright again. And so on. And then, for a longer time (many sleeps) it's warm, and then it's cold. And then it's warm again, and then it's cold again. And so on.

4. When I go out to hunt, sometimes I contrive to trap or run down the quarry. I bring back, for my woman and my young, good meat. Then, again, there are days when I see many deer - even rabbit - and, no matter what I do, I can't catch a single thing. Does God/Nature let me catch something on my 'lucky' days? And, if so, does he prevent my catching something on my 'unlucky' days?

So comes one of the most persistent beliefs about the Godhead: Its capriciousness. And, from that disturbing thought comes the next - and it is a reassuring - thought: Is there anything that I may do to cajole this capricious Being to shew me favour? At this point begin, not merely prayer, but every

religious ritual which has been devised and practised since Man's first spiritual awakening.

Early Man's conception of God/Nature being anthropomorphic - as indeed, it is still the conception of the average Modern Man - Man sought to influence God/Nature by behaving to his God as Man would have wished that others should behave to him. He made presents to God, to save Him from the boredom of hunting; to save Him, even more importantly, from the disappointment of a non-productive hunt. Man began to make sacrifices towards his God ...

How many centuries, how many millennia, passed before Man, still uneasily aware of the numinous nature of that world through which he strode; hunted and loved, ate and slept; began to observe and record the laws by which God/Nature regulated Man and his surroundings, we shall never know.

But, at some point in Man's development, he became aware, in addition to that awareness of himself which had marked his passage from the state of animal to the state of Man, of certain laws. He connected the yearly couplings of animals with the off-springing of their young; and, by analogy, he saw - or deduced - that his own pleasure-seeking with his woman (pleasure-seeking in unopposed submission to a blind impulse) made up a series of acts which, resembling those of the animals that he observed, produced, apparently, a similar result. His woman became big with young, as did the animals.

There must, he reasoned, be a connection between his - and the animal's — coupling, and the eventual birth of young: his own and the animals'.

From the realisation that, first, coupling preceded the birth of young, and, second, that coupling produced the young, Man's reasoning went further. His observation of the temporary changes which occurred in animals - and in himself -immediately before coupling began, called his attention to the genital organs, both of himself and observed animals.

To the non-scientific mind, there is something quite inexplicable - and so mysterious; 'magical' — about the simple mechanism of the male organ's tumescence. Why, limp and flaccid in its non-tumescent state, does it take on the characteristics of those horns which spring from the heads of animals? (Though - even more mysterious - the horn of deer and goat and aurochs was a permanent thing, whilst the analogical condition of Man's mentulum was merely a temporary affair.)

What early Man thought of this compulsive organ, which gave him pleasure when its rigidity forced him to seek the companionship of a female of his kind, we may guess from the fact that the Latin word that we have adopted, penis, means simply 'a tail'. Early Man must have regarded this appendage as the homologue of an animal's tail, save that, in himself, the 'tail' depended from the front, rather than from the back. But what caused this 'tail' so mysteriously to change its function, as its shape and general character changed?

For most of the time, this organ was dedicated to drawing off what we call "waste products', but which were far from that to pre-chemical Man. (1) But with tumescence, not only could the organ no longer be used to make water; its discharge had changed character entirely; its golden colour bleached out to a milky white, and its clear liquidity turned into an opaque viscidity. (Later, much later, when

Man had come to recognise, in this milky substance, the Seed of Life, he would be impelled to reverence the mistletoe, in the lactic secretion of whose white berries he would see the concentrated essence of the human seed. That the mistletoe was most commonly encountered on the oak-tree, whose acorns bore so striking a resemblance to the male member - but again in a 'concentrated' likeness - made the oak-tree equally sacred, so much so that the Ancient Gauls, in adopting Latin, rejected the Latin word for 'oak', quercus, and for that Latin word substituted their own cassanus, 'sacred oak', from which descends modern French chêne.)

Even after the simple, effective mechanism of tumescence has been explained - a simple effective no-return valve to maintain the expansive force of the pressurised blood, together with adequate erector muscles - should the primitive sense of wonder be lessened by this 'revelation'? Ought one not still to marvel: 'How wonderful! And Who designed and 'programmed' this simple, effective mechanism?'

Yet to say that, because of the explanations and illustrations in our text-books of biology and physiology, we 'understand' the mechanism of human generation, is to call that understanding very much into question. If we - or is it 'we'? — knew as much as 'we' claim, how did the Thalidomide babies come amongst us? We may know more than did primitive Man in some respects - though there is no doubt that, in others, he knew more than we - but the implication of this statement is usually that we know everything - and that contention cannot possibly be supported.

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[1] Pre-chemical Man is the apposite term here. It means Man before the advent of modem chemical processes. Urine, in more primitive communities, has many useful purposes besides the highly important function of manuring. A powerful acid, urine plays an essential preliminary role in the curing of skins and furs, and in fulling cloth -that is, in removing the lanoline from raw wool. Its nitrogenous content contributed greatly to supplying an essential ingredient -saltpetre - of gunpowder. It has remarkable antiseptic properties, and is an efficient contraceptive. It has many other valuable qualities, most of them known to, and utilised by, Pre-chemical Man.

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In considering this mysterious change which came upon his body, primitive Man found himself once again pondering that quality of the capricious that he could not fail to have noticed as one of the fundamental characteristics of the Divine Power. What brought about this change? Why were its visitations not constant? It was true that - generally - the rigidifying of the generative organ occurred when the adult male was in the presence of a desirable female. But not always. Sometimes the change affected children - even very young children - who had yet come to no experience of sexual desire. And the change passed by men of fuller age, who still knew the sting of sexual appetite. The change, primitive Man reflected, was as capricious as the wind ...

Seeking an explanation, primitive Man found one satisfactory to him in the hypothesis of a Spirit of Life, which entered into Man in order to facilitate Man's reproducing his own kind. Indeed, this visitation was essential, since only when the male member was in a certain - 'right' - condition could the transmission of the seed from male to female be effected.

The tumescence, then, was an essential condition brought about by the presence of a Spirit of Life - invisible, yet potent - whose physical force might be not unjustly compared with the often terrifying pressure exerted by the odourless, tasteless, colourless, totally invisible wind. The worship of the phallus, as the 'shine' and 'tabernacle' of the errant Spirit of Life, had begun - the concomitant worship of the Female Principle, though inevitable, was to come later. 'Male and Female created them the Gods [Elohim]' belongs to a much later stage in dogmatic cosmogony.

Natural objects — especially stones - which seemed to resemble in shape the tumescent mentula were, from the earliest times, objects of reverence, as, indeed, they still are in many parts of the world, not excluding our own computer-enslaved land. A moment's reflection will persuade the reader that it was not the phallic shape which first made such objects holy, (2) as a conviction of the observer's part that the permanently phallic shape - or, rather, the permanent rigidity - betokened the permanent residence therein of that magically rigidifying Spirit of Life, which visited men only sporadically, but which honoured these stocks and stones with Its ineffable Presence continuously. Visiting the male member of generation, 'like angels' visits, short and far between', the Spirit of Life dwelt permanently it seemed in these rigid rocks and timbers. It was the immanent Divinity which made them holy.

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[2] As they are to this day in Ireland, Wales, Derbyshire, Normandy, Brittany, the Massif Central, the Pyrenean countries, India, South America and many other places throughout the world.

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I cannot find it in me to agree with the opinion of those who maintain that there have been within the past five thousand years, and, indeed, are, peoples ignorant of the connection between coition and human reproduction. We find this opinion maintained by Bertrand Russell, when, in commenting on Malinowski's The Sexual Life of Savages in North-west Melanesia, Russell mentions the absence of the word for 'father' in the Trobriand speech, because 'no such concept exists'. Charles Seltman, in Women in Antiquity, maintains the same opinion in greater detail: 'Missionaries could not get along without such an idea and name (i.e. of "father"), and they were forced to teach the Islanders the facts of procreation, which these happy people dismissed laughingly as plain nonsense.'

This is a traveller's tale that I myself am inclined to dismiss laughingly as plain nonsense. A very clear realisation of the facts of procreation is evidenced by the ancient tale of Onan (Genesis, 38, 8 and 9), and perhaps even more clearly by the surgical practice of the Australian aborigines - so, incorrectly, called, for they appear to have migrated to Australia about 6,000 years ago. Though the contact with European settlers and visitors over the past two centuries has inevitably had a sophisticating effect upon these primitive people (as I write, one has become an international tennis star), when contact was first made at the end of the eighteenth century, there could hardly have been a more primitive culture than that of the Australian Blackfellow.

Yet, for all the primitive character of the culture, it had come to so competent an understanding of the mechanism of procreation that the central ceremony of these aborigines' 'bar mitzvah' is a surgical operation, performed with a stone drill, by which each boy newly promoted to official manhood is

provided with one of the most effective - as it must surely be one of the most ancient - contraceptive devices in the world.

The hole, which remains permanently open, is drilled at the root of the penis, just where it joins the scrotum, and acts as a drain-away for the seminal canal. In a poor - poor only in the material sense, of course - culture, the birth-rate must be strictly controlled. Where it is not permitted to a Blackfellow couple to have children, coition is practised with the drain-away open, the seminal fluid passing out through the artificial meatus. Where a child is permitted, by the decision of the tribe's elders, to a married couple, the hole is closed by the tip of a finger held against it, and the seminal fluid, on ejaculation, passes up the penis and out of the natural meatus in the normal fashion.

So ingenious and effective a method of birth-control could have been conceived and devised only amongst a people more than merely superficially cognisant of the facts of procreation - and yet, even today, the Blackfellow is reckoned as amongst the most 'backward' of the world's peoples.

When primitive Man traced the functional connection between his coupling with a woman and the woman's eventual pregnancy, he came, as an inevitable result of that association of facts, to pay (not the phallus so much as the sporadic rigidity of) the phallus reverence and worship. But he did not worship the phallus; he worshipped only that Divine Power which took up its temporary residence in the phallus, whose irregular tumescence primitive Man saw as a theophany. It was the Divine Power which 'exalted his horn', and which, with the appropriate spiritual pressure, might be induced, as was later promised to the Hebrew prophets, to 'exalt his horn for ever'.

We shall see, at this critical point in Man's search for the facts of Nature/God, that some of the human seekers were convinced that, with the identification of the tumescent phallus with a visitation of the Divine Spirit, they had come to the ultimate revelation. We shall see, too, that the religion of the Witches - that is, the ancient Fertility Cult - passed, in no important point, beyond this 'revelation', upon which the whole later structure of the Fertility Cult was erected.

But others were not satisfied that, in identifying the tumescence of the phallus with the actual presence of the Maker-Spirit, they had come to the ultimate truth. They went further; they sought to discover the identity - or, at least, the nature -of this all-immanent Godhead; and, in their search through all classes of all created beings, they found It under many aspects. Their keen observation traced the connection between sunlight and growth; and eventually they began to seek the Godhead, not in erratic rigidities of the phallus, but in something — what was it? - the Sun? - the Sky, of which the Sun was only a passing adornment (however important to Man's world)? - or something ever more distant, something far more total?

Long before the Law of Conservation of Energy had been defined in the nineteenth century, some inspired human minds had groped their way towards a dim apprehension of the truth that there was - there must be - a law of the conservation of Divine Purpose, that the immanence of the Godhead must mean that God/Nature was not only everywhere, but that everything, no matter how small, no matter how large, no matter how seemingly trivial, no matter how apparently important: that everything, everywhere, was a manifestation, a theophany, of the Divine Purpose. But to this sublime understanding of 'what made the Universe tick' not everyone attained. It is certain that Akhenaten so

conceived the universe that a single Divine Will ruled and managed; but not to everyone came this bold vision. Some thinkers and seekers got no farther than to think of the Godhead as Something-Up-Above - perhaps simply because it seemed reasonable to postulate a Being who could see more by being so far above the world that It surveyed. Such were the meditative minds among the Aryans, who named this supernal Being 'Sky-Father' - the 'Zeus-Pater' of the Greeks, the 'Dies-pitar' (later 'Iuppiter') of the Romans, the 'Dia' of the Celts, the 'Zio' of those ancient Teutons to whom both Greeks and Romans fearfully ascribed an only half-human (3) origin.

But to many - one may almost consider them the majority -the Godhead; omnipotent, omniscient, immanent and transcendent as It might be; was still the more credible as It seemed the nearer, and thus the more familiar. It was from these only mildly adventurous thinkers and seekers - worshippers of stocks and stones, of meteorites and phalli, of trees and wells and streams and albino animals and cross-eyed men - that we must trace the descent of the Fertility Cult in its purest form; that is to say, the religion of the nomad hunter to whom the facts of procreation were strictly those which seemed to explain the reproduction of animals - his prey and ... himself.

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[3] The Teutones were believed to have sprung from the aberrant union of those female demons who lay in wait for unwary travellers through the dense Hercynian Forest. Those familiar with modern history will have no difficulty in subscribing to this theory.

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## 2 - Father God ... or Mother God?

The most ancient form of the Fertility Cult, as I said in the last chapter, is that which arose from a consideration of the physical mechanisms by which mammals reproduce their kind. The modes of reproduction of the other branches of the animal kingdom - fishes, birds, reptiles - are not so easily perceived, especially when, as in the case, say, of moths and butterflies, their brief lives are lived as it were under two very different forms, the larval stage preceding that into which they emerge as 'true' butterflies or moths.

So long as Man remained the nomad hunter, so long did his religious views take their coloration from the perceived life of the mammalia. Only when he began to raise crops, in however primitive a fashion, did he find himself dependent upon a form of life whose reproductive system baffled his ingenuity to explain. However, the willing, undaunted mind of Early Man accepted this, as he was to accept many an even more testing, challenge.

The connection between seed and crop must soon have been established, but how came the seed? Were there male and female in the realm of the plant, as in the realm of the animal? Certainly, close examination of flowers seemed to shew structural (and so, presumably, functional) differences which might argue a sexual differentiation. But whether as primitive emmer or cultivated wheat, Man's 'staff of life' shews no obvious reproductive mechanism - a fact which may account for one of the original meanings of Latin vagina, 'the sheath of an ear of gram; the hull, the husk'.

One aspect of the mysterious reproductive system of plants, especially of plants necessary to life, seemed 'obvious' to the early observers of Nature: the reproductive mechanism was either hidden within, or fulfilled its functions in, the earth -the place (the implications here call for careful note) in which the Dead are inhumed. This deduced connection between the burial of the human being and the upspringing of the crops accounts for the close connection, in myth, between the Corn Goddess - Ceres, to give her one of her better-known names -and the Underworld, the Place of the Dead.

When crops began to supplement the flesh of hunted animals, the Fertility Cult had necessarily to be widened in 'doctrine' to embrace the magic requisite to the healthy and plentiful growth of corn and other staples. But the additions to the basic religious creed did not oust that creed from its strong hold on human belief and human reverence. The proof is that the totemistic origin of so many gods and goddesses was never forgotten, and that the totem 'patrons' of tribes and clans and nations multiplied rather than died out. The Italians were the people of the Calf (viteliu), the Ulpian clan were the Family of the Wolf ((w)lups; lupus in Classical Latin), Taurinum (modern Turin), was the City of the Bull (Latin, taurus, 'bull'), Cynetae (possibly, though not necessarily, a translation into Greek of the indigenous name), the People of the Dog (Greek, - kuon, 'dog') - neighbours, it seems, of those Celts of Britain, one of whose kings named himself (or was named) Cunobelin, 'Hound of (the God) Belin'.

All the great gods of classical and non-classical mythology seem to have had an animal, that is, a totemistic, origin, from the Sacred Milch-cow which became the Isis who wears the two-horned uterus as her crown, to the Sacred Farrowing Sow who became Demeter, 'the Pig-Mother', or that Sacred Bear which was the theological ancestor of the goddess Artemis.

It is time now to say something of totemism, one of the least explicable, because least understood, of those 'religious' impulses of Early Man, yet one whose provenience is world-wide, and whose influence has been of the strongest in shaping and modifying primitive religious belief.

*The Dawn of Magic: A doctor-priest of the Palaeolithic Age, dressed in ritual 'garments', a bull's hide and horns, with glove 'hoofs' and a 'bull-roarer', performs the Fertility Dance - the earliest representation of this ancient ceremony yet discovered. (From an incised drawing in the Fourneau du Diable, Dordogne.)*

I have never, so far, encountered what, to me, seems the obvious, simple explanation of the origin of sacrifice - the 'staking out' of an animal or human so as to attract the attention of the Totem. From the prevalence of human sacrifice in all cultures, one might assume that the human victim was considered preferable to the non-human. Of course, there were some totem-animals - horse, calf, beaver - which would have had no interest in a human being offered as a sacrifice; but the list is small, and most of the totem-animals - bear, wildcat, wolf, bull, dog, lion, scorpion, etc. - are just those animals which enjoy an unenviable reputation for ferocity.

Totemism is, in its later and more defined phase, the placing of a family, tribe or nation under the

magical protection of an animal whose admired and envied characteristics caused it to be chosen as totem. After 'installation' as the group's totem, the selected animal then became the 'luck' of the group, which usually adopted its name.

Modern survivals of totemism are more numerous than most people realise, even in, particularly in, the 'civilised' parts of the world. The 'mascots' of British regiments, the bears maintained by the City of Bern, the ravens of the Tower of London and the Barbary apes of the Rock of Gibraltar - these are all healthy survivals, into modern times, of the totemistic attitude towards animals which first began to colour our ancestors' religious beliefs perhaps as much as fifty thousand years ago (if the clay bear in the Neanderthal grave is evidence of totemistic belief).

The heads of beasts worn as helmets by the heroes portrayed in Greek and other ancient painting and sculpture, the zoo-morphic helmets of Roman and Goth and Viking; the animal skins worn, not so much as articles of clothing as marks of superior martial rank - all these shew the tenacious hold that totemism retained upon human consciousness, even as religion, throughout the world, was becoming more and more spiritualised, more and more sophisticated.

But, as C.G. Jung has pointed out, there are primordial concepts, buried deep in the collective unconsciousness of humanity. Calling these concepts 'archetypes', Jung defines them as 'inherited predispositions to reaction', and offers an acceptable analogy in suggesting that they are 'perhaps comparable to the axial system of a crystal, which predetermines, as it were, the crystalline formation in the saturated solution, without itself possessing a material existence'. (1)

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[1] Quoted by the late Dr G. B. Gardner ('Scire') in his excellent The Meaning of Witchcraft; London: The Aquarian Press, second edition, 1971.

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The totemistic reaction to some admired animal characteristic - the survival-quality of the cat, the tracking-ability of the dog, the cunning self-protectiveness of the wolf, the blind ferocity of the shrew - is evidently one of these 'inherited predispositions to reaction' that Jung claims are buried deep in the collective unconsciousness of humanity. But before totemism had to come, the belief that a shared mode of reproduction - and thus (presumably) a shared collection of emotions centred about the sexual act -made Man somehow the Brother of Brother Animal, as St Francis of Assisi restated, in para-Christian terms, thousands of years after Man had first deduced the common humanity of the animal or the common animality of man.

In his progress towards a greater spirituality of faith - which, too often, has meant a greater complexity of doctrine - Man took along his earlier beliefs with him; and totemism long continued a most important part of his religio-emotional baggage. When, in addition to a God or Gods, a Goddess or Goddesses added themselves to the pantheon, the totemistic background of all those goddesses is clearly perceived. But it was from specifically female animals, and not from animals considered in any general sense, that the goddesses were developed.

At what point in human enquiry did the truth that the female is 'the other half of a reproductive totality make itself evident to human understanding? Behind the revelation must have come more careful observation, since the changes which overtake the female genital apparatus during the oestrum are not as readily perceptible as those that tumescence induces in the male. Yet there are changes, and at some time or other some observant man - or woman - saw them. Reflection then brought to mind the truth of the matter: that it takes two -male and female - to reproduce one's kind. Woman, one may assume, rose in social dignity and esteem as a result of that detection of the obvious; and now Man's eager questing into the shadowy background of life led him to postulate a spirit which, at the time of the sexual act, was immanent in the female pudenda, as a Spirit of Life was simultaneously immanent in the life-transmitting organs of the male.

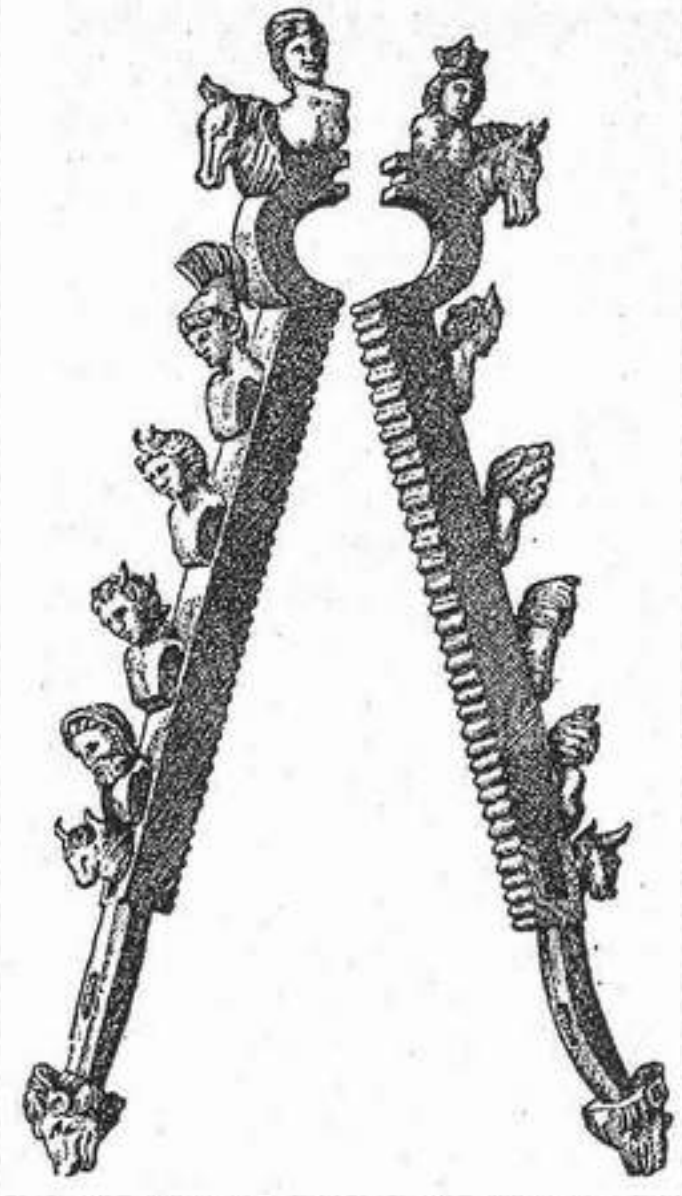
All the same, the raising of woman's social status, with the provision of female god or gods in analogical reflection of the god or gods already hypothesized to account for the miracle of male tumescence, can have come about only in a culture already sympathetically disposed to hold Woman in great, almost excessive, respect. It has been correctly pointed out that the Great Mother, as an object of worship, is to be found in all parts of the ancient and not-so-ancient world; it is, however, equally correct to point out that She was not always worshipped with the same fervour everywhere, and that, whilst exercising superior divine authority in some regions, she held inferior rank in others.

The impulse to see, in the dominant Great Mother, an import from the mother-dominated peoples of Asia Minor and the eastern Mediterranean is irresistible. Even today the 'Old Religion' of Italy, maintained and served by the hereditary female witch-priesthood for a 'church membership' not higher socially than the lower middle-class, has but one supreme divinity, the goddess Diana, and one subordinate divinity. Diana's daughter, Araldia; the male Horned God of northern Europe having been completely dismissed.

A story which may or may not be true explains how the Great Mother, in that dominant, savage aspect so typical of her theophany amongst the peoples of the near Orient, was imported into the Roman pantheon.

In 205 BC, Rome had already been waging war against the brilliant Carthaginian general, Hannibal, for twelve (generally unsuccessful) years. At last, in desperation, the augurs consulted the Sibylline Books. The Books gave the - to the Romans - unwelcome advice that Hannibal could be defeated only if 'the Idaean Mother were brought from Pessinus', a city in Phrygia.

Accordingly, Cybele (or Kybebe), the Great Mother, Magna Mater deorum Idaea, was brought to Rome and there installed with a priesthood so odd in their behaviour and so repugnant to the then Roman ideas of 'good order and military discipline', that Romans were forbidden to join the ranks of the Galli, as the castrated priests of Kybele were called.



*Cybele's castration forceps: With these highly-decorated bronze forceps, found last century in the Thames near London Bridge, the neophyte priests of Cybele, the Great Idaean Mother of the Gods, were ritually castrated to the service of their divine Mistress. The temple of Cybele -sedes Magna Matris - stood on the northern bank of the Thames, at the entrance to, and to the east of, Roman (timber) London Bridge. The name of the sedes Magna Matris ('Headquarters of the Great Mother') survives almost unchanged in that of the modern church standing on its site: St Magnus Martyr.*

For the Galli - Celts, originally? - castrated themselves, almost certainly with a pair of ritual forceps (of which a fine example was found, last century, in the Thames), dedicated the crushed and separated genital organs to the Goddess, and then - provided that they survived this brutal and dangerous mayhem -continued to serve the goddess, but dressed now, henceforth, only as women. (2)

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[2] Despite the strong element of 'Mother Goddess' worship in Christianity, Christianity itself, from its very beginnings, dissociated itself from even the most tenuous links with Cybele-worship. It is for this reason that the (now Roman Catholic) Christian Church has always strongly insisted on permitting only completely 'entire' males to be the celebrants of its rites. Up to this present century, when the

false delicacy of this Age of Grossness 'refined' certain ancient rituals, it was loudly proclaimed in St Peter's, before the actual enthronement of a new Pope, that he had been physically examined by a committee of cardinals, who had found him to be 'entire'. Under the soaring arches of Bramante, the Latin rang out loud, clear and completely unambiguous - 'duos bonos testes habet!" - 'He hath two sound testicles!' It was essential -and still is, for that matter - that the Christian God and His Divine Mother (the Theotokos) should never be served by eunuchs.

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When they moved through the streets in procession, they danced and capered and frothed, working themselves into such a state of hysteria that they gashed themselves with the knives that they carried. This was the Great Mother in her savagely dominant aspect, an aspect which, in origins at least, appears to have been almost exclusively Mediterranean-Oriental. This is any mother when, greedily possessive of her offspring, she says to a growing son, 'I'd rather see you lying dead at my feet [than marry that girl],' or, gazing with insatiable love at her baby, says, 'Ooh, I could eat you - every bit of you!' —and means it. (3)

Compare now this bestial Great Mother, served by half-mad castrati who bathe daily in the hot blood of a sacrificed bull ('A smack in the eye for the Male!'), with the calmly dignified Great Mother as she appears on an Eastern Altaic wall-hanging, in appliques felts, of the fifth century BC. A mounted horseman, elegantly slim and dashingly moustached, with a brightly coloured scarf tied with graceful abandon about his neck, has halted his mount before the chair in which the Great Mother sits. The horseman is not only elegant; he is, for all his elegance, unmistakably masculine. The Great Mother, as elegant in her way as the young horseman is in his, is dressed in one of those wrap-around, high-necked robes that Chinese women wear, or wore until recently.

Her shaved head gives the Great Mother a distinctly non-feminine appearance, without making her in the least masculine. She seems almost as sexless as the priests who serve her more savage aspect five thousand miles away. Her hat is curious, too; obviously a ritual headgear, with nothing feminine about it. But on her calm face is no evidence of that love of savagery for its own sake, that determination to achieve her own will at whatever cost to others, which so brutalises the Great Mother as one gets ever nearer to that focus of religious insanity, the Middle East.

It is true that, as I say, the Great Mother is found everywhere, but she differs so in aspect, according as we encounter her in the Altai mountains (from which the wall-hanging came) or in the humid flats of the Mediterranean littoral, (4) that it seems hardly possible to consider Cybele, the Great Mother of Idaea, and the unnamed Great Mother of the Scythian wall-hanging, as one and the same concept of divinity. Gods alter with physical surroundings, simply because Man's basic characteristics change in reacting to the demands of this harsh climate, to the licence of that gentle one.

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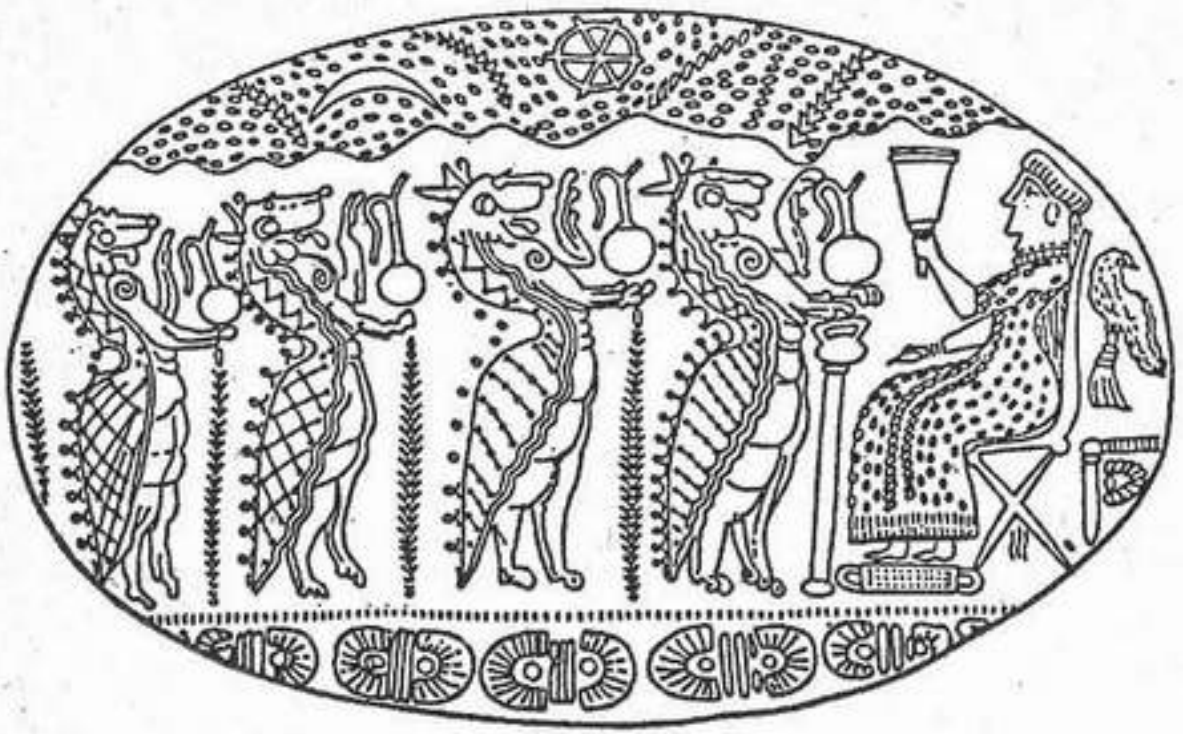
[3] Female mice, rabbits and pigs would fully sympathise with this sentiment. The animals, though, are not restrained by any social taboos; they do actually eat their young.

[4] We must, however, note that, for all the bloodiness of her aspect through the Near East generally, the Great Mother is surprisingly different when encountered in the Minoan and sub-Minoan (Mycenean) cultures. Her representation on the gold ring found at Tiryns so closely resembles that on the wall-hanging found in Mound 5, Pazirik, Eastern Altai, that there can be no doubt of the common origin of the two, separated though they were by many hundreds of miles and by many different peoples and cultures. But the 'gentle' Great Mother, of the Scythian nomad and the sub-Minoan Greek were divided by a cultural barrier of great extent, within which the Great Mother was worshipped only under her most savage aspect. There is, all the same, no difficulty in Unking the Altai and the AEgaean 'religiously', since the trade links were long established, through the Greek cities - Sinope, Sebastopol, Panticapaeum, etc. - on the Black Sea.



*Great Mother of the AEgaean: Allowing for small regional differences in dress and presentation, this 'benign' Great Mother, receiving the tribute of the Sacred Drink from her lion-headed beetle servitors, is identical with the Goddess from the Pazirik wall-hanging. Yet this! Great Mother is depicted on the bezel of a large gold signet ring found in a Mycenean treasure at Tiryns, on the Aegaean Sea.*

We should, therefore, expect to find an early and well-developed worship of both Sun and Moon in such a place as Egypt, where the Sun literally 'rules the day', and the Moon, 'the lesser light5, so brilliantly 'rules the night'. And so we do.

It has been pointed out that the probable reason for facing the four sides of the Great Pyramid of Cheops with finely worked slabs of white limestone was that, in the moment of the Sun's reaching its zenith, the four 45º-angled sides of the Pyramid would flash a dazzling beam of intense radiance to the four corners of Egypt - a flash as momentary, as concentrated, as intense, and - perhaps - as startling as that with which the first atom-bombs exploded over Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The dazzling beams of sunlight would have been only instantaneous; within a second of time, the Sun would have passed the zenith, and the brilliancy of the light would have faded to a gentle glow on the polished limestone.

But note: pyramids (the Greek word - pyramis, though misunderstood by the later Greeks, bears out the theory of that Pyramid's having been a light-reflector) exists only where there is an ever-present and powerful Sun. We find the ziggurats in the plains of Mesopotamia, the teocallis in the level lands of Mexico, Guatemala and Yucatan, the pyramids in Egypt: all places where the Sun beats fiercely down, and is obscured by cloud only for the shortest periods of each year.

Those who have visited, say, Egypt may never forget the all-demanding presence of the Sun, which seems to leap out of the Eastern horizon, so that - in the desert at least - the sub-zero temperatures of pre-dawn (5) are raised, within seconds, to a heat in which even the lightest clothing becomes intolerable. The burning rays beat down on the parched skin; the eyes dazzle and ache from the bright light reflected on the iridescent, shimmering sand. In that nightmare of sweltering heat and blinding light, there is room in the aching consciousness for only one reality: the All-conquering Sun.

As far north as Rome, we find the worship of Sol Invictus, 'the Unconquered Sun' whose 'birthday' - dies Solis Invicti Nati - was celebrated on December 25, a day which was later appropriated by the Roman Church for the celebration of Christ's Nativity.

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[5] Water freezes during the Egyptian night, a fact utilised by the pyramid - and temple-builders to split the granite blocks from the mother-rock. Small holes were drilled in the granite, plugs of soft palm-wood introduced. The plugs were soaked with water, and during the night the water froze, expanded, and split the rock.

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But, as we proceed even farther north - and especially into the north-west (where, says Herodotus, the Cynesii, 'The People of the Dog', dwell) - we certainly find evidence of both Sun-worship and Moon-worship, though the fact that, in Anglo-Saxon, mona, 'the Moon', is a masculine noun may argue that Sun and Moon worship originated independently. But, in a truly literal sense, such Sun-worship as existed north of, say the Massif Central, was strictly 'down to earth'.

It has long been suspected, and seems now to have been brilliantly proven by Dr Gerald S. Hawkins,' that Stonehenge was built, about 1850 BC, as an astronomical 'sighting device', whose function had particular reference to the Sun. Over some three hundred years, the 'calculator' was extended in scope and refined in operation, so that, according to Dr Hawkins, it was able, not only to discharge its original function of determining the exact dates and times of the Solstices and the Equinoxes, but could be used to predict eclipses, etc., with remarkable accuracy.

The point, however, of importance here is that there was nothing equivalent at Stonehenge to that interest in the Sun's zenith positions, the information on which, available in Egypt from an early period, enabled Eratosthenes to make the first accurate estimate of the Earth's circumference in the third century BC. All Stonehenge's information is concerned with the Sun's risings and setting; as I said, Sun-worship, north of the Massif Central, was literally brought 'down to earth'.

Now whether or not an original matriarchal rule was replaced by a paternal rule, so that male gods tended to oust female gods (a process reversed as Rome, over the short space of one hundred years, imported no fewer than 1,500,000 slaves, mostly prisoners of war, and almost all from the imaginatively religious lands of the Middle East and Nearer Orient), there is no doubt that a recognition of the indispensable part played by the female in human reproduction led inevitably to the concept of a dual origin of human and other animal life.

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[6] The actual date of Christ's birth, as it has been calculated from (mainly) astronomical and other evidence may fairly confidently be given as during the night of 16th-17th May, 8 BC, probably at 2 a.m. The fact that Christ's birth must be dated as 'eight years before Christ' is due to an error made when Dionysius Exiguus began his 'AD' chronology in AD 533.

[7] Stonehenge Decoded; London: Souvenir Press, 1966.

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It is this concept which found its artistic expression in the androgyne divinity - the dual-sexed, hermaphrodite supernatural whose form exhibited the primary and secondary sexual characters of both sexes. To such a specialised class of divinity belonged the famous Diana (Artemis) of Ephesus, whose statue shewed not only the many breasts of the goddess, but also her enormous phallus. To this class of hermaphrodite divinity also belonged the 'brother-and-sister' divinity, which, sometimes separated into male and female, as Frey (Fricco) and Freya (Frigga), 'lord' and 'lady', were more frequently fused into the androgyne form, as a Frigga with obviously feminine characteristics allied, as the mediaeval geographer, Adam of Bremen, observes, 'cum ingenti priapo' - 'with a huge organ'. (Later I shall call attention to the fact that the Inquisitors looked for supernumerary nipples on suspected witches because it was held that their Goddess was Diana the Many-breasted. I do not recall having heard mention of this important point before.)

As I said earlier, even the fundamental characters of 'the same' god or goddess could change radically with a translation to a climate differing greatly from that in which the divinity had originated - originated, be it carefully noted, in response to the enquiry of rationalising minds, in specific climatic conditions Even the experts are liable to forget how greatly a divinity could change with a change of habitat. Thus the usually correct Dr G.B. Gardner, in discussing the universal Great Mother, has this to say:

She is the Great Mother of All, the giver of fertility and the power of reproduction. All life comes from her; all life-giving crops and fruits, animals and people are her children. She is the Bringer and the Taker Away, the Goddess of Life, Death and Rebirth; but all in a sweetly loving way. Laughingly she has been described as "The Mother who lovingly spanks and kisses her children." [My italics - M.H.]

Now this panegyric would perfectly apply to the Great Mother in her aspect of the gentle Kwan Yin, or even of the Virgin Mary as presented for general worship in any run-of-the-mill Roman Catholic

church. But how could it possibly apply to 'the same' Great Mother in her savage, bloodthirsty aspect of Cybele, threatening Death rather than promising life, and communicating with mankind through a priesthood of maniac geldings? The equation of a Roman god or goddess with a Greek, as Diana with Artemis, Mars with Herakles, Mercury with Hermes, was seen to have some contradictions inherent two thousand and more years ago; how less likely is it that we may establish a valid equation between two gods or two aspects of 'the same' god, modified in character by climates which, permanently sun-scorched on one side, are foggy, rainy ... and fertile ... on the other?

## 3 - Fertility Religion and the Celtic Spread

On one important subject, average opinion never seems to be able to grasp the facts. This subject is that of communication by travel in the Ancient World. The ordinary man either overestimates the facility with which our remote ancestors moved about their world or - more commonly - the opinion is that, like the cottagers of Gray's Elegy, those ancestors were born, lived out their unadventurous existences, died and were buried in the same obscure plot.

Only in the exceptional cases of some mass migration of peoples or of some vast incursion of savage killers under some even more bloodthirsty Leader - an Attila, say, or an Alaric or a Genghis Khan — does the average man concede that the man of olden times might have moved more widely about their world than is implied in a half-yearly visit to the local market-town.

Contacts between all points of the known - and many of the 'unknown' - world had been made, reciprocal trading arrangements worked out and established trade-routes surveyed and opened up for regular commerce, in prehistoric times. With the beginning of the historical record, we find a world in which trade between the Baltic and the Mediterranean, between Greece and Phoenicia and Egypt and the British Isles, between Ireland and Troy, is conducted on a regular basis.

Egyptian beads of blue faience, of a type able to be accurately dated to about 1,350 BC have been found buried under one of the great uprights of Stonehenge; Celtic gold-work of 'British' type was found by Schliemann in Troy; a Trojan cup was found in Billingsgate, London, and another not far from Reading, where also, in the River Kennet, was dredged up an arrowhead of bronze bearing the name of Queen Berenike of Pergamum (third century BC).

The all-powerful dynamic to set travellers travelling in the Old World was the search for metals. In those far-off times, the amount of surface metal must have been calculable, in millions of tons, and it was worth going far afield to find, since (though the Persians seem to have had electric light by the fifth century BC) for ordinary illumination only crude oil-lamps were available, and deep mining, with such illumination was almost an impossibility.

The Bronze Age began about 2000 BC, with the discovery - perhaps accidental - that copper, alloyed with tin, would produce a metal with qualities superior to those of either of the constituent metals. It is clear that 'Britain' - or whatever it was called in 3000 BC - had already been 'opened up for trade with prospecting parties from the Mediterranean, hunting copper. The discovery of bronze must have increased the trade multiplied the contacts between the cultured men of the Middle East and the still Neolithic inhabitants of 'Britain'. Cornwall supplied the searchers with both copper and tin, but that they looked elsewhere throughout the British Isles is evident from the stone erections - menhirs, dolmens, etc. that they left behind them, from most westerly Ireland to the northernmost tip of the Orkneys.

Besides the essential metals - iron was yet to be smelted into what is still the world's most useful metal - the men from the Middle East sought amber, jet, gold, and those shaggy woollen cloaks which, many centuries later, as saga, were to form an essential part of the Roman military officer's uniform. In 'Britain' they found them all; something of what they traded in exchange has been found -

though little, since our damp climate does not lend itself to the preservation of much. But did they bring with them ideas? Certainly. And did those ideas include those of a religious nature? In all probability, yes. And did the Fertility Religion come in with these shrewd traders, who had come so far for what they sought? In the sense that the Fertility Religion that we are considering in this book came from another source, that I am about to de-scribe, no.

The Fertility Religion, in its more primitive aspects, had already become an oecumenical faith long before the first ship of the metal-hunters touched in at some early Sennen or Porthcurno or Treen or Mousehole, and when the metal-hunters arrived, those who had come to 'reform' and 'codify' the ancient universal Fertility Faith had already displaced -or, at least, come to dominate - the earlier ethnic stock. Fortunately, just as the name, 'Hartland Point', tells us that we have here another promontory named - as is the promontory of Monaco (Herakles Monoichos) — after Hercules, we can say that the same people who originally called a Mediterranean promontory after the wonder-working, wandering God to whom all promontories were sacred, gave 'Hartland Point' the designation which lies behind the present name.

They were Greeks - and many peoples had preceded them before they passed through the Pillars of Hercules and rounded Carthaginian and Iberian Spain and Brittany and the Channel Isles before making landfall in Cornwall. Etymology has helped us to identify the people who named 'Hartland Point' with those who named 'Monaco' - and we shall have to rely strongly on etymology to tell us, not only who settled (at least Southern) Britain before the Celts arrived, but what they brought with them in the way of speech and ideas - especially religious ideas.

Opinion seems to be hardening in favour of a return to the nineteenth century theory that the Celts, arriving in Britain in several invasions or immigrations, first appeared on British soil in about 1800 BC - or, roughly, about the time of the building of Stonehenge I. (Whether or not they built it has yet to be determined.) If the date is even approximately correct, then it means that the last wave of immigrants before the Celts arrived must have settled here by at the latest 2000 BC. Who were they, and which language did they speak?

I shall answer those questions completely in a later chapter, but their place of origin was guessed by Professor J. Morris-Jones, who explained his reasoning in his now famous Appendix to Sir John Rhys's The Welsh Language, published just before the First World War.

Briefly described, Professor Morris-Jones's theory of the origin of the Welsh language is that it is a tongue having a preponderantly Celtic vocabulary (we shall disregard the 800 or so words of Latin origin), but with a non-Celtic syntax.

This can only mean that modern Welsh is the language derived from one formerly spoken by a people who originally spoke an entirely different tongue, and had the Celtic vocabulary imposed upon them as a result of conquest.

Professor Morris-Jones points out that when, in the past, one people was conquered by another, the conquerors rarely had their women with them, and chose wives out of the subjugated 'locals'. These wives would learn the language of the conquerors only so far as the vocabulary went, putting the new

words in their own familiar syntax: the English of the Bombay babu, of the Italian immigrant in New York or Chicago, of the Pakistani in Bradford or Wakefield will sufficiently illustrate Professor Morris-Jones's point.

The children of the marriage between a member of the conquering force and a woman of the conquered people would have learnt the new language from their mother: Celtic vocabulary, the syntax of Language X. Within a generation or two this hybrid tongue would be 'correct' - French (through Latin spoken by Gauls), Haitian patois (through French spoken by West African Negroes), Lowland Scots (through English spoken by Gaels) are all analogous developments.

From these deduced facts one important conclusion must be implied. If we may examine the syntax on which the Celts of - what, 1800 BC? - imposed their conquerors' vocabulary and relate that syntax to existing or recorded congeners elsewhere, then we may be able to say to which group of languages the language spoken by the pre-Celtic inhabitants of Britain belonged.

There is no space here to quote Professor Morris-Jones's examples of Welsh-type idiom matched in other languages. Let it suffice to say that he shews that the syntax most closely resembling that of Welsh is to be found in a group of North African languages, of which Berber, Tamachek and Tuareg are the most important and the most representative for the purpose of Morris-Jones's argument.

The first wave of Celts, then, found in Britain, and conquered, a people of Neolithic culture, speaking a tongue belonging to the Western North African group.

Well, how did such a people migrate to Britain, and are there traces of them on their journey from Tunisia and Morocco to the extreme limits of north-Western Europe? Yes, says Morris-Jones decisively, there are.

The argument on which he places the most reliance concerns the attested appearance of the name, 'Berber' (or, rather, the root of that reduplicate name) along the route that the North Africans must have taken on their way to 'Britain', whether or not they came wholly by sea.

Beginning at North Africa, the Land of the Berber (Ber-Ber), we come first to Spain, whose ancient, pre-Carthaginian, pre-Greek, pre-Roman name was whatever the Romans pronounced as 'Iberia', and then proceed, either through Spain or along the western coast of the Iberian Peninsula, until we come to Britain, having stopped off, if names are anything to go by, at Ireland - Ibernia. or Ivernia in the old days. And if we preferred to return - assuming that there were some amongst us who wished not to settle down in the misty greenness of Britain - we might have chosen to return by way of the narrow strait, hardly more then than a wide river's crossing, between what would one day be Dover and Calais; and here, too, we find a trace of the same name in that of former land now sunk beneath the waves: the Feme (Varne) Sands.

*The 'Other People': Despite the Church's propaganda, which sought to present the 'Faery' as diabolical, the surviving remnants of the aboriginal inhabitants of Europe continued to be accepted by the ordinary people, as a folk 'different' but not malign. Here is a representation of the 'Elves' Dance', from Olaus Magnus. The 'O' is a stylised representation of a 'fairy ring'.*

Well, that is the theory: that the people whom the first wave of tall, blond; blue-eyed Celts conquered were a Neolithic people - we shall come later to their supposed physical characteristics - who spoke a North African language allied to the still extant Berber tongues.

To anticipate the findings of later chapters of this book, there was only a partial abandonment of the ancient tongue displaced in favour of Celtic as the 'official' language (P-Celtic, in the first and possibly the second - Iron Age - incursion; Q-Celts (1) arrived later). What is important to our thesis is the fact that, though the Celtic vocabulary was adopted by all but a few living in remote districts, inaccessible to the central government of the conquering Celts (just as, for counting sheep, a form of Celtic is still used in both Cumberland and Lincolnshire), the old language was retained for religious purposes, becoming the ritual tongue.

The earlier immigrants, who had brought a language and a faith with them - as well as cultural benefits, no doubt - had come from a part of the world where the worship of the Great 'Mother was a dominant religious impulse.

Yet climatic conditions soon modified this worship, as climatic conditions, centuries later, were to change much of the original structure of the religion of Isis. The Mother Goddess retained her importance for these Neolithic worshippers, but, unlike normal Mediterranean practice (as it was in pre-Roman days), the God soon advanced from his subordinate position as consort, 'stud-bull'; and, first gaining equality with the Goddess, eventually overtook her in divine rank. Today, though the religion that the Celts found when they arrived in Britain nearly four thousand years ago has suffered some addition in the matter of belief (an addition possibly acquired from Celtic belief), its main tenets are what we may suppose were found acceptable to priests and laity certainly long before the beginning of our present era.

The unvarying fertility of Britain was a source of constant wonder - and, later, of envy - to the Ancient World. The Triads of the Welsh Barddas (2) state that the second - or it may even have been the third - wave of Celtic immigrants, the Cwmry, arrived in Britain about 450 BC, a date which, as Lethbridge points out, has the support of the fact that it appears to coincide 'in a remarkable way with the immigration of the earliest iron-using peoples ..."

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[1] Celtic is differentiated between P-Celtic and Q-Celtic according to the different treatment of certain original Indo-European sounds.

[2] Quoted by T.C. Lethbridge; Witches: Investigating an Ancient Religion, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1962.

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There were to be several other waves of Celts before Celtic immigration finally ceased - though, with Irish labourers and barmen still pouring into Britain, may one truthfully say that Celtic immigration has been finally halted?

Now, the reason for the Celts' crossing over to Britain was only partly explained by the fertility of the country and (we may guess) the apparent weakness of its defences. But the migration of the Celts from Europe was due, not so much to a desire for change as to the irresistible pressure being exerted upon the Celtic tribes by Teutonic peoples, themselves being pushed west by a collection of very mixed peoples, set in motion by the gradual drying-up of grazing and arable lands to the far East - what is now the famous Gobi Desert.

At the time, and for long afterwards, the Celts were scattered over an area of several thousand square miles, which stretched from the Crimea (where they were still speaking a Celtic dialect in 1700) to Britain, from northern Italy and Switzerland to northern Spain. In what is now Germany they were very numerous, and some philologists attribute the 'second German sound-shift' to the Germans' having been in contact, for a considerable time, with certain of the Celtic tribes. (3) The Celts, without extirpating, easily contrived to dominate the earlier immigrants into Gaul - modern France: the Ligurians, spanning the coastal area between Marseilles and Toulon, and the borderlands of the Alps from the Franche-Comte to northern Italy, concentrating their density of population along the valley of the Rhone.

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[3] It was the 'second sound-shift" of the Germanic group of languages which brought about the division of German into 'High' and 'Low'. In 1925, in his Bine Lautverschiebungstheorie, O. Heinertz suggested that this 'second sound-shift" arose from the influence of Celts on the speakers of German. From about AD 400, the Celts occupied an extensive territory bounded roughly by the Main, Rhine and Danube. When this territory was conquered by Germanic peoples, the Celtic inhabitants adopted

the language of the 'Master Race'', but kept their own speech habits, thus 'shifting' the Germanic consonantal stops. Following a well-established pattern of conquest, the relatively few conquerors married Celtic women, and their children spoke the 'pidgin' Germanic of the mothers, and not the 'correct' German of the fathers.

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The other 'first-comers' - but who had themselves probably erased an earlier population - were the Iberians, who, in about the sixth century BC, moved in from Spain and gradually pushed deeper into Gaul, so that, in no very long time, they had occupied the western part of what is now France from the Pyrenees to the Loire. The Celtic occupation of Gaul - again achieved in several waves, perhaps widely spaced in time - must have brought a number of tribes speaking different forms of the basic Celtic tongue.

Though the majority of the tribes spoke a form of P-Celtic, the Celts of and around the future city of Burdigala (Bordeaux) were speaking a form of Q-Celtic (Irish) as late as the sixth century AD. Had the Celts possessed a sense of solidarity, had they learned to organise themselves into a cohesive mass, they might have founded a great Celtic empire. Their successes in war they owed to their superb - almost monopolistic - mastery, not only of the horse, but of the horse-drawn wheeled vehicle, considered as a unit. Their principal totem, at least at the time when they were frightening Europe and Asia Minor out of their collective wits, was the pig; but the prestige gained through the mastery of the horse and horse-drawn vehicles caused many of the Celtic tribes later to adopt the horse as their totem.

Amongst these was the famous tribe of the Iceni - 'The People of the Horse' - Norfolk Celts whose outraged Queen, Boadicea (Boudicca) still threatens the Romans from her scythed chariot on the Thames Embankment. After the terrible defeat of the Iceni and their allies in AD 61, part of the Iceni moved north to Caledonia, where their descendants still call themselves 'Sons of the Horse' - MacEachern.

Just as the skill of French carriage-designers in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was memorialised in the French names of carriages: cabriolet, berline, landau, coupe-de-ville, limousine, etc., so did the Romans use Celtic names to describe the various types of horse-drawn vehicles that the Celts had invented: henna, 'two-wheeled cart with wickerwork body', carpentum, 'two-wheeled covered waggon', carrus, 'four-wheeled waggon', cisium, 'light two-wheeled vehicle', covinnus, 'scythed chariot', essedum, 'war chariot', reda, 'travelling coach', etc. The modern German word for 'horse', pferd, is derived from a Low Latin hybrid word, paraveredus, which is the Greek preposition, para, 'a sort of, and the Celtic word for 'horse', veredus.

This restless people, the Celts, were on the move; and, as I said above, they had no empire. But they were already sufficiently powerful, nearly a hundred years after the wave of circa 450 BC had arrived in Britain, to swoop down from across the Alps and sack Rome in 390 BC.

I have spoken at some length of this extraordinary people, because it is my opinion that their religious beliefs, which they preached with as much enthusiasm and energy as, later, they were to preach their

own form of Christianity, had a not inconsiderable effect on the Old Religion that they found in Britain, Gaul and Spain - nor were Celtic beliefs to remain unaffected by close and (it would appear) never hostile contact with the priests and laity of the 'established religion'.

Which brings us, of course, to that most important question: Were the Druids 'witches'? - that is, priests of the Old Religion?

## 4 - Birthplace Of An Old Religion

The question has been asked before, but never yet either fully, or seriously attempted to be, answered.

The first noteworthy fact to consider is that, whether or not Druidism was identical with the old Religion - an aspect of it, shall we say? - both Druidism and the Fertility Cult in its specifically Western form 'grew up together'. Possibly from as early as circa 1800 BC, but certainly from circa 450 BC, the Druidism of the conquering Celts and the Fertility Cult of the subjugated earlier inhabitants were faiths in close and constant proximity. Perhaps more to the point, in assessing the possible mutual influence on Druidism and what we might well call 'Western Fertility', is the fact that, in all those places where Western Fertility developed its specific aspect ('witchcraft' of a later day), it did so always and only in physical proximity to the Celts and their religion.

Using the modern names of the countries, Western Fertility is a religion developed only where Celts had achieved a military domination: Britain, France, Northern Spain; both western and eastern; Germany, Switzerland, the French and Swiss Alps, and that part of Northern Italy which was known to the Romans as Cisalpine Gaul. It is true, in this last case, that we are assured by Polybius that the Gauls were so quickly and completely assimilated into the native population whom the Celtic Gauls had conquered, that 'Gallic' (as Polybius calls the language) had ceased to be spoken by 150 BC. (1)

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[1] Polybius, 2.35.4. Quoted in The Latin Language, L.R. Palmer; London: Faber & Faber, 1954.

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Nevertheless, too much importance may be attached to the Cisalpine Celts' loss of their native tongue. Both 'Gallic' and the 'proto-Latin' tongues of the Cisalpine Gauls' neighbours were all members of the Indo-European speech family, and the adoption of Lepontic, Venetic, Ligurian, Rhaetic or any other of the neighbouring Italic dialects would have been no more difficult, and just, one thinks, as inevitable, as the adoption of English by German-speaking immigrants. In any case, 'Gallic' - and the ideas conveyed by it - had an important influence on Roman thought and Roman speech before 'Gallic' disappeared, as we saw in considering the number of 'Gallic' loan-words in Latin which are connected with horse-management.

Here, then, is a fact deduced from observation of the distribution of Celts over Western Europe: the more dominant the Celtic immigrant population, the 'purer' the form of Western Fertility; the nearer to what we may call 'the religious norm' shall we find the Old Religion.

There is a second important point to be considered. It has been said, rightly, that Celtic energy and Celtic recklessness, combined with Celtic ingenuity in devising new weapons of war and Celtic skill in using them, never led them to the creation of an empire. True. But what has almost always been forgotten by those who make that statement is that, for all that there was never any imperial bond linking all Celts together under some supreme government, the strong tribal and family bonds have never weakened, from the time that the Celts first mysteriously appear in the historical record until

today. Perhaps it was that the Celts, recognising the fact that this 'family' loyalty could never be weakened, considered that an imperial organisation of Celtdom was unnecessary.

But, scattered over Western Europe as the Celts might have been, the tribal links remained unsevered. The Veneti of the northern Adriatic (modern Venice) never forgot their kinship with the Veneti of Brittany (centred upon the modern city of Vannes, which is named after them); the Brigantes of that part of north-west Spain which is now called Galicia ('lands of the Gauls') were closely linked, both by sentiment and an appreciation of the advantages of family links, with their tribal cousins of Italy, Austria, France and Yorkshire.

This constant maintenance of tribal links - Carausius, the Menapian, could have come to the usurped throne of the Western Empire either from the mouth of the Scheldt or from Cork Harbour - enabled Celts to move without hindrance across a vast territory which, though not politically, fiscally or militarily organised into an empire, yet permitted every Celtic-speaking Celt to pass freely across territories nominally under the jurisdiction of other peoples. That the Celts and Celtic-speaking peoples have jealously guarded this privileged position is still evident today in the ease with which an Irishman may pass from Ireland to Australia, Mexico, France, Poland or to the United States of America.

Though the Druids excited the interest and earned the respect of many of the leading minds of the Ancient World, what we know of the organisation of this still mysterious priesthood, and of the beliefs that they taught, we owe to 'the great Roman statesman and stylist, C. Julius Caesar', whose interest in the Druids, however, was hardly religious and certainly not subjective. Seeing them as the rallying force behind those Celts whom he intended to subjugate, Caesar studied them and their organisation only the better to destroy their influence over the warlike Celt.

So that it is from Caesar that we learn, in what we now see to be considerable detail, of the Druids' organisation into classes, of their dress, of their traditional ceremonies, of their power in the tribal society, and - which most concerns us here - of their beliefs. Unfortunately, it is here that Caesar, never long-winded, becomes almost too brief.

However, he does state categorically that:

(a) They taught the doctrine of metempsychosis (2) (that is, the transmigration of souls from body to body).

(b) They taught the doctrine of the immortality of the soul. This is not necessarily implied in the doctrine of metempsychosis, which may argue the perpetual transmission of the soul, but not of the personal identity. The doctrine of the soul's immortality implies the immortality of the personal identity.

(c) 'From their knowledge of astrology, they drew omens and saw futurity revealed before their eyes.'

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[2] Diodorus Siculus, writing some fifty years after Caesar (De Bella Gallica), confirms this when he writes: 'Among the Celts the doctrine of Pythagoras prevails, according to which the souls of men are immortal, and, after a fixed term, recommence to live, taking upon themselves a new body.'

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(d) - and 'they were professionally acquainted with the art of magic'.

This is the sum of what the ancient commentators - Sotion of Alexandria, (3) Cicero, Caesar, Diodorus Siculus and Pliny the Elder have to tell us of the Druids' religious beliefs. Let us see if our deductions may not enable us to add some certain conclusions to the above modest list From what I have written earlier:

(e) The Druids' ascription of worshipful quality to the mistletoe (see page 54) indicates plainly that, primarily, Druidism was a Fertility Cult, here seen, not in its pure form, but overlaid with the doctrine of Sympathetic Magic. The doctrine of Sympathetic Magic, which derived from the simpler form of the Fertility Cult, and is the ancestor of Homeopathy — similia similibus curantur ('like is cured by like') - holds that things which have an appearance in common (e.g. the viscid white juice of the mistletoe and human semen) have their other qualities in common, and that, therefore, whatever is done to the simulacrum must, , by the power of Sympathetic Magic, be executed upon its more important analogue. (This is, hi fact, no different from the Roman Catholic doctrine of the Pope's spiritual power, supposedly based on a promise of Christ's to St Peter [Matt. xvi. 19.] that to Peter and his successors should be given the power that 'whatever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in Heaven ..."

This famous 'Power of the Keys' is indistinguishable, in sentiment, from that belief in Sympathetic Magic so often and so roundly condemned as the basest superstition by the Roman Church.) A further piece of evidence in support of the claim that Druidism was in whole or part a Fertility Cult, is the ascription of a sacred character to the oak-tree (see page 54). If the name, Druid, be a translation of the Celtic, we seem to have a totemistic (or animistic) name based on that of a tree. 'Druid', from Greek, 'oak', means, in its Greek form, 'son of the Oak'. Now, this may be a translation into Greek of the Celtic name, or it may be an interpretation of a name which, to the Greeks, sounded like 'son of the Oak'.

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[3] Dr G.B. Gardner dates Sotion at 'about 200 BC'. This is incorrect. Sotion of Alexandria, the philosopher and grammarian, was preceptor to Lucius Annaeus Seneca - Seneca, the philosopher - who was born in Spain about 6 BC.

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But the name itself, as used by the Druids, could possibly have been Greek. Cultural exchange between Druid Britain and Greece and Greek-speaking Roman learning was closely maintained over centuries, and that Greek names were adopted for what one might consider purely Celtic ideas is well

illustrated by the name of the mythical microscopic super-man, King Kuon of Bordeaux, where 'huon' is simply pure Greek 'dog'.

(g) Accepting the common culture (with only unimportant dialectal differences in the common speech until well after the beginning of the present era) of Celtdom, we may take it that evidence of religious beliefs in one part of the sprawling Celtic 'sphere of influence' may be accepted as evidence that such religious beliefs were common to all Celtdom.

Evidence of this kind is supplied by the altar dedicated to the Horned God, Cernunnos (Latinised Celtic, but so spelt on the altar itself), which was found, under the existing Christian altar of the cathedral of Notre Dame, Paris; the Celtic altar now being on display in the Musee de Cluny, in the same city.

On the Cernunnos altar (the name means 'Horned One', 'Old Hornie'), (4) only the head of the divinity is shewn; a completely human head, as of a middle aged, bearded man, but with stag's antlers, on which are hung, one each side of the head, two torques, of a type commonly found in any museum of Celtic antiquities.

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[4] The name appears in every variation throughout the area of Indo-European speech. This chief god of the Fertility Cult - the 'Devil' or 'Satan' of the later Witches' Sabbats - was (and is still) known in Ireland as Conall Cernac. His name is enshrined in both English 'Cornwall' and Breton 'Kerne' (the French 'Cornouaille'). Another example of what has happened in Paris, where the shrine of Cernunnos was 'rehabilitated' for the purposes of the New Faith, is to be found at Cerne Abbas, in Dorset, where, in Anglo-Saxon times, a large monastic foundation grew up upon the site (or, most probably, within the original buildings) of a Shrine of Cernunnos.

Here it was that the learned AElfric, educated in the Romano-British city of Winchester (Venta Belgarum), translated the Pentateuch into Old English and wrote his famous Homilies. He was master of the monastic school at Cerne, and his Grammar, Homilies, Lives of the Saints and Translations from the Bible, were all written at Cerne between 987 and 998. Above now ruined Cerne, the great club-wielding (but no longer horned), ithyphallic Cernunnos still stands in chalk-white majesty - immense against the green hillside. Both the Latin proper name, Cornicen ('hornblower'), and English Hornblower recall ancient Cernunnos.

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Not only the sophisticated workmanship of the altar, especially of its well-chiselled inscription, but also the fact that its temple was of such evident importance that a chief temple of the New Faith was built on the site of Cernunnos's, amply testify to the high standing of the Horned God throughout Celtdom.

Summing up, then, we have five fundamental points of doctrine on which Western Fertility ('witchcraft') and Druidism are obviously in agreement:

1. Both are Fertility Cults.

2. Both acknowledge, apparently as the Supreme Divinity, a Horned God. (We shall examine the female counterpart of this Horned God later.)

3. Both postulate the immortality of the soul.

4. Both subscribe to the doctrine of metempsychosis - that is, the transmigration of souls. (I find no evidence for the statement, often made, that the Druids believed that men's souls, on the death of the body, would pass, not into human, but into animal, bodies.)

5. Both practise 'magic', and seek to predict the future in similar ways.

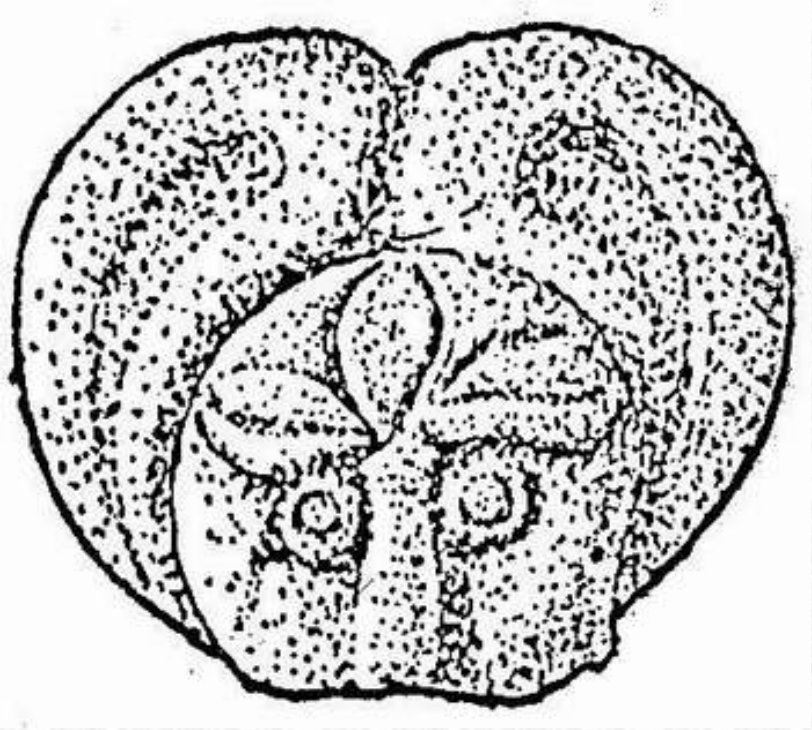
*The Horned God: Based on the universal symbol of the Bull, as the archetype of Nature's fertility, here is the horned, three-faced (that is, omniscient), priapic God of Fertility from the buried city of Mohenjo-daro, in the Punjab. About 2000 BC.*

Allowing for the fact that essential differences between Druidism and Western Fertility on their first coming together may well have been 'ironed out' over centuries of friendly intercourse - for instance, even some modern 'witches' hesitate to consider a belief in reincarnation part of the original corpus of Old Religion belief - it still seems impossible to reject the conclusion that Druidism was, or eventually became, identical with that ancient faith that I call Western Fertility or the Old Religion.

Too much importance may, I feel, be attached to the absence, in one region of this continental

religion, of elements which, in another region, are all-important. 'In the Triads (of the Welsh Barddas),' Dr Gardner notes, 'there is not the slightest trace of anything connected with the worship of Diana' - the Supreme Divinity of Italian Witchcraft, which has relegated the once supreme Horned God to the ritual presence of a billy-goat. (So much for male superiority!)

But, as I shall presently shew, Diana was not forgotten farther West, though her name appears in slightly different form; and I shall also shew that her daughter, Aradia, was not only not ignored in the West, but, more, I shall indicate that Aradia's name originated there.



*The enduring faith: The great Horned God of Celtic Fertility - Cernunnos he was called by the Gauls. This head from Heidelberg (after Jacobsthal) is unusual in that it shews Cernunnos with the 'third eye' recently found on a Mayan statue of a god uncovered in the jungles of Yucatan. The 'third eye" depicted here is so reminiscent of the Celtic 'magical' shamrock that one may hardly suppose there to be no link.*

## 5 - The Emergence Of The Enemy

Christianity, in common with a multitude of new religions, or old religions with new faces, emerged in the ferment of emotional excitement which had involved all the world's peoples in the years immediately preceding the Christian Era. That there was an unusual celestial phenomenon to catch men's attention and to inspire them with disturbing thoughts is not denied; many maintain that the Star which brought the Wise Men to Jerusalem was a nova - it is accurately dated in Chinese records; and, if this sudden brightness in the sky was indeed a nova, then its magnitude must have been of a literally shocking kind.

But, whatever the cause, men were gravely disturbed in the first years of the Roman Empire, and a rumour was current in many strata of society and through many different religious bodies that some sort of Saviour of Mankind might be confidently expected (or, for the wicked, as confidently feared). It was this rumour which explains the quick success, not only of Christianity within the first century of its foundation, but of many other creeds - most gone, save from histories. Of these other creeds, those of Mithras and of the Gnostics, Manichaeans and Zoroastrians were the most important; of them, only the Zoroastrians survive to this day.

It has often been commented upon - and never explained -that the witches, especially of the time of the witch-trials, gave the text of spells and invocations which seemed to be addressed, either wholly or in important part, to the God both of the Old Testament and the New.

**To the Spirit**

'... now, therefore, in the Name and by the power and dignity of the Omnipotent and Immortal Lord, God of Hosts, Jehovah, Tetragrammaton, (1) I do...'

Other spells and invocations - and by far the more common - invoke, sometimes the Gods both of the Old and New dispensations, sometimes the Christian God only. The Virgin Mary and the lesser Saints are often associated with the Christian Redeemer in the ritual, as are the Eucharist (often using the actual consecrated bread) and other Sacraments of the Christian Church.

Peter Haining expresses a widespread point of view when he writes (in his The Warlock's Book):

Scholars have noted how persistently the name of God - the Christian God - is employed in witchcraft and Black Magic rituals. They are agreed that, because He was believed to be the most powerful of all deities, any command given in His name could not be ignored by inferior spirits. Those who dabbled with the powers of darkness also considered His name to be a protection against danger from any entities that might be evoked. It could further be argued that the Black Magician not wholly dedicated to evil was also trying to build up store in both, heaven and hell!

This is all true enough, so far as it goes. The trouble is that this passage, like most of the others written from the same point of view, does not go far enough. I propose now to take the commentary a great deal farther and make a suggestion that neither witch nor witch-hunter has yet, to my knowledge, put forward.

Yet this suggestion explains so much otherwise inexplicable that I cannot understand how at least one person of the past failed to put it forward. The silence of the witches on the subject may be explained by an honourable desire to preserve secrets, yet I cannot accept that this is the true reason for the unbroken silence, over the centuries, on the subject that I am about to discuss.

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[1] Tetragrammaton is Greek for 'four letter (word)'. When writing the name of God in Hebrew, only the consonants were written, never the vowel-points, the true pronunciation of the Sacred Name being a verbally transmitted secret of the Hebrew priests. Consequently, the four Hebrew consonants of the Name -yod, he, vau, he - 'J.H.V.H.' -were known as 'The Four Letters', Tetragrammaton. To add the last to 'Jehovah' - the Name vocalised by guesswork - is simply to be tautological.

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The simplest and most satisfying reason for the witches' constant mention of Jesus Christ is that, as soon as Christ's teaching - and, even more, the reported details of His life - were made available beyond the narrow confines of an Israel-based and relatively small sect, the members of the ancient Fertility Cult in its purest form instantly believed that they had recognised in Jesus Christ a perfect theophany of their own eternal God.

This theory is put forward in no disrespectful sense - far from it. If the reader will forget his perhaps strongly held religious prejudices, and try to consider the persona of Jesus Christ from the point of view of a devout member of the Fertility Cult in, say, the first century after the Crucifixion, that reader will surely see why it would seem to such a member of the Cult that Christ, in His words and life, expressed the very highest principles of the Cult.

*The Agape, feast of brotherly love: The agape or 'love-feast' of primitive and still unsophisticated*

*Christianity, as depicted in a catacomb fresco of the second century. The ceremony, it should be noted, is a sellisternium, not a lectisternium; that is, the guests are seated in chairs, not reclining on lecti. As the sellisternia amongst the 'pagan' Romans were strictly private banquets for women, the early Christians' agapai were obviously 'woman-orientated'. The Latin inscriptions read (left of picture): IRENE DA CALDA (correctly, Irene da calda(m)) -'Peace: give me hot (water)'; and (right of picture) AGAPE MISCE ME - 'Love: mix me (wine and water)'. The Romans never drank wine unmixed with water.*

For consider. Christ, after His childhood, had been apprenticed to an honest trade. He was not directly associated, in His work, with the land; but He was a village carpenter, working with the timber that He himself had taken from the living tree. He was not a man of the city. But as soon as He embarked on His mission of teaching, He forgot even His carpentry and joinery, and, as His parables shew, conceived His ideas strictly in terms of agricultural and pastoral - true Old Fertility -images.

He was, the Fertility Cult members marvelled, not only a fellow-member, but one whose every action affirmed his affinity with their primitive but rational beliefs. In His actions -especially those of a magical ('miraculous') nature - He shewed himself to be a charitable and powerful Spirit of Plenty. For those who followed Him and heard His words, He had freely-offered gifts: He made wine out of water; He caused the sea to 'be fruitful and multiply', so that the nets of His disciples broke under the strain of a record - and unprecedentedly bounteous - sea-harvest. He made a few fishes and a few loaves so to reproduce themselves as to be able to feed an immense multitude come to hear Him preach, with a wealth of homely countrymen's tropes and analogies, the simple and soul-supporting facts of life.

When the four Gospels - redactions of the mysterious and now lost 'Q' (2) - were available to circles outside those purely Christian, members of the Fertility Cult were even more strongly convinced that, in Jesus Christ, they had to acknowledge one of their Masters.

Not only was His death foreshadowed, announced, and willingly (though not painlessly or uncomplainingly) accepted; the pattern of that Sacrifice belonged, in all its details, to the most ancient sacrificial patterns of the Cult.

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[2] 'Q' is the hypothetical master-Gospel - hypothetical since its existence has so far been only deduced; no copy or part of a copy having yet been found. It is the master-Gospel from which, it is supposed, the four canonical Gospels have been derived.

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*Mediaeval agape: By the thirteenth century the strongly Fertility-flavoured early Christian agape has reverted, with the rule of non-Christian English kings, to a completely and openly 'pagan' affair. This illustration of a 'mixed' banquet from an early thirteenth-century MS shews the unmistakably Fertility character of both celebration and participants. The star-shaped 'trencher' of bread and the vine-crowned feasters should be noted. Note also the ritual cap of the diner on the extreme left of the picture: compare the dentate pattern on his cap with that on the cap of the Great Mother from the Pazirik mound. (See Plate 1)*

Then again, the obvious astrological bias in editing the New Testament - a bias most obvious in the Gospel of Matthew -would have had a strong and esoteric appeal for all Cult members, with whom astrology was an essential constituent of their faith. Whatever later ages may have decided to think of the story of the Annunciation, the early compilers and editors of the New Testament were in no doubt of the astrological significance of the Nativity episode.

In ancient Jewish astrological lore, Gabriel (who, in the Gospel, announces the forthcoming birth of Christ to the Virgin Mary) is the angel who governs the Moon; and Virgo, the Virgin, represents the Moon-Goddess in the original six-sign zodiac of the ancient Babylonians.

It is clear, therefore, that the astrological bias in the editing of the New Testament would definitely equate the Virgin Mary with the Moon (Goddess) since it is Gabriel, the Angel of the Moon, who is the spirit chosen to announce the tidings to Mary. The tidings themselves are significantly worded, though it is only in Luke that the angel speaks to Mary; Matthew makes Gabriel speak to Joseph, rather than Mary; and Luke and John omit the episode altogether.

What the angel Gabriel said was this: 'Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women ... Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found favour with God. And behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS.'

And when Mary asked how this could be, 'seeing I know not a man'?, Gabriel explained: 'The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.'

To the members of the Fertility Cult, this promise, with its fundamental linking of natural reproduction

with the holiness of 'the thing which shall be born' of Mary, was fully in the tradition of their religious sentiments and beliefs. They had no difficulty in accepting Christ as a manifestation of their God, and they began to worship Him, the more fervently as they perceived - what only the most naive of then and now could deny - that political ambition and the greed for power and wealth had almost entirely 'de-Christianised' the Christianity of Christ. Wherever the Gospel story came, Christ represented to the supporters of the undefiled Fertility Cult the bitter and outspoken opponent of that corruption which was overtaking the Cult itself in the great cities growing up within the Roman Empire.

Christ, with such Fertility themes as the Parable of the Sower, of the Vineyard, the Prodigal Son, the Good Shepherd; with His openly expressed contempt and hatred for the city men, the parasites who battened on the good earth and on the men who helped to make it fruitful; Christ Who whipped the money-changers from the Temple, and Who said how nearly impossible it was for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven - to return, in other words, to the simple faith of Fertility; this was the Christ Who became and remained one of the great Gods of the Witches.

There is a curious name which occurs in the evidence given at the witch-trials of, especially, the late sixteenth century: Christsonday. (3) At Aberdeen, 1596-7, Andro Man 'confessis that Crystsunday cum to hym in liknes of ane fair angell, and clad in quhyt claythis'. 'Siclyk, thow affermis that the Quene of Elphen hes a grip of all the craft, bot Christsonday is the gudeman, and hes all power under God ...':'... all thay quha convenis with thame kissis Christsonday and the Quene of Elphenis airss.'

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[3] The variant spellings of this name - Christsonday, Christsunday and Chrystsunday - are due simply to the fact that late sixteenth century clerks of record permitted themselves considerable licence in rendering all words, especially proper nouns, even within a single paragraph.

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*The Good Shepherd: The Good Shepherd must have been that aspect of Christ of most appeal to members of the Old Religion. This simple representation comes from a fresco on a ceiling in the so-called 'Crypt of St. Caecilia' in the catacombs of Rome. It dates from either the second or third century AD. Note reversed 'Chi-Rho'!*

Whence came this curious word? Margaret Murray, with, however, no strong conviction apparent in her suggestion, asks if the strange word may not have been an ignorant 'interpretation' of the Latin phrase, Christus filius Dei: 'Christ ,Son of-God'. Dr Murray ingeniously - but I think wrongly - proposes that this phrase was mis-read as 'Christ's Son, "Dei"', 'Dei' ('Day') now being read as the name of 'Christ's son'. We shall pass over the difficulty of reconciling such a person, real or imaginary, as 'Christ's Son' with such a theophany as that reported by Andro Man, who saw 'Christsonday... in likeness of a staig', or with a ceremony in which the faithful 'kissis Christsonday ... airss', and ask ourselves if we may not find a more acceptable etymology for this exceedingly curious name, 'Christsunday'.

Now, in the trial of Andro Man, to whose evidence we owe most of what we know about Christsunday, the libel - as Scots law calls the written evidence against the accused - mentions that 'Thou confesses that the devil thy master, whom thou terms Christsunday, and supposes to be an angel and God's godson - albeit he has a thraw by God (4) - is raised by speaking of the word Benedicite.' (5)

Now, noting that Benedicite (Latin for 'Give your blessing to me/him/us/them') has developed from an

original Basque phenxatze'' 'to think, to ponder' ('Consider well, brethren and sisters ...'), we see that a Basque origin for the '-Sunday' of 'Christsunday' is easily suggested.

Actually, the Basque ending is not 'sunday' but '-unday' -the Basque ande'e (andere) 'miss, lady, mistress''. And 'Christsonday' or 'Christsunday', then, is, in fact, 'Christ's ande'e' -not Christ's Mother or Christ's wife, but Christ's female aspect, as, in Trinitarian doctrine, the Father, Son and Holy Ghost are all aspects of the same Triune divinity.

The interpretation of this mysterious word, Christsunday, has achieved something of the first importance: the proof that the Heavenly Androgyne - the hermaphrodite Artemis (Diana), the hermaphrodite Freya (Frigga) and, indeed, Hermaphroditus himself (fusion of himself and the nymph, Salmacis) - had not been banished from the Old Religion, as it had been banished from official Christianity. Andro Man's evidence with regard to 'Christsonday's' 'family' relationship to God is instructive - 'God's godson', which phrase seems to be both tautology and a play on words.

But if there was an aspect of Christ which was hermaphrodite, in the opinion of the Old Religion, the Greek version of John xiii. 23, with its disturbing implications for modern orthodox Christians, would have been perfectly comprehensible to the Old Religionists. They would also have understood what Christ must have meant when (and it has shocked many since) Christ rebuked His Mother for seeking to divert Him from his task by some trivial domestic question: 'Woman, what have I to do with thee?'

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[4] 'Has a thraw by God' = 'Has quarrelled with God'.

[5] The spelling of this passage has been modernised.

[6] Itself derived, of course, from Latin pensare, 'to ponder'.

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But the Old Religionists would see clearly that Christ had not said that to His Mother - he would hardly have addressed her as 'Woman' - but before His Mother; so that she, as well as the twelve disciples (making a coven of thirteen, with Christ as their Grandmaster and Incarnate God) could hear and comprehend. 'Woman, what have I to do with thee? - the female principle - seeing that, in Me, are fused indissolubly the two Great Principles of Life. I am both Male and Female; the Heavenly Androgyne; the Self-fertilising, Self-generating source of material and spiritual existence.'

When, perverted by the assured promise of wealth and power, organised Christianity abandoned the simple Fertility-based and Fertility-reverencing Faith of its Founder, the Old Religion did not abandon either its respect for, or its belief in, Christ. The Old Religion, as far as Christ was concerned - and as far also as the Christianity of Christ was concerned - remained obstinately and perhaps even bitterly (not so much reactionary as) fundamentalist. It could not - and did not, ever - follow already corrupt official Christianity, when its skilled and conscienceless managers stepped into the positions, and inherited the wealth accumulated over a thousand years of official Paganism (not the correct word, but

usage has made it so).

Totalitarian in outlook, the Rome-based Christian Church would not - and, indeed, could not - tolerate any religious rivalry; the weakness of all totalitarian disciplines and social-economies is that they cannot survive in the presence of a liberal opposition, with the result that the opposition may survive, develop and work only 'underground'.

There was to come a time when all the highly-organised forces of the Church's totalitarian ruthlessness were to be directed towards the 'extirpation' (the Totalitarians' favourite word) (7) of the Old Religion, and - helped by the fact that the growth of cities and of the merchant-class had divorced many from the land (and thus from the Fertility Faith) - the Totalitarians' success was almost as total as they would have wished.

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[7] Because this Latin word means 'to pluck out by the root', it expresses the totalitarians' 'total' ambition perfectly. That is why it is one of their favourite words.

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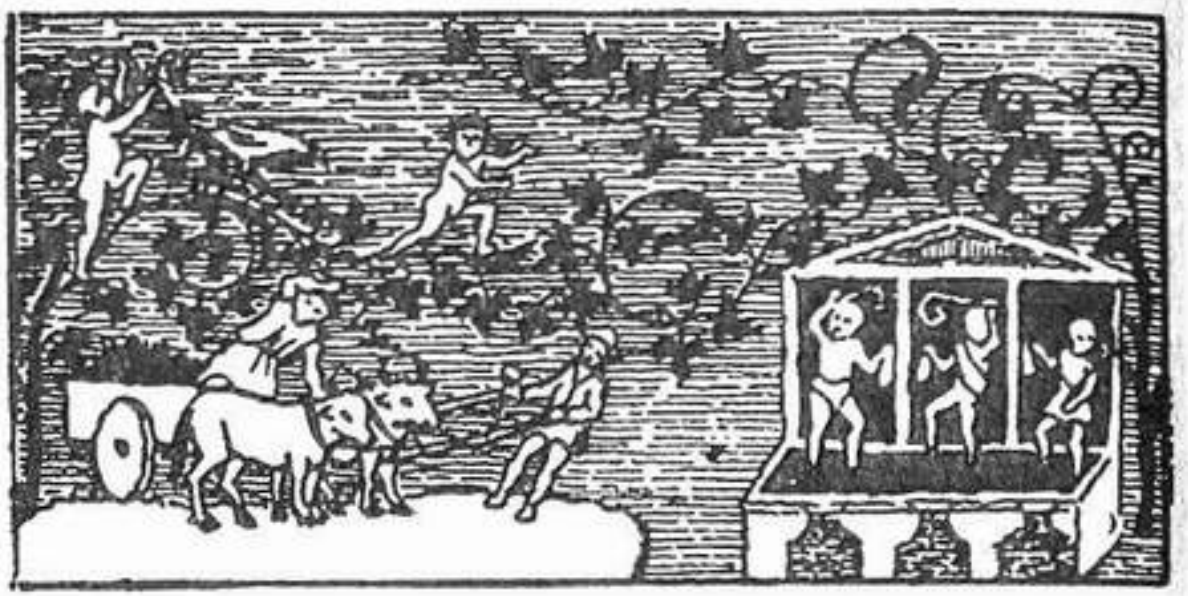
To affirm that 'tyranny never succeeds' is to ignore one of the most obvious truths of history. It not only often succeeds; tyranny is one of the most consistently successful forces in human affairs.



*The True Vine: The theme of 'The True Vine' persisted even into a time when Christianity had abandoned its primitive ideals. By the beginning of the fourth century, when this mosaic was executed for the church of St Constantine, Rome, this truly Fertility theme of the grape-gathering and the vintage must have been regarded as something of an archaism by a Church about to be promoted to monopolistic power by Constantine the Great.*

But before we return to the impending struggle between the Old Religion and a Christian Church

suddenly liberated from 'inferior citizen' status and endowed with the greater part of the Roman Empire's wealth, let us look at the beginnings of a religious development which was to provide the Church with a most powerful antagonist more than a thousand years later, and to create a Cult which, unlike that of the Old Religion, would not be extirpated - even though gravely weakened - by the Roman Church's 'Hounds of God'.

This was Diabolism, a product of, and a development out of, the Fertility Cult; a natural evolutionary form of belief, to which the adjective 'inevitable' may be given, providing that the special 'socio-economic-philosophical circumstances were present to give Diabolism its origin in the already well-established and essentially non-Diabolic Fertility Faith.

One of the incidents in the story of Christ which must have made a strong appeal to the Old Religionists, and helped to convince them of Christ's adherence to, and (reincarnated) leadership of, their Cult, was the post-Crucifixion journey out of the world - synopsized into a few words in the Creed: 'He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into Hell, and rose again the third day.' This, to the members of the Fertility Cult, was the exact expression of one of their fundamental beliefs - and if we may accept the assurances of the late Dr Gardner, it is what those of the Old Religion still believe today.

It is no argument against the truth of any belief that 'people used to believe this five thousand years ago'. Nor need a devout Christian hesitate to recite the Creed, even knowing that, long, long ago, Ishtar, they believed, went down into the Land of No Return; as others had done before Her, and others were to do after she had visited the place of shadows and had come back.

When she descended into Hell - to use the English of the Authorised Version - life went, as it were, into stasis:

Since the Lady Ishtar descended into the Land of No Return,
The bull does not spring upon the cow,
The ass does not bow over the jennet,
No more man bows over woman,
The man sleeps in his chamber,
The woman sleeps alone.

Ishtar seeking Tammuz, Isis seeking Osiris, Ceres seeking her daughter Proserpine, carried off to the Lower World by Pluto - these are all the poetic, romantic expressions of what seemed a fact to early peoples: that the crops spring up from the earth in the beginning of the year, and 'return to the earth' in the year's end. The variant on this ancient theme is to be found in the legend of Ceres and Proserpine, where the sought one returns only for half a year. This version of the legend must have originated in a region where the year is pretty evenly divided between fallow and fertile.

The honest realisation, by all ancient peoples, that He Who governs the pattern of this world must have the dual function of the Life-Giver and the Life-taker presented the God with two complementary aspects, which made Him at once the Lord of the living and the Lord of the dead.

In his life-giving aspect, He was the fertiliser of women and all female things, the bestower of reproductive power on men and all male things. In His life-giving aspect, he made the plants and trees yield of their fruit; the seas shoal with fish. To men looking for His bounty, the God in this aspect must have seemed 'good'. In that other aspect, when He chilled and killed the earth, so that few things - and none of them edible -grew; when the bull no longer sprang upon the cow, the ass no longer covered the jennet; when the trees were stripped of their leaves, and the game hid within its winter holes; the God must have seemed 'bad'.

It was easier then - as it has been too often found easier since - not to try to reconcile the 'good' and 'bad' aspects of one Deity, at once all-provident and all-demanding; but to assume a dual Divine Management of the universe; to assume that what is good for Man comes from the loving-kindness of a 'good' God; what is bad from the malign impulses of a 'bad'. Manichaeism - to give a fairly modern name to wrong-thinking perhaps as old as thinking Man - is an error into which all mankind must have a tendency to slip. And beyond Manichaeism - the belief in a Dual Direction of destiny - lies the far more dangerous error that the dominant partner in this Good-Evil partnership is ... Evil.

Again we have an error into which it is no difficult matter to find oneself slipping. We remember the 'bad' things which have happened to us, simply because we do not notice the 'good'. We take 'good' so much for granted that it is rarely that anything but the 'bad' captures our self-pitying attention. And so we may, if we are not careful of our souls' health, tend to believe the world managed by evil influences, when (despite the Hounds of God, the foul lawyers who ministered to the greed of Henry VIII, the Godless Williams - alias Cromwell - and his life-hating Roundheads, Lenin and his malignant apes, Hitler and his fellow-diabolists) the world is still more good than evil.

Rome, in its origins, was a community of staunchly independent farmers, who, on the approach of an enemy, would willingly lay down their hoe and sickle, and take up sword and spear.

From these simple, humble beginnings, the Romans built up the world's first great empire; a federal state which lasted, as a political entity, from 753 BC to AD 1461 - a span of over two thousand years, with a powerful 'influential' extension beyond mere political power whose authority is still vigorously active even yet.

Rome never forgot its peasant and yeoman origins; and the terms which entered the Latin tongue during those simple formative years became an inalienable part of the language. Today, when the British has followed the Roman into the limbo of vanished empires, many of the terms that we employ to describe legal and commercial probity come, not merely from the Latin tongue, but from the far-off thinking of the Latin and Roman farmer.

We 'stipulate' a condition, because, in the Forum, Roman farmers broke a straw, stipula, as a sign of faith in the unwritten contract. We talk of 'promulgating' this Act, that reform; forgetting, most of us, that to pro-mulgate is to squeeze milk, mulgum, from the udder of the cow. We have all heard that pecunia, 'wealth', came originally from pecus, 'cattle', as English 'fee' came from Anglo-Saxon feoh, 'money, property', from an earlier meaning, 'cattle'. Pax, whence English 'peace', comes from a root which originally meant 'to mark out a boundary' - and thus to ensure peace amongst quarrelling neighbours. And so on.

The religious ideas of this rustic period were equally obstinate in survival, and 'pure' Roman religion, up to the end of official 'Paganism', and, indeed, far beyond it in time, was a religion of the Fertility Cult group.

Two causes came to modify Roman 'pagan' faith, and to ensure the introduction and growth of that heretical, darker face of Fertility. The first was the gradual domination of Roman and Italian sentiment by the million-and-a-half immigrants - mostly slaves who had been captured in war; and mostly Orientals - who were imported into the capital of the world over a period of little more than a century.

Influential even when still enslaved; trusted by the ruling class, up to the Emperors, because the slaves were trusted by no one else; the slave or ex-slave population of Italy, especially of Rome, had it, as they say, 'both ways'.

Numerically superior to the native Romans in numbers, they yet enjoyed the advantages of that organisational, self-serving capacity that 'depressed minorities' will always exhibit The slaves were neither a minority nor a 'depressed minority', but they behaved as though they were - and profited as though they were. Once freed, they were, in many cases, hardly less wealthy or influential than they had been as slaves; the freedman, C. Caelius Isidorus (his cognomen means 'Gift of Isis', so that he may have been an Egyptian) bequeathed 4,116 slaves to his heirs - perhaps a fifth of what the Emperor possessed.

With all these exotic elements, who exhibited the same capacity for chasing the fast aureus or turning a dishonest sestertium as do their spiritual heirs, the 'oppressed minorities' and 'displaced persons' of today, the fancy religions entered, with all the 'fringe benefits' that such religions offered and offer: the fortune telling, the spell casting, the ritual cursing of enemies -

adiuro te demon quicunque es et demando tibi ex anc ora ex anc die ex oc momenta ut equos prasini et albi crudes occidas, et agitatore Clarum et Felice et Primulum et Romanum occidas collida neque spiritum illis lerinquas.

'I adjure thee, Demon, whosoever though mayst be, and I demand of thee that from this hour, this day, this moment, thou afflict and kill the horses of the Green and White team, and kill and batter the drivers Clarus and Felix and Primulus and Romanus, and leave no breath of life in them.' (Graffito from a wall in Pompeii.)

Titus Egnatius Tyranus defictus est. Publius Cicereius Felix defictus est. 'Titus Egnatius Tyranus is hereby solemnly cursed. Likewise Publius Cicereius Felix.' (On a roughly-cut piece of lead, from Roman London.)

The Pompeian graffito, with its faulty spelling - ignoring of initial h in such words as hora and hoc; mismanagement and confusion of declensional cases; ignorant metathesis - lerinquas for relinquas — suggest an imperfect acquaintance with Latin, and thus a non-Italian origin. One imagines some exotic soothsaying demon-handler, a sort of Pompeian predecessor of the lady fortune-teller, of any seaside resort - but (in the Pompeian milieu) much more imaginative and a great deal more dangerous.

And, along with the soothsaying and spell-casting and misfortune-averting, go those other standbys of the occult con-man: the love-philtres, the abortifacients, the poisons for a business rival, a wearisome wife, a too-long-living wealthy father.

We have the description of such a practitioner of magic in Apuleius's The Golden Ass: perhaps the first clear description of what happened when Dualism began to corrupt the Old Religion - or, at least, many members of it - by exalting the Death aspect of the Godhead at the expense of the Life aspect. God controls both Life and Death - God, under whatever name we know Him. But to see Him only as the Master of Death, the Guardian of the Portals of Non-being ... that is to court evil, and to become, eventually, as evil as the error which can seduce Man away from Him who is not only the Most High and Living God but also - and importantly, vitally also — the God of the Living, of Life.

Why this concentration upon the Death aspect of God is wrong - is (in every sense of the word) evil - is because no one who loved and respected Life could see God save as the master of creation, and the guardian of Life's continuity. The worshippers of God in - if one like to think of it so - His 'killing aspect' are wrong, and evilly wrong, because they are Anti-Life. In many of its actions, the Roman Church has been wrong; it was never more right than when it condemned Manichaeism as a - literally - diabolical heresy.

The justification for thus condemning Manichaeism (or Dualism by any other name) is supplied by the inherent instability of the average human mind when faced with two equal and opposite choices. If the two Aspects of the Godhead be separated into the White and the Black, into the Giving and the Taking, into what is (but ought never to be) called 'Good' and 'Evil', then few minds indeed will retain their balance as they walk the tightrope between the two choices over the howling pit of Chaos and Old Night. Just as the Coriolis Effect swings us towards the Equator, no matter how hard we strive to walk in a straight line, so, in human experience, there seems to be a Coriolis Effect of the less material world, to swing us towards the, darker of the two Aspects. That is why the two Aspects making up the totality of Omnipotence should not, for the sake of Man's sanity, ever be divided.

In the cities of the Roman Empire, the dangerous division was already an accomplished fact.

From the beginning of his urban civilisation, Man saw matters clearly enough to realise that, in organising his society into a socio-economic unit based on a city, he had already become, or was inevitably condemning himself to become, Man of a fundamentally different type from that Man who still roamed the steppes, hunted in the woods, tilled the open land (open because laboriously cleared by the tiller), and netted food from the sea.

The semantic content of those many words relating to the concept of the City will sufficiently indicate that mankind has never been in any doubt of the price extorted from Man for the doubtful privilege of living in a city-based society. Such words as economy, in both its senses: (managing an - oikos, 'house, abode, dwelling') should be compared with such words as civic, political, politics, politician; the first from the Latin, the rest from the Greek, word for 'city'. Men who gathered for the first time in cities, for both protection and the advantages of centralised administration, must have had depressing forebodings of the price which was to be asked; not otherwise could such words as political, politics and politician have so quickly acquired, and so very long retained, their pejorative meanings.

The one important difference between the City Man and the Country Man - one, because it is the master-difference from which all later differences, important or not, have developed -is that the City Man soon becomes separated from the sources of his food; and so, within a very short time, separates himself, mentally no less than physically, from the earth which feeds him. The Country Man may never, because of his daily association with the soil, forget the intimate, the truly vital, connection between the Good Earth and the maintenance of life on this planet.

In an article that I wrote on the Roman Army, as it was at the time when the Western Empire had collapsed and the Eastern Empire was preparing to take over the responsibility for maintaining, from Constantinople, the threatened Romanitas of the tottering but salvageable Empire, I used a somewhat rare word. To try to capture some of the now half-Oriental baroque of the Byzantine manner, I employed evaginate, based on a Latin verb, evagino, to be found in the legal code drawn up by the Eastern Emperor, Justinian (builder of the cathedral of St Sophia in Constantinople). A friend - younger than I - asked me to explain to him the meaning of 'evaginate'.

'To draw a sword from its scabbard; to unsheath it: E, "from"; vagina, "sheath, scabbard" - any sort of sheath, by the way. Anything which wraps around or encloses. Our specialised meaning hadn't then attached to the word, any more than it has in French, where gaine, directly derived from the Latin vagina, means a sheath, scabbard, case, even an elastic corset. Originally, the word means "something empty". "Empty" is vacuus, vacua, in Latin. Vagina also means the sheath of an ear of corn; you know, the hull, the husk ....'

But my friend didn't know. He'd seen grain growing in a beer ad; had seen the wind flattening the ears of corn as he'd driven down a motorway, for one unimportant geographical point to another. He had never plucked an ear of corn, 'Don't remember ever actually seeing the stuff ... close up, I mean ....'

The meat and fish for his family now came from the deepfreeze; his children had never eaten a kipper so as to have to deal with head and fins and skin and spine; kippers today, he condescendingly informed me, were sold, filleted, in a transparent bag, sealed. 'All you've got to do is to put them - still in the bag, sealed - into boiling hot water. No smell. Just the job for flats. Houses, if it comes to that. No mess. No bones. Nothing to stink up the dustbin. No waste. Eat up every scrap you pay for. Marvellous ....'

I asked him more. No, his wife wouldn't think of gutting a fish ('Nasty, messy job ...'). Doubt if she'd know how. And, anyway, why bother? People did it for you, these days ....

The divorce between this amiable young man and the material sources of his physical, mental and spiritual energy was complete; he had come a long way from the city-mind of Sumeria, from whose cities one might at least see the crops greening the rich alluvial plain of Sumer. Nor, I think, did the Egyptians ever forget - no matter what the size of their great cities - the direct connection between their food and the life-giving Nile.

But, today, the city has forgotten whence conies the food that it eats in ever greater quantities; and already, by 57 BC, when Pompey, taking over the annona (public food distribution system), reckoned that he had to find for no fewer than 486,000 people, Rome, though surrounded by the rural territory

helping to supply the city (ager Romanus) must already have blurred its consciousness of where the food originated. By the very beginning of the Christian era, when the figures for corn imports from Egypt and Africa, as supplied by Aurelius Victor and Josephus, indicate a Roman population of not fewer than 1,000,000, the mental link between the Roman and his food-sources must have been very tenuous indeed.

*Christian Orphism: This wall-painting from a 2nd c. Roman catacomb clearly demonstrates, not merely the 'oecumenical' and 'eclectic character of early Christianity, but its established character as yet another 'panzootic' faith which would have made a strong appeal to the as-yet-uncorrupted Old Religion. Orpheus, as a 'charmer of animals, was a true Fertility figure, though rather a 'hero' than a god.*

No Fertility Religion may flourish in a city, which soon forgets the mechanism of growth and reproduction; the perpetual cycle of sowing and harvest; of spring to new life and fading to inevitable death. City-dwellers know what causes their own children to be born; they forget the physiological affinities between themselves and the beasts whose meat they devour. Where Fertility rites continued to be practised in the bursting-at-the-seams cities of the post-Republican Roman world, they were self-

conscious archaisms; or curiously perverted forms of the true Old Religion.

And, with the tens of thousands pouring into Rome - to the 'traditional' Syrians, Israelites, Greeks, Chaldaeans, Baby Ionians, Pergamites, Bithynians, Egyptians, and so on, were now added Orientals from even farther East: from Arabia, India, 'Malaysia' and hither China, as Augustus, by sea and land, opened up the trade-routes of the Far East - came the fancy faiths, the novelty-religions, with their sharp con-men-missionaries and lonely-women-pleasing priests.

In my book, The London That Was Rome, (8) I traced no fewer than nineteen gods and goddesses - in addition to the ten or so already identified by traditional archaeology - having temples in London; some of the divinities, such as Artemis and Mars, had several temples, though, in the case of Mars, each temple was built, it seems, to honour a different 'aspect' of the god.

That makes a total of some thirty divinities - of whom we know — worshipped in Londinium; if we add to these the others whose cults have been identified in places elsewhere in Britain, we arrive at a total of not far off fifty, many of them local divinities or gods imported by troops coming from abroad without touching at London. To such troops belonged the Baghdadis, Damascenes, Palmyrenes and other Middle Easterns who were mostly recruited in Syria and other Levantine lands, and sent to Newcastle-on-Tyne, from which the recruits for the British Legion, based on the Tigris and Euphrates, left for their Middle Eastern headquarters. (9)

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[8] London: George Allen & Unwin, 1971.

[9] Two Middle Eastern units based on northern Britain were a battalion of Syrian archers, the Cohors I Hamiorum Sagittariorum and an irregular infantry unit, the Numerus Barcariorum Tigrisiensium, recruited from the Tigris area, and stationed at South Shields.

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Roman military activity was always accompanied by an allied commercial activity - 'Trade follows the Flag!' On the great wall that Hadrian built from the east to the west of Britain, a Palmyrene merchant named Barates had his store; he had acquired a licence to supply the legionary troops - not the first, and by no means the last Semitic trader to hunt up business so far afield.

Palmyra, an oasis on the camel-track between Syria and Palestine, had grown from lowly beginnings associated with the domestication of the camel as a beast of burden in the twelfth century BC, to a position of such commerce-based wealth and power that for a short time, Palmyra was able to challenge the might of Rome herself. However, in AD 272, Palmyra surrendered to the legions, and, after a revolt, was destroyed. Rebuilt, it regained little of its former glory.

Barates came from Palmyra at a time when it was still one of the great commercial centres of the Middle East; and, having made his money supplying the officers and 'squaddies' of the legionary troops with those 'extras' not included in the ration, Barates married. His wife was his freed slave-girl,

Regina ('My Queen'), and, by one of those freaks of survival, the tombstone that Barates erected to his mourned Regina was found in South Shields (probably the least Roman place that I have ever shudderingly seen!), and may now be examined in the Free Library of that unlovely town. Written in both the beautiful Palmyrene (Semitic) and the Latin monumental script, and cut by a master-mason, the Latin part of the bilingual inscription reads:

D[is] M[anibusl/Regina liberta et conjuge [for coniux] Barates Palmyrenus (10) natione Cattvallauna an[nis] XXX To the Gods of the Underworld [This stone commemorates] Regina, freed slave and wife of Barates, (11) the Palmyrene. [She was] of the tribe of the Catuvellauni. [She lived] 30 years.

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[10] Should be 'Barates Palmyreni' - but the whole inscription is in the doggiest of dog-Latin. As the present physical type of Tyneside shews, the Celts were drained off and replaced by Middle Easterns. Most were only imperfectly acquainted with Latin, as the botched Latin of the Barates inscription shews.

[11] If thirty-year-old Regina left sons to her loving (and, being Syrian, philoprogenitive) Barates, it may be from them that the common North Country name of Barren (Barratt) has descended to our own times.

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Regina, then, was British, member of the Catuvellauni, a Celtic tribe whose capital was either London or St Albans, and whose king, Cassivellaunus, was second only to Boadicea in his opposition to the Claudian legions of AD 43. So that, under the Roman occupation, the British were being enslaved in their own country - a fact to be noted when accounting for the speed with which the Celts reverted to their ancient tribal organisation on the departure of the Eagles.

Now, if Barates came from Palmyra, which god or gods did he bring with him to the windy bleakness of the Wall? If he came from the matriarchally Semitic land behind the Fertile Crescent, he probably brought a goddess or goddesses with him: Ashtoreth, the Semitic Venus, perhaps - whose name so closely resembles that of the goddess Adraste, whom, in the momentary pause before battle, Boadicea invoked after having let the magical hare scamper Legionwards. Or Barates may have brought with him - a single object of devotion, or a companion for other divinities of his worship - one of those darker aspects of the Life Principle: perhaps even the Great Mother herself.

I mention the odyssey of the Semitic merchant Barates here, to shew, through one unimportant man's wanderings - two thousand miles by Mediterranean merchant-ship or in a two-wheeled carpentum or four-wheeled carrus along the Roman roads - gods could pass as freely from the eastern boundaries of the Empire to the western. And what Barates was doing, tens of thousands of others, soldiers and merchants, officials and state-surveyors (no missionaries, mark you; that was left to a later day) were doing.

In its origins, Christianity, still profoundly influenced by, and selflessly modelling its sentiments and

conduct upon, the noble example of its Founder, remained for decades a religion as 'secret', as 'closed', as Mithraism and other contemporary faiths were to remain until their extinction. Not until after the Church had organised itself internally 'on a military foundation', with a special language based on the terms in use amongst the Roman soldiery (thus anticipating the practice of the Salvation Army eighteen centuries later), did it cautiously open its doors to the 'pagan' (the Roman squaddy's slang term for 'civvy'), and admit him to its secrets.

In considering the strange history of the Roman Church it should always be borne in mind that, notwithstanding its later oecumenical character, it began as a 'foreign' religion, whose membership, even in Rome - particularly in Rome -was almost completely composed of 'foreign' elements. It was what we should call today 'a religion of the Left'; a proletarian faith preached to the down-trodden, the enslaved, the tyrannised. Affirming the evil, not only of riches but, worse, of rich men; submitting with hardly-concealed reluctance and open ill-grace to Governmental rule; promising a Kingdom not of this world; it is not difficult to see why the early Christians should have seemed to the Romans of the Empire ill-conditioned anarchists who were better out of the way.

In those days of oppression; for, though the Christians openly proclaimed sentiments invited oppression, there is no doubt of the historical reality of the persecutions; they were not so far from the simple faith of the Old Religion. They can hardly, in those formative times, have queried too closely the teachings of the Master; so that, when the time came for them to edit the sacred writings according to their new thinking, they could hardly excise sentiments sanctified by centuries of reverence. The bucolic images, so reminiscent of the Old Religion - 'I am the Good Shepherd', 'I am the True Vine' - had to remain; though, paradoxically, the brain-washers and publicity-managers of the new Church raised the status of the simple Shepherd God of Palestine to a triple-crowned Emperor of the Universe. In this, they were but causing Christ's image to reflect the strange changes which were overtaking more earthly emperors.

Under the influence of the now completely Orientalised Greeks who, their country and its colonies deprived of their independence by Rome, took a fearful revenge by plundering every social class of that conquering Empire upon which the vampire Greek had come to batten, the ancient Roman virtues of gravitas, pietas, honestas, vanished.

Greek influence and supple persuasiveness it was which caused the Emperors to dress and comport themselves as the divinities that their coins and monumental inscriptions said that they were. Gradually - and at no very slow rate - the Emperor, by dress and ritual and carefully-arranged theatrical showmanship (all managed by Greeks - often slaves), affected to represent, in his Divine Person, that Over-God - Zeus or Iuppiter - who, ruling all lesser gods and goddesses, began to bring the foreshadowings of a true monotheism to Roman state religion, a development which was to prove greatly to the advantage of the Church of Rome when the time for its historic take-over of Roman state religion came due.

The presence of Christians in Rome in the years immediately following the Crucifixion is easily explained by the presence of a colony of Jews, settled there by the interest of Julius Caesar who, like many other educated Romans of a philosophical turn of mind, was interested in the Jewish religion. Indistinguishable, to Roman eyes, from the Rome-settled Jews, the Christian Jews newly arrived from Palestine from the earliest days of their 'separation', took every step - not short of physical violence - to

make it plain that they were always to be distinguished from the Unbelieving Jew.

The Roman authorities, seeing the newer Jewish immigrants as 'trouble-makers', might have expelled them, but for one of those world-shaping accidents which, more than all human planning or even (one might affirm) Divine intervention, bend the pattern of mankind's destiny. Already the Roman Jews had felt the weight of imperial disapproval; in AD 19, when Christ, if the stories be true, was out of his time as a carpenter's apprentice, and was serving as ship's carpenter on a merchant-vessel belonging to his uncle, Joseph of Arimathaea, trading to Britain; in AD 19, then, the emperor Tiberius angrily shipped 4,000 of the Roman Jews to the mines of Sardinia. And when, in AD 70, Rome moved against the Jews of Palestine, and destroyed the Temple of Jerusalem, it was the orthodox Jews and not the Christian Jews who were the principal objects of Roman official disapproval.

Though not a proselytizing religion, Christianity attracted its disciples, nonetheless; it was certainly established in Rome as early as the reign of Claudius, AD 41-54, and had recruited so many adherents that, by AD 64, Nero was able plausibly to blame on them the conflagration that, some say, the emperor himself began.

The strength of early Christianity was in its 'popular' appeal but this popular appeal made it, even in its earliest days, powerful friends. Though the historians Tacitus and Suetoniu appear to know of Christianity only by report, St Paul' Epistles, greeting those Christians who are 'of the household of Caesar', prove directly, in Carcopino's words, 'that the apostle had recruited some of his followers from among the retainer of the emperor, among those slaves and freedmen who, under specious appearance of humility, included the most powerful servants of the empire'. (12)

The Church which developed out of this popular radical religion never forsook its original 'proletarian' image, even in the days of its greatest wealth and authority. In the beginning though, the 'proletarian' attitude was a necessity of member-ship; certainly a necessity of promotion within the tight-knit organisation. We have seen the same ludicrous business in our own time; as they did in the days of the French Revolution. In Rome, the obvious wealth and power of this 'underground' movement attracted educated, ambitious men who, prepared like Henry IV to compromise with their habits for an ad-vantage, began to join the movement.

The New Men moved delicately. They not only accepted the existing Sacred Writings with all their uncouth solecisms, their faulty (and often meaningless) translations from the imperfectly understood Greek; these ambitious newcomers abandoned their 'Oxford accents', and bent their tongues to the crude vocables and the loose grammar of the sermo plebeius, the common people's way of speaking. At least, they used a 'was you?; me and Gaius had a shufti at them lions larss Toosdy; my old woman - cor! she's a crafty cow! - topanta mea — mehercle! - prime cata'st!' type of speech when attending the love-feast of the faithful - the agape - but not when gently trying to convert their still well-spoken and unconverted friends. The Russian aristocrats who, joining the revolutionaries, tore off their epaulettes and wore workers' cloth caps could hardly have disgusted honest men more than these 'gor blimey' renegades from paganism sickened those to whom pride was more valuable than money or power.

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[12] Jerome Carcopino: Daily Life in Ancient Rome (translated by E. O.) Lorimer) Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, (paperback), 1956.

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This sketch of the Roman Church's beginnings is essential if we are to understand how and why it became, in later centuries, the bitter and unrelenting foe of the Old Religion.

The Church's teaching was successful because it was so marvellously adaptable. Though it was anti-sex - and so anti-Life - from the beginning, it attracted the women of the later Empire because its still-remembered Jewish origins inclined it, despite its bias against sex, to elevate the status of woman: the respected, powerful and always obeyed 'Momma' of any normal Jewish household. Anciently when Rome and Italy (except Etruria) were populated by non-Oriental peoples, Woman had enjoyed an elevated position, especially when she was Wife and Mother of a Roman household. Her position protected as much by unshakable popular opinion as by inflexible laws, the Roman matron occupied a rank in the social hierarchy superior to that that Woman has enjoyed in any other society - even Jewish.

But the population of Italy; even more that of Rome; had been diluted by the importation of Oriental blood; so that Rome was no longer 'Western' in any but a strictly geographical sense. And the Orientals who now ran the Empire were not of those peoples amongst whom Woman enjoyed - or, to this day, enjoys - any elevated social rank. She was a chattel; a domestic slave; an amusement; a breeding mare. The Church offered a change; a reversal of the woman-degrading trend; a restoration of Woman's old privileges and old rank; her esteemed place in society would be hers once again. Women have always been the strongest and most faithful supporters of the Church of Rome; it was to consolidate their membership that a female counterpart of Christ - the Theotokos -was reintroduced into the religion.

During the third and fourth centuries, Rome had to fight for her very life; enemies gathered on every frontier; and in this confused atmosphere - with Rome holding the borders, but only just - the one well-organised and not at all confused body offered its help to the State. The Emperor Constantine accepted; and Christianity became, officially, the religion of the Empire. The former 'pagan' religion was - also officially - not suppressed, any more than Jewish shops were suppressed 'officially' in the early days of Nazi power.

The Nazi authorities knew that they might safely leave the 'disciplining' of the Jews to the unofficial zealots roaming the streets looking for Jews to molest, Jewish shops to loot and smash, and Jewish synagogues to burn. It is astonishing to observe with what courage the adherents of the proscribed faith bore up against the first taste that the world was to have of Christian persecution. It was not, indeed, until the very end of the fifth century; a hundred and fifty years later; that a 'converted' barbarian Emperor officially proscribed Paganism, and ordered that what remained of its property should be handed over to the Christian Church - which, anyhow, had already adopted the organisation and many of the forms of the State religion that it had supplanted ('Taken over complete' is probably the most correct way of expressing it).

The Church waited only until after Constantine's death to produce one of the most shameless forgeries in the history of false pretences: the famous Donation of Constantine. This document purported to be the instrument by which the Emperor Constantine surrendered the imperial insignia and his sovereignty over the Western Empire to the Pope of Rome. Appeal to this impudent forgery to support every claim to supreme kingly authority in the West was made by Pope after Pope for centuries until, indeed, with the smashing of Rome's total power by the Reformation, the Donation of Constantine might be denounced for the swindle that men had long known it to be.

Some distant municipia and coloniae, profiting by the Empire's inattention during a time when every resource was needed to protect the heart-lands of the Imperium, disregarded the official recognition of Christianity as the State religion. The traces of Christianity in Britain are very few, and that London was still 'pagan' at the beginning of the seventh century (so that the Londoners angrily kicked out Mellitus, the 'Bishop of London' whom King Sebehrt would have placed over them) we have on the authority of the Venerable Bede.

The Church's great opportunity - an opportunity seized without hesitation and with both hands - came with the official extinction of the Roman Empire in the West (the original Roman Empire's original home) by the barbarian, Odoacer, chief of the Heruli, who, in extinguishing the Western Empire, proclaimed himself King of Italy.

What was left of Rome was ruled from Byzantium, the Eastern Empire, as yet too unprepared and weak to challenge the Germanic and Scythian tribes now pouring into and across Europe. In this governmental vacuum, all that remained of Old Rome - the Rome of Romulus and Remus - was the 'true' Roman Emperor, the Pope, claiming a shadowy sovereignty by virtue of the forged document falsely signed with the name of a long-dead Emperor.

The barbarian kings, after a little 'token' sacking, settled down to become 'Romans', and in this pious wish they had every help from the Church. The wonderful buildings of Theodoric in Ravenna shews how closely a barbarian king could identify himself with the culture of the politically extinguished but still culturally living Empire. Theodoric, King of the Ostrogoths, revolted against his overlord, the chief of the Heruli, and, overthrowing Odoacer, proclaimed himself King of Italy in the Herulian's place. Theodoric made his capital at Ravenna, and left the Pope to rule Rome.

The plan to restore the vanished glories - with the wealth and the power - of the Empire; but, this time, by a religious, rather than a military campaign of recovery; can have been no inspiration of the moment. The plan may have been many reigns in maturing; but the plan itself was inherent in the fundamental transformation which had changed the Roman Church from a foreign, immigrant, Leftish, evangelical 'Pentecostal' faith, with a carefully cultivated 'proletarian' image, to an efficiently organised, wealthy, powerful and insatiably ambitious force, whose organisation is so clearly modelled on that of the pagan state-religion that we can think of the Roman Church, in the years immediately preceding Constantine's 'conversion', (13) as a 'shadow' ecclesiastical government, readying itself to take over control on the expected dismissal or abdication of 'the old firm'.

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[13] For all his support of the Church, he was never baptised.

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The dates not only indicate this; they seem to me to prove it.

Constantine the Great, British-born son of a British mother, and ruler of Britain and Gaul," decided to make a bid for the Empire itself. The boldness of his ambition may be measured by the fact that, under the reorganisation of the Empire by Diocletian, with its division into Eastern and Western sub-empires, four emperors - and not merely one - were henceforth to be entrusted with the management of those imperial Roman dominions which stretched from Portugal on the west to Mesopotamia on the east; from Scotland in the far north to - as we have recently discovered - Southern Arabia and East Africa on the south. Constantine had to rid himself, then, of four obstacles between himself and the Purple. By October 28, AD 312, he had succeeded. He fought and defeated the last enemy, Maxentius, at the Milvian Bridge, about three miles out of Rome. On the following day, the Senate 'unanimously' voted him senior Augustus of the Empire.

In making his bid for the throne, Constantine had had the help of Licinius Caius Flavius (so nicknamed because he was yellow-haired) Valerianus, a poor Dalmatian peasant of brilliant military genius, who had joined the Roman army as a simple miles, and had been appointed, by the emperor Maximinianus, an old platoon-mate, to be governor of Pannonia and Rhaetia (modern Switzerland, Austria and the western Balkan states). By the time that Constantine - on his way to the supreme dignity - had blackmailed himself into a sub-emperor's purple, Licinius was already one of the Tetrarchy. Constantine courted his help; gave him his sister Constantia as wife. Licinius it was who first began to defeat Maximinus, and got rid of him for Constantine, who, as soon as he had defeated Maxentius, turned on Licinius, using as excuse the fact that Licinius had persecuted the Christians, on whose help Constantine had openly proclaimed his intention henceforward to rely. (It seems no Christian historians' fable that Constantine did cause the mystical Christian Chi-Rho monogram to be painted on his soldiers' shields.)

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[14] One often hears it said that 'the old Province of Gaul is the modern France'. It is not so. The Province of 'the Gauls' (Galliae) had its southern boundaries along the Loire, becoming its western boundaries along the Rhone until Lyons, and then turning north-east again to include the part extending to the present Switzerland.

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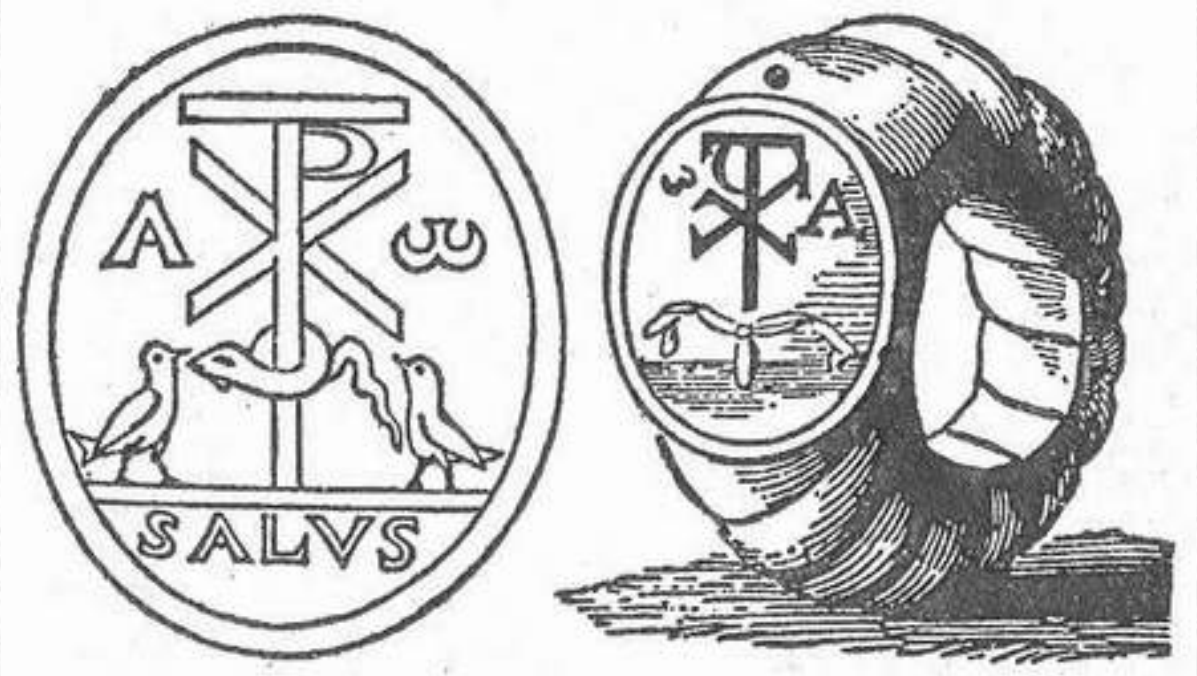
Licinius, offering battle to Constantine, was twice defeated; he fled to Nicomedia, from which he was forced to return. His wife, Constantia, pleaded with her brother to spare Licinius. Constantine did - until AD 324, when he ordered that Licinius, then in exile at Thessalonica, should be strangled. To make sure that no revengeful heir might grow up to trouble Constantine's ambitions or menace his health, the Emperor ordered that Licinius's son - Constantine's sister's son, as well - should be put to death also. 'A great and good ,man, Constantine', as the Church's panegyrists described him; and

exactly the same words were used by Sir Winston Churchill, in his history of World War II, to describe the late Josef Stalin. It depends, of course, on how one regards all these things.

Now for the significance of the dates.

Exhibiting all the known Christian emblems, amulets and other religio-magical talismans, Constantine advanced to victory at the Milvian Bridge. On the following day he was voted to the supreme position in the Empire; and, as a token of his gratitude to the Christian God for having helped him to victory, Constantine made over to the Bishop of Rome the Lateranus enormous palace - this, exactly a year later, in the winter of 313-314.




*More eclectic Christianity: A seal and seal-ring dating from possibly as early as the first century. Note how 'Christian' symbolism is mixed with that of other faiths. Not only is the distinctively 'Christian' Chi-Rho monogram united, in both cases, with the sacred (and non-Christian) Tau, there are also the most ancient Babylonian Sky-Serpent and the pair of good-luck birds. And whilst the Latin word salus simply means 'health, wealth, prosperity', etc., it should not be forgotten that Salus was the Roman Goddess of Health, with an important temple in Rome itself.*

Whatever other opinions regarding Constantine's future attitude towards the Church, its directors were confident that they could contrive to preserve and encourage Constantine's friendship towards Christianity, and to profit to the full from that sympathy.

By the beginning of the third century, the Church had undergone fundamental change - a fact of which I was reminded when, some years ago, I was passing by Buckingham Palace, and a large limousine entered the courtyard, its occupant being saluted by guards and policemen on duty. It was the 'General' of the Salvation Army, arrived to receive his order of chivalry from the late King. The Church had shed its Leftish, radical, communistic, deliberately uncouth social attitudes, and though it was still saddled with sacred writings edited under the old, 'proletarian' dispensation, there was little which might be done about that now. But, in every other respect, the Church had given itself a new image -

polished, urbane, worldly; above all, educated in the traditional Roman manner. Little Pagan boys learnt their Latin through a study of the Pagan classics - indeed, there were classics of no other kind; and whereas the Church, in its 'strict' period, would rather have left its Faithful illiterate than learn from such 'devil's works', the advantages of compromise had been seen; and whilst the Church proclaimed that it never did, nor ever would, compromise on religious matters, it compromised on those involving a common culture.

By the middle of the third century, some noble families had become openly Christian; there was even a Christian minority in the Senate, led by the noble Anicii. But the support of the Church, 'traditionally educated' though it now could claim to be, still came from the women, aristocratic or otherwise In the noble family of Ceionii Albani, the women were all Christian, the men, Pagan to a man.

Those dates ...

In 313, the year following Constantine's victory over Maxentius, the Lateran Palace was made over by the new emperor to the Bishop of Rome.

In 314, the Bishop of Rome, satisfied now that, sooner or later, the Church's 'manifest destiny' would call it to share, or even to usurp, the supreme power in the Empire, hastily convened the Council of Ancyra - perhaps the most important single event in the history of the Old Religion.

On the agenda of this Council, which was summoned to warn the assembled bishops of the imminent 'promotion' of Christianity, and to make plans for the assumption of power, was the subject of the Church's future relations with State Paganism, and all the other religions which were outside The One True Faith. In particular, the assembly concentrated its attention on the Old Religion - for reasons which have been only superficially (and never constructively) examined. Here I may put forward my view that it was because aristocratic, rich women - the Church's most notable converts to date -were already forming a 'reform group' within their own intrinsically separate (but which might easily become separatist) section of True Belief.

The monastic ideal was in fact invading Roman high society - and what a society it was! Its salient features are familiar from the writings of Ammianus and other contemporaries: the wealth and luxury of the aristocratic elite, the passion for the circus and the arena, the ostentatious progresses with attendant hordes of slaves and eunuchs, the extravagant banquets, the ornate hairstyles and jewellery flaunted by the women. Amid all this worldly racket there were not a few who resolved on a renunciation of property and pleasures. This was not merely a withdrawal from all the temptations and vices of a decadent society; it was also a protest at the official Christianity which ... had made the capture of the secular world its main objective. (15, 16)

At the time that the Council of Ancyra met, this emotional revolt of the rich women Christians against the Church's 'backsliding' had done no more than to send them off in search of a 'more primitive', 'purer', far more demanding Christianity -that Christianity that these wealthy female zealots imagined that the Church, seduced by wealth and the promise of power, had abandoned.

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[15] My italics - M.H.

[16] This passage is quoted from Professor Joseph Vogt's admirable The Decline of Rome; London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, (English translation), 1967.

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So far, this search for a 'reformed Christianity' had taken the women no further than a convent, as Marcella, niece of the Praetorian Prefect, Lampadius, was to enter, in 365 - though it must be admitted that this convent was established in her elegant and luxurious mansion on the Aventine Hill. But others, attracted by the news of eastern monks' ascetic life, did actually make pilgrimages to these holy men - amongst the pilgrims, Melania, widowed twenty-four-year-old daughter and granddaughter of consuls. She reached Jerusalem, founded several convents, and put herself under the spiritual guidance of a learned monk, Rufinus, whose self-appointed task it was to translate Greek theological works into the Latin that the Church, identifying itself with Empire's most extreme nationalism, had now adopted as its official language.

But for how long, the assembly asked itself, were disappointed, scandalised women to be content with moving backwards within the Church? Might not a time be coming -and perhaps soon - when the revolt of the rich, earnest women would take them outside the Church, into the orbit of another faith living obviously nearer to its original simple ideals?

The practical measure to be taken now was to block up as many exit-holes as possible; to destroy as many alternative religions as possible. It is at this point that the Old Religion - never, of course, popular with Christians; but so far tolerated by them - becomes Designated Enemy. A 'rule for the Bishop' (Canon Episcopi) was drawn up, to deal with heresy and paganism and unbelief - all very different things - and though this Canon's authenticity was to be impugned, centuries later, by (of all bodies!) the Church, I see no reason to doubt that it was a production of the Council of Ancyra of 314, and represented, if not the unanimous view, then at least the majority view. It certainly represented the official view.

As this Canon Episcopi was an opinion of a Church Council to whose authority appeal was to be made until the end of the fifteenth century, that opinion, so far as it concerns the Old Religion, ought to be quoted here.

Bishops and their assistants must labour with all their energy to uproot (exstirpare) thoroughly from their parishes and sees the pernicious art of sorcery and malefice invented by the Devil; and if they find a man or woman follower of this wickedness, to eject them, foully disgraced, from their parishes. For the Apostle says, 'A man which is an heretic, after the first and second admonition, him avoid.' Those are held captive by the Devil who, leaving their Creator, seek the Devil's aid. And so Holy Church must be cleansed of this pest.

That constitutes the first 'official' warning. Old Religion beware!

It is also not to be omitted that some wicked women (17) perverted by the Devil, seduced by illusions

and phantasms of demons, believe and profess themselves, in the hours of night, to ride upon certain beasts with Diana, the goddess of pagans, and with an innumerable company of women, and in the silence of the dead of night, to traverse great spaces of earth, and to obey her commands as of their mistress, and to be summoned to her service on certain nights.

But I wish it were they alone who perished in their faithlessness, and did not draw so many with them into the destruction to which infidelity leads. For an innumerable multitude, (18) deceived by this false opinion, believe this to be true, and, so believing, wander from the True Faith, and are involved in the error of the pagans, in thinking that there is anything of divinity or power save the One God.

Wherefore the priests throughout their Churches should preach with all insistence to the people, that they may know this pagan doctrine to be in every way false, and that such phantasms are imposed on the minds of infidels, and not by the divine, but by a malignant spirit.

Thus Satan himself, who transfigures himself into an angel of light, when he has captured the mind of some miserable woman, and has subjugated her to himself by infidelity and lack of faith, immediately transforms himself into forms and likenesses of different personages; and deluding the mind that he holds captive, and exhibiting things joyful or mournful, and persons known or unknown, leads that captive mind through devious ways, and though it is merely the mind which receives these impressions, the Infidels believe that they have these experiences in the body and not simply in the mind.

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[17] My italics - M.H.

[18] My italics. This, at a time when, according to the less critical histories, 'Paganism had almost ceased to exist'!

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Who is there who is not led out of himself [Greek: 'ecstasy' means 'to fly out' - i.e. of the body] (19) in dreams and nocturnal visions, and sees much when sleeping that he had never seen waking? Who is so stupid and foolish as to accept that all these things which are happening only in the mind happen in bodily experience - as when the Prophet Ezekiel saw visitations of the Lord in spirit, and not in actual fact, and the Apostle John saw and heard the mysteries of the Apocalypse in the spirit and not in the body, as he himself says: 'I was in the spirit.'

And Paul does not dare to say that he was rapt in the body ....

But Paul does not say that he was not. St John positively affirms that he was 'in the spirit' but St Paul, when describing how he was caught up into the third heaven, to hear 'unutterable words', is not at all positive in this matter: 'Whether in the body or out of the body, I cannot tell.' This is an instructive episode in ecclesiastical history: a false statement made to an assembly of experts - not one of whom protested that Paul did dare to say that, at any rate, he may have been rapt in the body.

It is therefore to be publicly proclaimed to all that whoever believes such things, or similar to these, loses the Faith; and he who has not the right faith in God is not of God, but of him in whom the faithless one believes, that is, of the Devil. For of Our Lord it is written, 'All things were made by Him.' (20) Whoever, therefore, believes that anything can be made, or that any creature can be changed for better of for worse, or be transformed into another aspect or identity, except by the Creator Himself, Who made everything, and by Whom everything is made, is beyond doubt an infidel.

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[19] As has been pointed out before, by many others, the difference between right-acting and wrong-acting depends on the doer. St Paul (2 Corinthians, 12:2-4) was a notable ecstatic.

[20] Another curious - intentional? - mistake. It was of God, not of 'our Lord' that this was written. (John 1:3.).

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Apart from the warning to the Old Religion that this explicit and lengthy condemnation of 'infidelity' expressly gives, this extract from the decisions of the Council of Ancyra is important in that it defines the experiences of the faithful at Old Religion assemblies as so much diabolical illusion - though, curiously, it does not appear to dismiss the traversing of 'great spaces of the earth', in 'the silence of the dead of night' as illusory.

What the Council appears to have thought is that the members of the Old Religion were what used to be called 'englamoured' - caused to experience happenings which had reality only in their imaginations. The phenomenon of 'ecstasy' was one well known, by personal knowledge or hearsay, to every member of the Council; amongst the Greeks, the Ecstatici were diviners who used to put themselves into a trance-state (by drugs?), and, recovering from the trance, describe what they had seen 'when out of the body'. The Hellenistic Jew, Paul, not only knew of this practice, but, evidently, employed it himself.

It is noteworthy that the Council's concern seems predominantly with women, and, just as women were the main support of the early Church, so it is obvious that they were - or the members of the Council believed them to be - the main support of the Old Religion. The gatherings of Old Religionists are stated to have been mainly if not exclusively of women, though whether the phrase 'innumerable multitudes' reflects the facts or is merely a propagandist 'loading' to justify the contemplated persecution of the Old Religion, it is impossible to say. At any rate, the Old Religion was still, in 314, sufficiently vigorous to warrant the Church's attempt to put it down.

Ten years later, another Council was convened - the famous Council of Nice (Nicaea, in Asia Minor). Presided over by Constantine the Great, the Council's ostensible reason was the suppression of the Arian heresy; its real reason: to take advantage of the 'favourable climate' created by Constantine's sympathetic and protective attitude towards the Roman Church. The Roman Church did not then protest against, nor has since condemned, Constantine's treachery or murderous impulse. So far as the

Church was concerned, this was accounted a virtuous and pious act - Licinius had been an active persecutor of Christians. He 'deserved' to die. Morality does not demand that a True Believer keep his word, however 'solemn', to a heretic, pagan or infidel - as John Huss was to discover in 1415.

The Council of Nice, called ostensibly to combat the Arian heresy, was, in reality, a meeting summoned to decide on internal discipline and external relations with non-Christian elements. It was clear now, that Constantine intended to make over the State religion to the Bishop of Rome - and the Church was determined to overhaul and up-date its 'immutable' rules in good time for the take-over.

Nothing was said about that other - and more important -heresy: the Old Religion. The question had been dealt with thoroughly by the Council of Ancyra, ten years before; and, as the leaders of the Roman Church realised, they would have had their hands full overcoming the opposition of Paganism at Senate level. There was all the time in the world to attend to the 'extirpation' of the Old Religion later ....

By the end of the sixth century, the New Europe had achieved a relative stability, after the rape of all the Western Empire's outer provinces by 'barbarian' invaders. The incalculably powerful prestige that Roman culture - and, indeed, Roman institutions generally - enjoyed among the barbarians exercised a moral force which weakened the barbarian's enmity and soon converted them to defenders, rather than destroyers, of the everywhere apparent achievements of Roman architects and engineers, Roman sculptors and painters; above all, of Roman administrators and Roman lawgivers.

The Franks who had burst into 'the Gauls' had - after the first few token barbarisms, not only respected the cities of Roman Gaul; they had respected, protected and preserved Roman municipal administration. They had even retained the Latin tongue, which is why the French speak French today, and not some German dialect.

In the 'Seven Provinces' - modern Southern France - the Roman culture changed even less. The Visigoths went straight through to the Basque country - that the Romans called 'The Seven Peoples' - and, hardly halting, went on to Spain proper, there to found the powerful Visigothic kingdom of the North, which survived until Tariq overran it in the eighth century.

The Germanisation of the Empire did not come about for two reasons: the German kings achieved their successes with the minimum number of troops, thrusting forward in the irresistible force of the Blitzkrieg, so that they could not take over anything save the actual sovereignty of the lands that they had invaded. And, either as a result of this paucity of numbers or because it suited the invaders to disturb as little as possible existing social order, the wealthy and powerful senatorial families, with their vast estates, and their armies of both slaves and private soldiers, were left in undisputed possession of all the things which had given them power. And, in addition, the Church - its prelates, priests, buildings, and estates - remained relatively untouched, especially in the Gauls and in the Seven Provinces. Attila the Hun had ravaged Europe in 447, but his nightmare invasion was brief, and his success due to causes which prevented his being opposed by any united force.

The Merovingian king, Clovis (Ludwig, Louis), after having fought and defeated the Roman general Syagrius in 485, had himself baptised in 496, and when, eleven years later, Clevis's fellow-Teuton,

Alaric, invaded what was now 'France', Clovis, with an army of Romanised Celts and Franks, defeated the invader at Vorcille, near Poitiers. Except that, as from 510, Gaul was ruled from Paris and not from Rome, Gaul was as Roman under the Merovingians as it had been under the Caesars.

The sentimental attachment of the new German kings for Roman institutions is strikingly demonstrated by the fact that Clovis asked for and received from the Emperor of the East an honorary consulship, with the meaningless title of 'Augus-tulus', the robes of state and other insignia of royalty.

Sigismund, heir to the Burgundian throne, deserted Arianism for Catholicism; and, because, with the collapse of Roman rule in the West, a career under the Empire was no longer possible to ambitious young men, they sought careers in that 'non-Imperial Rome' which had survived the fall of the Empire. Thus the Germanic take-over of the West had strengthened, not weakened, the Church; and though the Visigoths and Ostrogoths were Arian, even this heresy gave way to Catholicism under the compulsion of political advantage.

Europe was safe from Roman Catholicism for another thousand years, since the now Catholic kingdoms of north-east Spain - the old Roman territory of 'The Seven Peoples' - soon recovered from the shock of the Arab conquest, and rallied to overcome and expel the Saracen. It took the new Spaniards seven centuries before the last Arab kingdom fell, but, by opposing a Christian force to the Arab invaders, the Visigothic-Catalan-Basque-Celtic fighters of Navarre and Aragon and Old Castile interposed a defensive barrier between Moorish Spain and still Roman Gaul.

With all of continental Western Europe - save for the future Arab conquests (but those were nearly three hundred years in the future) - safe in its hands, the Roman Church prepared to extirpate what it considered to be its two most dangerous enemies: the non-Roman Christians and the adherents of the Old Religion. Historical accident had caused both to flourish in a Britain rapidly de-Romanising itself.

## 6 - Rome attacks the 'Witches'

Long after the envoys of now ecclesiastical Rome had contrived to extirpate British Christianity - that early and still-pure Faith which had been carried to Britain by Joseph of Arimathea (and by, some say, even the Mother of Christ and her faithful companion, St John) - Roman Christianity grudgingly allowed a claim by the British bishops that this introduction of Christianity by a Disciple of the Lord gave the bishops precedence over those of any other branch of the Church.

A sentimental tolerance for this claim had softened Roman opinion towards primitive British Christianity, but when Rome reappeared on British shores in AD 597, no such sentimental tolerance had developed, and it was with the firm intention of 'converting' British Christianity to the Roman obedience by any means, not excluding force, that Augustine and his companions landed in Kent.

As it happened, the 'conversion' did not exclude force. Moving very much as the pagan Romans of Suetonius had moved against the Druids - and in almost the same part of Britain - the agents of the Roman Church moved against the great Abbey of Bangor, centre of Christianity, killed six hundred of its monks, and destroyed a library rivalling in size and importance those of Pergamum or Alexandria. Small excuses are needed to effect large charges: like the wolf in the fable, Augustine used any - and the smallest - excuse to do what he had intended to do from setting out on his 'civilising' mission. With him, Augustine brought Pope Gregory's orders to the British bishops that they should put themselves under the direction of Augustine. But, as the British bishops had never accepted the claim of the Bishop of Rome to speak for, and make the rules for, all Christians, they refused to accept the orders.

A second meeting provided Augustine with his needed excuse to go against these semi-heretics; when the British bishops entered the meeting-hall, Augustine did not rise, and, offended by this discourtesy, the bishops promptly walked out. It was now Augustine's turn to be offended - at the bishops' temerity in taking offence! - and ten years later, Aethelfrith, King of Northumbria, a 'distinguished convert' to the Roman faith, moved against Bangor. Small differences between the British and Roman practices offered, after the massacre, no difficulties in 'ironing out'. The adoption of the Roman method of calculating the date of Easter; the adoption of the Roman form of tonsure for priests and monks, the substitution of certain British ritual forms by the Roman equivalents - all these were accepted by British Christians who had not failed to profit by the lesson in 'frightfulness' provided at Bangor.

Now remained the Old Religion.

We are so used today to living as the subjects or citizens of multi-million-population countries that it is not easy to visualise a world in which 'independent sovereign states' were to be counted in their hundreds.

It was easy not so very long ago - say until about 1806, when Napoleon the Great began the first important unifying of Europe since Charlemagne had tried to recreate the Roman Empire a thousand years earlier. When Napoleon set about the unification of Germany there were no fewer than six hundred states in Germany alone; some big - as Prussia, Bavaria and Hanover; some small, and many even smaller; principalities, duchies, margravates, landgravates, counties, baronies, prince-bishoprics, as Cologne, Osnaburg and Wurtzburg. It is hard today not to think of all this fractionating of the

German lands as something impossible to reconcile with that entity (split for the present) that we have learned, for more than a century, to think of as 'Germany'.

**la** *The Bear Goddess - Chinese Artemis. The earliest religious object yet discovered is the figure of a bear; and the cult of the Bear Goddess - Artemis -was as widespread in Roman London as it was in Ancient Greece. In pre-Christian times, trade and cultural contact between Greece and China was close. Did the Greeks export the worship of the Sacred Bear to China? This gilded bronze bear is the surviving foot from a ritual vessel of the Han dynasty, c. 100 BC-AD 100. (Photograph: British Museum)*

**lb** *Great Mother of the Steppes. The Divine Mother in her 'benign' aspect, holding the symbolical Tree of Life, as she appears on a hanging of applique felt, found in the Eastern Altai in 1949. The felt hanging (or carpet) was part of the great archaeological treasure found by the Russian scientist, S.I. Rudenko, in Mound V at Pazirik. It is now in the Hermitage Museum in Leningrad. (Photograph: Novosti I Press Agency (A.P.N.)*

**2a** *A worshipper from Crete. With Mohenjo-daro's three-faced god, this worshipper from ancient Crete, c 1600 BC, shares that ithyphallic condition which enables us to know that this is an object from one of the many Mediterranean fertility cults, all variants of the Old Religion (Photograph - British Museum)*

**2b** *An Iberian shaman From the very centre of the Western Fertility Cult comes this figure of an Iberian priest, whose high-crowned hat was adopted by many a later priesthood, and whose 'blinkered' undercap was inherited by the later Iberian culture, as exemplified in the magnificent head of 'the Lady of Elche'. Note the ritual breast-plate marked with seven sun symbols. (Photograph: British Museum)*

**3a** *The formality of ritual. Even though this limestone drinking trough dates from c. 2900 BC, Sumerian religion had already reached that stage of sophistication when such 'basic' symbols as the Horns of Fertility had been completely stylised, as in this ritual object from the temple of the Goddess Innana, at Uruk (modern Warka), Southern Iraq. (Photograph. British Museum)*

**3b** *The Eleusinian Goddesses Two potent figures from the most ancient beliefs of the Fertility Cult*

*Demeter and Persephone wait on Triptolemus, founder of the Eleusinian festivals and mysteries in honour of Ceres (the Corn Goddess). A 'red-figure' skyphos from Attica, c. 490-480 BC. (Photograph - British Museum)*

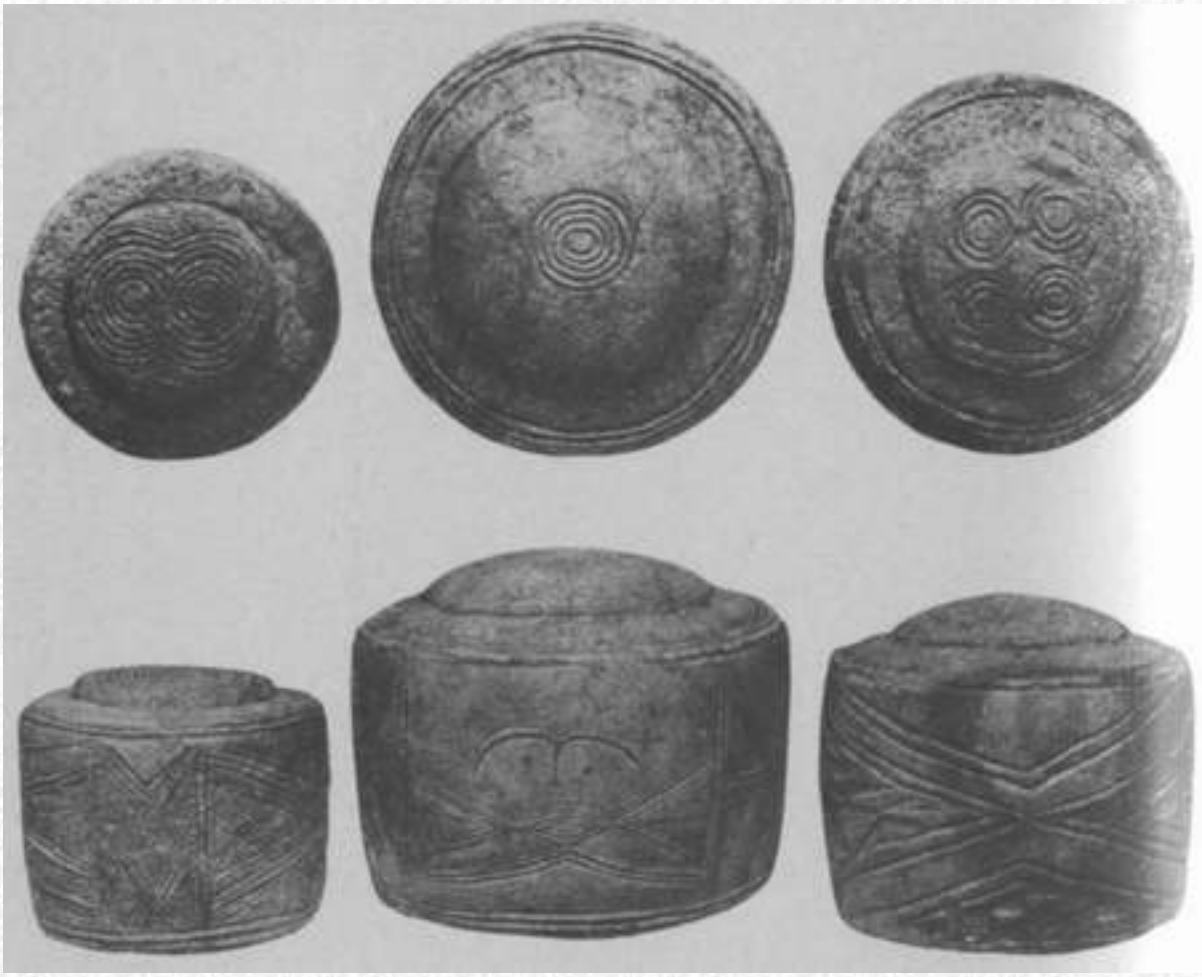
**4** *The Horned God of Ch'ang-sha. The universality of the Horned God. This carved wooden head, fitted with real deer antlers, comes from Ch'ang-sha in the Province of Honan, south-west China, and is dated to fourth-third centuries BC. (Page 86) (Photograph : British Museum)*

**5a** *Cernunnos of the Parisii. The great Horned God of the Gauls, as carved on this altar, marked with his name, found under the existing altar of Notre Dame at the end of the eighteenth century. The rings on his horns show that the modern game of quoits had a religious origin. The altar is now in the Musee de Cluny, Paris. (Photograph: Service de Documentation Photographique, through Contrad Research Library)*

**5b** *The Watcher over Paris. In 1797, under the high altar of Notre Dame, Paris, there was discovered the altar of the God to whom the original building on the same site had been dedicated: Cernunnos, the Horned God of the Gaulish Celts. Notre Dame has been officially 'de-paganized' since the fourth century, but high on the western facade of the Gothic cathedral the God of the older religion still keeps watch over Paris. The English and Americans call this figure - wrongly - 'the Gargoyle': the French - quite as wrongly - le Chimere or le Strige (Chimaera, vampire, ghost). All these names are wrong: here is Cernunnos still above, as he was once present below. (From the Author's collection)*

**6** *Cernunnos in Britain. Romano-British mosaic, now in the Verulamium Museum, St Albans, where Cernunnos is erroneously identified as Neptune, on 'The Sea God Mosaic'. In fact, this is one of the clearest representations of the Horned God to survive from Roman Britain. (Photograph: The Verulamium Museum; Author's collection)*

**7** *The Cerne Abbas Giant, Dorset. Britain's-perhaps the world's -most famous surviving fertility god: the Cerne Giant, whose location, Cerne, is simply the God, Cern (unnos). Lethbridge incorrectly calls the Cerne Giant 'Helith, Helios or Hercules', but the name, Cerne, makes it clear whom this huge figure, cut in the chalk, is intended to represent. In the centuries, Cerne of Cerne has lost his horns, but not - even through the era of Victorian public prudery - the unambiguous statement of his function as the Lord of the World's Fertility. (Photograph: National Monuments Record)*



**8** *The Folkton drums. Roughly contemporary with the Cretan worshipper (plate 2a), these primitive 'cult objects', carved from chalk, were found with a burial of the 'Beaker' period on Folkton Wold, Yorkshire. The anthropo morphic element has been stylised almost out of recognition, yet the obvious sacred nature of the 'drums' proves the existence of an organised Fertility Cult in the Britain of pre-Stonehenge date, about 1600 BC. (Photograph British Museum)*

The problem of 'bringing back Britain' into the Roman way of life was rendered most difficult for Augustine and his fellow-missionaries by the fact that in no acceptable sense of the phrase, was Britain, after the withdrawal of Roman rule, a 'nation'. Even when the Romans had ruled, the island had not been homogeneous, so far as its population was concerned; now, with the Angle, Saxon, Jute and Frisian immigrants added to the Roman-ruled stock, the population contained even more ethnic elements than any that Rome had known.

I have said that, when Rome withdrew her Eagles (and her civil servants), the Celtic peoples reverted to their own tribal organisation, which had been suppressed by Rome. But this did not mean that they were unable to agree to present a common defence against a common enemy; and modern research has greatly modified the tale of the Anglo-Saxon invasions, as told in school-books even today.

It now seems certain that the German land-seekers from Holstein and Jutland made, first, for the western coast of France, being put off by the still formidable defences of the Litum Saxonicum per Britanniam ('The Saxon Shore in Britain' - to distinguish the 'anti-Saxon defences' the other side of the English Channel; Litum Saxonicum per Galliam, with a defensive system based on Gessoriacum - Boulogne). The Saxons, under their King Eadwacer, sailed around the peninsula of Brittany, and

moved up the Loire as far as Angers, occupying the town and preparing to take root there. In 463,

Childeric, King of the Franks-still a 'rex', or sub-king acknowledging the sovereignty of Rome - kicked the Germans out. Then, and only then, did they try — with better luck this time -for a foothold in Britain.

In or about the year AD 500, a great battle was fought between the 'British' and the German immigrants at an as-yet-unidentified place named 'Mount Badon' (Mons Badonicus). The result was not only a halting of the Anglo-Saxon advance westwards, but what seems to have been a final halt to immigration altogether. A well-substantiated contemporary account of the battle and its results says that the Saxons, unable to find further Lebensraum, returned to the Continent, finally settling down in what is now Saxony.

One of the strongest supports for this theory that the British 'contained' the Saxon advance at Mount Badon is to be found in a religious context, and has been pointed out by F.M. Stenton, in his Anglo-Saxon England. (1)

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[1] Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1943.

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Tracing the former existence of immigrant 'holy places', by the Teutonic names ealh, 'temple', hearh, 'hill sanctuary', leak, 'grove', and weoh, 'idol, shrine', Stenton points to one curious and highly significant fact:

The distribution of these heathen names is curiously irregular. More than nine-tenths of them fall within an area which could be indicated on a map by lines drawn from Ipswich to Stafford, and thence due south to the Channel. No heathen names have so far been found in Northumbria; they are very rare between the Humber and the Welland; and there is no. certain example in East Anglia ... What the surviving names establish beyond all doubt is the strength of heathenism in the centre and south-east of England.

Many passages in the history of the Conversion become clearer in their light. The difficulty with which the East Saxons were brought to accept Christianity is made more intelligible by the numerous heathen sites in their kingdom. The heathen sanctuaries of Wessex provide an admirable illustration of Bede's statement that Birinus, meaning to preach in the remoter parts of England, remained in the south to combat the strong paganism of the Gewisse. (2) On the wider question of the conditions which governed the work of the Roman mission to England, the evidence of these names is of peculiar significance. It shows that, throughout the country in which Augustine and his companions laboured, heathenism was still a living religion when it met the Christian challenge. (My italics - M.H.)

What we must now ask is the question: to what extent may the 'heathenism' of the Anglo-Saxon invaders be equated with the existing Old Religion, as practised by those British who were not

members of the British Christian Church (3) or of one of those other religions introduced during the days of Roman rule?

To answer this question, we shall need to examine not only the religious beliefs of the Teutonic immigrants, but also what we know or many confidently deduce of the several beliefs of the British.

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[2] Original names of the West Saxons. Obsolete by Bede's time, the name was revived, as sentimental archaism, by the later English kings in their charters. Cf. the spelling in the modern tide, Master of the Queen's Mustek.

[3] Christianity was brought to Britain direct from Jerusalem perhaps ten years or so before the Claudian invasion.

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First, let us see what the Teutons believed.

It was precisely because English heathenism was still so powerful a social force that the Christianised historians and commentators devoted so little space to it in their writings. To discuss it was not only bad cess in itself, it was also to advertise a 'false' religion, as well as the more important fact that the Church had failed, so far, to 'extirpate' it.

However, the admirable and mainly honest Bede had permitted his patriotic sentiments to triumph over his religious prejudices, and, in writing his De Temporum Ratione ('Casting up the accounts of the years') has told us some important things about his 'heathen' ancestors and their beliefs.

We may also deduce what the heathens did by the things forbidden to the Faithful, especially those prohibitions which are to be found specified in the Poenitentiale of Theodore, Archbishop of Canterbury (d. 19th September, 690).

That the Anglo-Saxons of pre-Christian days had a year of twelve, rather than thirteen (lunar) months, indicates that at some time during their residence in their Continental home they had fallen under the influence of a culture using a twelve-month calendar. If the influence, direct or indirect, was Roman, then the adoption by the Teutons of the twelve-month calendar could have come only after the Julian reform of 46 BC, when the old Roman year was adjusted to the month-lengths that we still use today.

The names and 'character' of the Old English months were as follows:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 12th month<br>1st month | GIULI ('Yule')<br>Year began: December 25<br>*Modra nect* (or *niht*).<br>'Mothers' Night', was<br>26th December | MID WINTIR<br>MONATH<br>FORMA[4] – OR<br>WULF-MONATH |
| 2nd month | SOLMONATH or SPROTE-CÂL ('Kale sprouting')<br>'The month of cakes,' says Bede, 'offered during it to their gods.' | |
| 3rd month | HRETHAMONATH (*or* HRETHMONATH) | |
| 4th month | EOSTREMONATH (*or* EOSTURMONATH) | |
| 5th month | THRIMILCI<br>' . . . because cows were then milked three times a day.' – *Bede* | |
| 6th month<br>7th month | LITHA ('The Moon') | SEREMONATH<br>MŒDMONATH |
| 8th month | WEODMONATH<br>'The month of "weeds" ' (i.e. vegetation) | |
| 9th month | HALEGMONATH (*or* HALIGMONATH) earlier GERST *or* HÆRFESTMONATH<br>'Holy month' *or* 'Harvest month'<br>'The month of offerings'. – *Bede* | |
| 10th month | WINTIRFILLITH *or* TEOTHA (tenth) MONATH<br>Connected by Bede with the first full moon of winter. | |
| 11th month | BLODMONATH<br>'Blood Month'<br>'The month of Sacrifice, because they dedicated to their gods the animals that they were about to kill.' | |

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[4] Forma - 'first, foremost, earliest'.

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Now, it is clear that, in abandoning the old 13-month year which would inevitably be the choice of a Fertility-oriented people, the ancient Teutons retained much of the flavour of the old in their new calendar.

It is not only plainly the calendar of a Fertility religion; it is even more 'Fertility' than historians of the quality of F.M. Stenton seem to have realised.

Stenton, for instance, whilst rejecting the theory that Bede invented the names of the goddesses, Hretha and Eostre, so as to be able to account for the names of the months, admits that 'neither name can be explained, and neither appears in any other mythological system'.

I am not so sure that Hretha cannot be explained. It bears so striking a resemblance to a common Anglo-Saxon word, hrither, 'an ox', that it is surely permissible to advance the theory that Hretha is (not so much 'cow', as) 'female ox', 'she-bull' - that is, a female deity having the character, if not the characteristics, of the bull. Or, perhaps, more accurately: the Consort of the Divine Bull.

As for the other goddess, Eostre, which has given modern English its 'Easter', there is no reason why this should not be a loan from Greek or Latin, borrowed by the Teutons whilst still in their Continental home.

Greek - oistros; Latin oestrus; means some species of stinging insect, probably the well-known 'Spanish fly'; a meaning all the more probable in that a derived meaning in Greek and Latin is 'fury, inspiration' - and hence the sting of Springtime sexuality, the prick of concupiscence, the juror femineus, the 'oestrum'.

Thus the sequence, to Fertility-conditioned minds, would be: March - dedicated to the Bull-Goddess (the personification of the dual creative principle of Nature); April - dedicated to the personification of the Oestrum, the procreative impulse attacking all animals in the spring. 'But other [Old English] divinities,' says Stenton, 'which have never been called in question bear equally obscure names - there is at least no obvious explanation of Erce, the Old English name of Mother Earth ....'

In my opinion, there is an obvious explanation of the name, Erce, as that of 'Mother Earth', but we shall have to turn to a language other than Greek or Latin to find the explanation. It seems to be that Old English Erce (pronounced airchay) is nothing more or less than Basque (that is, Western European Neolithic) erche (pronounce it air shay), 'bowels, belly, intestine, womb'. What, in the simple imagery of a primitive people, could be more fitting than to think of, and call, Mother Earth 'the great womb'? That fruitful womb from which all blessings flow ....

These images are eternal; they have survived the dreadful sophistication of modern man, as I thought the other day when

I turned on the wireless and heard a fruity tenor sing:

... a tree, whose hungry mouth is pressed
against the Earth's sweet -flowing breast ...

If such images force themselves into the mind of even a modern song-writer, how should we wonder that we find them - I had almost said, 'without looking' - in the nomenclature of ancient peoples. Erce in Old English; Erche in that far more ancient Western Neolithic: 'the Great, the Ever-Fruitful Womb

of Mother Earth'.

These are not the only points at which the religion of the Old English seems to be connected with the Fertility Cult.

The month of May, for instance, is called Thrimilci because, as Bede says, cows were then milked three times a day -no people not in the closest touch with Nature could think of naming a month after an abnormal yield of milk.

But the fact that September is, as well as being Gerst (barley) monath or Hoerfest (harvest) monath, 'The Holy month', and, as Bede notes, 'The Month of Offerings', means that a pre-Christian 'harvest festival' was an essential part of the Old English year.

The worship - or, at least, the sensitive awareness - of the Moon is more than merely hinted: June and July were dedicated to, and named after, Litha, 'The Moon'; October was Wintirfillith, a name connected by Bede with the first full moon of winter: three months dedicated to the Moon; three months connected with animals; three months connected with sacrifice or offerings. Surely these can be the sentiments of none other than a Fertility religion?

The eleventh month - November - is Blodmonath, 'Blood month'; 'the month of sacrifice, because they dedicated to their gods the animals that they were about to kill.' But O.E. blod, 'blood', had already acquired extended meanings which took the significance of the word far beyond the juice of butcher's meat. Our word, bless, comes to us through O.E. bletsian, itself derived from an earlier bleodswean, 'to sanctify by the (ritual) shedding of blood'. And it was this extended meaning which became dominant, words developing from the sacramental meaning which had no close association with the bleed which had generated them; words which developed into our modern 'bless', 'blessed', 'blessing3, 'blessedness', and the many semantic variations on all these words.

Stenton remarks that Bede's explanation of Blodmonath 'gives what is by far the earliest reference to the practice of killing off superfluous stock for winter food, and the name shews that the custom, with a naive economy, was made a sacrificial occasion.'

I cannot see that the necessity to kill off cattle should make the acts of praise to the Giver of All Good any less sincere. Our ancestors thanked Him for the opportunity that He had given them (through sending them winter, if you please) to eat well

- to eat better than usual. To thank God for a happy accident is not to be naive or hypocritical; rather is it to be piously realistic.

Even Pope Gregory advised Augustine to permit converts from heathenism 'to kill and eat at the Christmas festival (the Old English New Year's Day} a great number of oxen to the glory of God, as they have formerly done to the Devil'.

One of the novelties in time-reckoning introduced when Julius Caesar reformed the Roman calendar in 46 BC was the division of the year - any ordinary, not a 'Leap', year - into four groups

- 'Quarters' - of thirteen 'weeks' (septem dierum spatia) of seven days each. This new division complemented, not supplanted, the ancient Roman division of the month into three periods, begun with the Kalends (first of each month), and continuing through the Nones (fifth or seventh) and ending with the Ides (thirteenth or fifteenth); and though a Semitic origin has been claimed, not unreasonably, for the origin of the seven-day week, it was the astrologer and not the Semite who introduced it into the Roman calendar.

That the week had been adopted by the Teutons before their migration to Britain - their uneasy foothold in France was too brief that they might have acquired a Roman-type calendar there - proves that the race had been in contact, proximate or remote, with either Rome or the source from which Caesar's astrologer-advisers adopted their seven-day week. That the Old English Teothamonath ('tenth month') was always regarded as synonymous with Roman October (originally meaning 'eighth month'), makes it clear that the Teuton-Roman cultural contact was made after the Julian reform of the Roman calendar had, by inserting two 'new' months between June (sixth month) and September ('seventh month'), altered September, October, November and December, from original 'seventh', 'eighth', 'ninth', and 'tenth' months, respectively, to ninth, tenth, eleventh and twelfth in the year's calendar.

And that the inspiration of the Teutonic seven-day period came rather through Roman than through any other cultural influence is strongly suggested by the fact that the allocation of the seven days of the 'rule' of Old English gods follows Roman precedent. As:

| *Week-day* | *Teutonic* | | *Latin/Roman* | *Mod. English* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1st | *sunne* | Sun | *sol (dies Solis)* | Sunday |
| 2nd | *mona* | Moon | *luna (dies Lunae)* | Monday |
| 3rd | *Tiw (Tig)* | Tiw= Mars | *Mars (dies Martis)* | Tuesday |
| 4th | *Woden (Odin)* | Woden= Mercury | *Mercurius (dies Mercurii)* | Wednesday |
| 5th | *Thunor* | Thunor= Jove | *Iuppiter (dies Iovis)* | Thursday |
| 6th | *Frig (Frigga)* | Frigga= Venus | *Venus (dies Veneris)* | Friday |
| 7th | 'Saturn' | common to both | *Saturnus (dies Saturni)* | Saturday |

At first it might well appear that there had been a transposition of the 'divine patrons' of the 4th and 5th days, since the identification of Woden with Mercury, and Thunor with Jove, is not immediately convincing. One would rather have expected the equation Woden-the-All-Father = Jove-Father-of-the-Gods, and Mercury, to some extent, shares qualities with Thunor. But a close examination of these gods, in all their aspects, will convince us that contemporary religious opinion was not at fault in identifying Woden (Odin) with Mercury, and Thunor with Jupiter. But I shall return to these identifications presently. For the moment, let us note what we may gather from the choice of gods to

protect the days of the week.

What is significant is the fact that the choice enables us to know which of their gods the Teuton Old English considered to be of the first rank.

In the week-day names, there are four native Great Gods, Tiw, Woden, Thunor and Frig (Frigga); the two Heavenly Lights - 'the Sun to rule the day, the Moon to rule the night' [5] - personified in a subtly different way from other races', other religions', personification, in that, with the Old English, mona, the Moon, was like the Sun, sunne, of the masculine gender.

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[5] I paraphrase Genesis, 1:16]

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Different from the practice amongst the majority of the Ancient World's religions, the deified Moon was, for the Teuton Old English, not a goddess but a god. There was also Satur(n), who may be an import from Roman belief - Roman Saturnus was originally a blight-god, and thus a proper member of any Fertility Cult's pantheon - but may be descended from a primitive Indo-European source common to both Proto-Teutonic and Proto-Italic. The fact that the sixth day is named after Saturn amongst the Celts also (modern Breton, Sadorn, 'Saturday') would seem to argue an Indo-European source common to both Celtic and Teutonic; for even though Celtics and Teutons were in close contact at the beginning of the present era, the Celts are hardly likely to have adopted a Teutonic nomenclature. The conclusion is irresistible that both Teutons and Celts took the name, Saturn, from a common source - and this common source is unlikely to have been other than Roman.

Are the Old English gods and goddesses Fertility deities?

Let us take the 'week-day' divinities in order.

First: Tiw. If, in using his name to replace that of Mars in the Roman week-day name-list, the Old English equated Tiw's characteristics with those of Mars, then, as in the case of Mars, Tiw must originally have been a pastoral deity. Stenton calls Tiw 'the pre-eminent war-god of the Germanic peoples', and so, indeed, he was; but Mars became a war-god only through his having (as the Guardian of crops and flocks) to defend the pastoral and agricultural activities of his devotees. The ancient Carmen Arvale, that hymn to Mars recorded in AD 218 as part of the ritual of the Arval Brethren, has been interpreted by Norden - it had become unintelligible to even the Arvals by the third century - to shew that it was a ritual to protect the boundaries, invoking, first the Lares, as the agri custodes, 'Guardians of the Tilled Plot', then Mars, 'who is not only the wild war-god, but also the protector of the farmers' crops, house and buildings, ... summoned to take his stand on the "threshold" and protect the land from harm.'

Finally, the hymn calls on the Semones (a name connected with the root SA, which gives, besides Latin semen, English seed). 'The Semones are a group of gods of whom little is known, but Norden

suggests that they are divine potencies, executive agents, as it were, for the supreme gods: "The Semones, manifestations of powers which preserve the people, will co-operate".' (6)

If Mars, then, was amongst the Romans a god whose pastoral origins had not been forgotten, the same must be true of the war-god, Tiw.

At first glance, the identification of Woden (Odin) with Mercury is not, as they say, 'all that obvious' - though we must never forget that the identification was obvious to the Old English of two thousand years ago.

On what was this identification based?

Mercury (Hermes among the Greeks), though best known in later times as the Messenger of the Gods, diaktoros, has his true nature shewn clearly enough in ancient Pelasgic sculptures, in which he is presented as a bearded middle-aged man, without hands or feet, but with a large and fully erect membrum virile, this last being the unmistakable badge of the Fertility God. (7)

Patron he may be of 'all secret dealings, cunning and stratagem', but he is also the god of good luck, especially, as Hesiod points out, with regard to increase of cattle, so that, to the Ancient World, Hermes/Mercury, though god of merchants, thieves and handcraftsmen, was pre-eminently a god of increase: ho nomios theos, 'The Pastoral or Shepherd God.'

This was the god whom the Old English equated with their own Woden, the All-Father? At first glance, as I said, the equation seems unwarranted (why, for instance, did the Teuton English not rather equate Woden the All-Father with Iuppiter Optimus Maximus, 'Jove, Best and Greatest'?); yet there must have been excellent reasons for the equation Woden = Mercury. What were these reasons?

Both gods, though potent in themselves, belonged to that class of supernatural being acting through magical instruments. The 'insignia' presented to Hermes/Mercury by Jove included not only the winged cap - petasus - and the magic wings for Mercury's sandals - talaria — but also the short curved sword, herpe.

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[6] The Latin Language, op. cit.

[7] Compare, e.g., the figure on the chalk-downs at Cerne Abbas, Dorset.

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Now this last word is obviously allied with an ancient IE. word for 'reap' (Latin, serpo, 'I reap'; Welsh, harff, 'sickle'; Russian, serp, 'sickle') that it is evident that, before it became a magic sword, herpe was simply a sickle - the proper and necessary symbol of an agricultural Fertility god.

Woden, too, like Mercury, is a god who is as well, or even better, known for his potent accessories as

for those qualities inherent in his character. Let us list the magical accessories of the two equated gods:

| *Mercury (Hermes)* | *Woden (Odin)* |
|---|---|
| winged cap – *petasus* | flying horse, *Sleipnir* |
| winged sandals – *talaria* | magic ships, *Skidbladnir* and *Naglfar* |
| 'scimitar' – *herpe* | magic spear, *Gungner* |
| magical golden rod – *caduceus*: hence his name, κρυσόρραπις, *chrysorrapis*, 'with wand of gold' | magic ring, *Draupner*, which produced eight replicas every ninth day |
| magical association with selected animals: *crayfish, cock, goat, scorpion, fly, tortoise* | magic associate animals: black ravens, *Huginn* (thought) and *Muninn* (memory); wolves, *Geri* and *Freki* |
| disguise: *all-concealing cloak* | disguise: one[8] of Woden's other names, *Grimr*, means 'a masked person' |

The points of resemblance between the two gods are as numerous as they are striking. Both were renowned for wisdom; Mercury's being a gift of the Greater Gods (especially Zeus/Jupiter), Woden's having been purchased - he gave an eye for a draught from the Well of Mimir, which gave All-Wisdom.

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[8] Stenton says that, 'so far as is known, he was the only god to whom the English peoples applied an alias', (i.e. Grimr.) This is not quite correct: in the complicated mythology of the Teutons, the high-priest of Odin (Woden) became the God Himself, and the priest's name was Sigge, son of Fridulph.

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His likeness to Mercury impressed the ancients, and, since Mercury was a Fertility god, Woden was likewise. The fact that each temple of Woden was in the charge of twelve priests - diar or drottnar - which, with the ever-present God, made up a coven of thirteen (as in the origin of Christianity) (9) is the strongest indication that we have here, in the worship of Woden, an aspect of the universal Fertility Cult. Woden's wife was Frigga (Frig, Freya).

There are other indications of Woden's right to be classed among the Fertility gods. His one eye, with which he could scan the whole world within the compass of a single brief glance, equates him partially with the one-eyed Cyclopes, 'sons of Earth and Heaven', and thus originally the personification of the beneficial inter-action between Sun and Rain; the Sky and Mother Earth; to produce the wealth of growing things. Woden certainly seems what the ancients held him to be: a Fertility God - and be it

noted further that he sat on his throne in Asgard with his two ravens perched always on the chair's back; ravens whose perpetual presence links him very closely with the ritual of the Basque country. (10)

If Thunor is Jove - and the Old English evidently thought so - then Thunor is as much a Fertility god as was, originally, Jove, whose name simply means 'Sky-Father', and whose 'All-Power' was primitively specialised to ensure fertility in man and beast and plant.

There remains but Woden's wife, Frig (Frigga), and no one doubts that she was a Fertility goddess.

And the rather shadowy 'Satur(n)' of 'Saturday' brings us back to one of the titles of Mars in his less warlike aspect: Mars Sator, 'Mars the Sower'; from the root of sator, 'Satur(n)' being obviously derived.

So that the four principal gods - as well as Satur(n) - that the Old English worshipped were all unequivocally Fertility gods - deities fitting to enter into the pantheon of any Fertility cult. What, then, of the Druids?

The 'historical truth' commonly accepted is that C. Suetonius Paulinus took his legionary troops north-west to the 'sacred groves' of the Druids on the isle of Mona (Anglesey), and there destroyed not merely the groves and the Druids, but Druidism itself.

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[9] The memory of the primitive Christian 'coven' of Christ and His Twelve survives curiously in the tradition by which the prelates of the Roman Church - now numbering many hundreds - are known collectively as 'the Twelve', the Pope addressing 'the Twelve' in his identity of 'Master'.

[10] Morrigu, also the Irish goddess of war, in her aspect of a hooded crow.

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Now a little thought, some time over these past nineteen centuries, should have persuaded the historians - who have been repeating this myth ever since Tacitus committed it to his Annals - to reject the story as too unlikely for credence. With all the organisation and modern mechanical and electronic equipment available to the secret police of totalitarian regimes, tyranny has not succeeded, as we know, in suppressing either contradictory opinions or religious belief. How could the burning of a sacred grove and the massacring of even hundreds of Druids have destroyed Druidism?

Again: the Romans ruled Roman-occupied Britain for four centuries, a span of time equivalent to that which separates us from the middle of Elizabeth I's reign.

The British, according to the legend, had all become 'Romanised'. Yet, the historical truth is, that, as soon as Roman rule was lifted, the Celts resumed their old tribal social organisation, neglected Latin (which survived only in the walled cities of London, York, Exeter, and some others) save as a

'prestige' affectation amongst some of the Welsh kings, and began again to produce domestic utensils, weapons, decorative objects and articles of personal adornment in that Scythian-inspired style which is seen to be as 'typical' of native Celtic art in the fourth, fifth and succeeding centuries as it had been in the days immediately preceding and following the Roman invasion of AD 43.

In the decoration of villas, temples and other buildings, in the period during which the Celtic Britons are so obviously moving back into control of national affairs, there is sometimes a merging of two art-styles, as in the temple of the (Celtic) god, Nodens, at Lydney on the Severn, where a rather debased 'classicism' keeps company with decorative themes of purely Celtic inspiration.

Again: for all the survival of Latin in English place-names, in those cases of survival where the fusion of two names (in two languages) denotes peaceful occupation by the invader or immigrant, the double name - as the very common Woodcote (wood, Anglo-Saxon; coed, 'wood', in British Celtic - now Welsh) - marks the co-operation of Briton and Saxon, and never - or hardly ever - that of Saxon and what the Saxons themselves called Boc-loeden; the Latin-speaking part of the British population.

Again to point out the possibility that the 'savage' nature of the Anglo-Saxon invasion may well have been over-written by monkish or other religious-subsidised historians, the correspondence of Pope Gregory and Augustine makes it clear that, certainly in the kingdom of Kent, there were many Christian churches of the Roman period, neglected, but unharmed by the new rulers - churches which, with only a little restorative work, could again be made usable. The attested presence of these Christian churches with the notable absence of Roman Christianity amongst the Celtic British demonstrates how ineffectually these subsidised churches tried to wean the Celts away from an older religion which, if we may believe Roman and later historians, was 'extirpated' at Mona in AD 60.

It is significant, in an examination of the relations between the newcoming Saxons and the indigenous Celts, that it is not only in ordinary place-names that there is evidence of friendly (or perhaps not actively hostile) contact. To such explanatory, 'macarontic', names as Woodcote, we must significantly add such as Weedon Beck and Weeden Bois, in Northamptonshire, as well as Weeden, near Aylesbury, where Weeden is the divine name, Woden (unaltered to this day in Woden Law - 'Woden's Grove') joined to the Celtic, dun, 'hill'. [11]

If the incoming Saxons could equate Woden with the corresponding Senior God of the Druidic Celtic religion, and if both Celtic and Saxon religions were basically Fertility Cults, then the surviving, pre-Celtic practitioners of the most ancient Fertility Cult of all (what we shall call the Religion of the Witches) might have had no difficulty in meeting the Saxon invaders on non-hostile terms. The conclusions to which all this evidence seems to force us is that what Stenton calls 'the case for the vitality of Old English heathenism' rests on attested and proven facts.

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[11] As all Celtic cities and towns, including London, were built on hills, the Celtic word, dun, came to acquire the extended meanings of 'settlement, tribal centre, township', and so came to provide the ending for many well-known Celtic town-names: often, on the Continent, with a Latin beginning, as Augustodunum, mod. Autun.

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That the Saxons seem to have been tolerant towards other religions is supported by the fact that abandoned Christian churches of Roman date were available to the Augustinian mission of AD 597, and the only explanation that I can offer for the manner in which the newcoming Roman Christians used the (often still heathen) Anglo-Saxons to attack the non-Roman Christians is that the necessity for doing so was presented to the Anglo-Saxon kings in a thoroughly convincing but not altogether honest fashion.

There is no question that the British Christians, firmly based at such places as Bangor in the west, and at Iona and Lindisfarne, in the north, had made no attempt to convert the heathen Anglo-Saxon; and left to his own religious devices, the heathen may have felt neglected, and even snubbed, by the indigenous Christians' ignoring of him as a possible recruit It was this apparently studied neglect of the Anglo-Saxon immigrants by the heads of the British Christian Church which may - more than the arguments of King Aethelred's Christian wife, the Frankish princess Berctha - have inclined the King of Kent to accept membership of the Roman Church, and forcibly to induct ten thousand of his pagan subjects into 'the Faith'.

Concessions had to be made, of course, even to a King with a Christian wife. In a famous and often-quoted letter to Augustine, Pope Gregory directs the missionary to 'accommodate the ceremonies of the Christian worship as much as possible to those of the heathen, that the people may not be much startled at the change'; and in particular the Pope advised Augustine to permit converts to kill and eat at the Christmas festival (which was, as we have seen, the New Year's Day -December 25 - of the heathen) a great number of oxen to the glory of God, as they had formerly done to the Devil - a passage already noted on page 135.

The retreat from compromise was to come much later -towards the end of the next century, when a formal adherence to Roman Christianity had been made by perhaps as many as half the total of the immigrant kings.

As Stenton says, 'that Gregory's attention was first called to Britain by a simple desire for the conversion of its heathen inhabitants may not be doubted. But Gregory was in the succession of ancient Roman statesmen, and could not have been indifferent to the political advantages which would follow from the reunion of a lost province of the empire to the church of its capital.'

By 'official' Roman thinking, Britain, as a province of the Empire, was not even lost - merely strayed; temporarily alienated; but still, and always, an inalienable Province of the Empire. As such it is classified in the writings of Jordanes, the Gothic historian of the sixth century.

My own view ranges further; I have long held that the Roman Church - its Head adopting the imperial, civil and religious insignia of the vanished secular empire - set out consciously and purposively to replace the Roman Empire of the West in regaining its lost provinces.

The Church, in its own organisation, had already adopted, in taking it over, the well-tried organisation of the State Religion: as has been well said, where there had been a flamen, the Church appointed a

bishop; where an arch-flamen, an archbishop. In the scarlet slippers of a Roman senator, and perpetuating, in his own high office, the title of Pontifex Maximus - the tide first borne by 'the King of the Sacred Rites', and afterwards by the Emperors - the Bishop of Rome seemed to unite in his person the highest dignity of ancient religion and modern dominant political theory.

Backed by such material ambitions, the fearless and ruthless missionaries worked towards one end: to secure conformity. If they managed to secure that, they were not much concerned with sincere belief. Lip-service is all that a tyranny requires; for lip-service will include all the 'outward signs of inward grace': attendance at official ceremonies, regular and generous contributions of Church or Party funds; abstention from 'disloyal' (open) comment. The realists who govern any big and powerful society know that they can expect no more than overt conformity; and that, once that is obtained, they need no more. The members of that society may disbelieve as much as they like; so long as they turn up for meetings and put money in when the box passes, then the society will be safe from 'saboteurs'.

In starting a new religion, one certainly needs faith. To keep that religion going, one does not need faith, one needs organising ability. This the heirs of Imperial Rome, the ambitious planners 'in the succession of ancient Roman statesmen', had in a measure which, for those disorganised days, was unique.

Once a sufficient number of English kings and sub-kings had been either 'converted' or made into allies of Christian Rome, the Church began to shew itself a little less tolerant of the Old Religion than its initial 'hands off' policy might have led the Old Believers to think. Nevertheless, the Church still proceeded at a prudent pace; 'Softly, softly catchee monkey' was still the watchword from Rome, and the Archbishop of Canterbury, Theodore, and his Dean, Hadrian, began to denounce Old Religion paganism definitely, though never intolerantly - by the standards of the day.

Theodore was a Middle Eastern, from the Cilician capital, Tarsus, birthplace of St Paul. Hadrian was a Negro - a novelty even for the seventh century: the first, but possibly not the last, man of his colour to become Dean of Canterbury.

On such provocative subjects as divorce, Theodore is more tolerant than even the English law-courts of today; on the matter of the Old Religion, he is, as I have said, definite without being unduly intolerant. It is obvious that, in forbidding the rites of 'paganism', he is also aware how subtly the Old Beliefs have entered into the fabric of the people's thinking and way of life.

First of all he attacks the habit - to be attacked again and again over the centuries - of 'guising'. The selection of this particular 'pagan' custom was probably inspired by the fact that the 'Other Name' for Woden was Grimr (surviving in Grimes dic, 'Grimsdyke'), meaning literally 'a masked person', for Woden, like some divine Haroun-al-Raschid, wandered all over the world disguised.

The Liber Poenitentialis of Theodore refers thus to the banned custom of 'guising' - a custom so old that in the Palaeolithic cave drawings of Ariege, there is the representation of a shaman dancing in the 'guise' of a wild beast.

In Latin which has already fallen from its strict classical standards, the Penitential Books warns:

Si quis in kalandas [should be kalendas] ianuarii in cervulo aut in virula (12) vadit, id est, in ferarum habitu se commutat, et vestiuntur pellibus pecudam, et assumunt capita bestiarum; qui vero taliter in ferinas speeds (should be speciebus) se transformant, III annos poeniteant; quia hoc daemoniacum est.

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[12] Sc. vetula.

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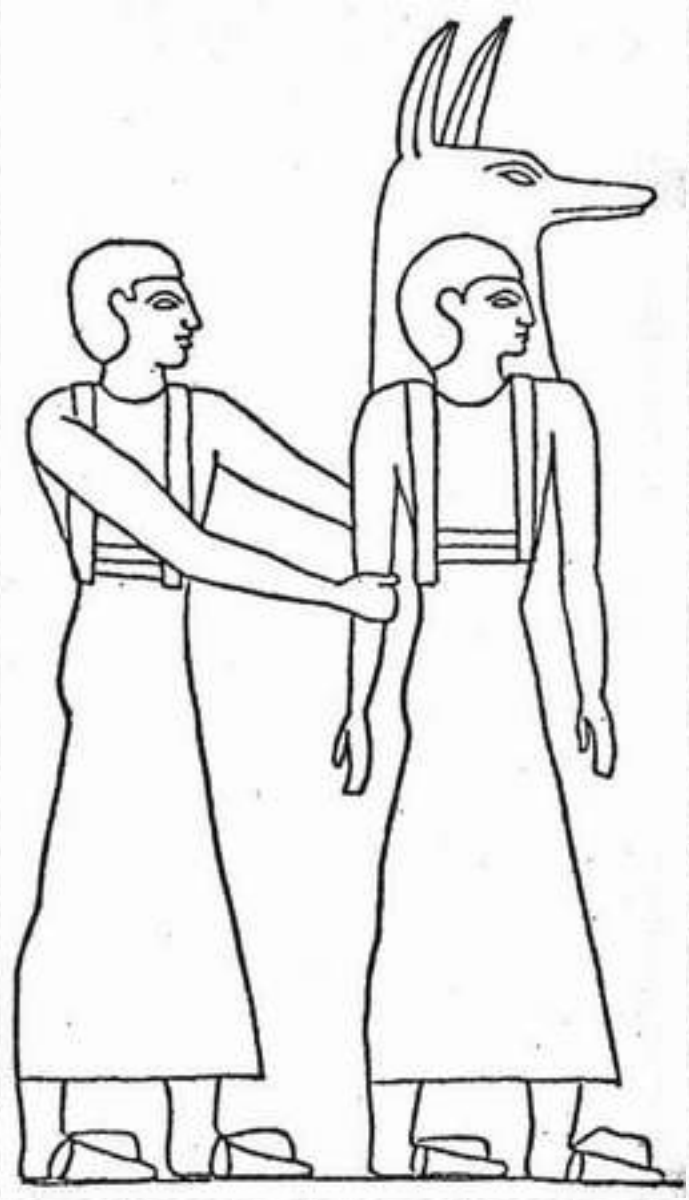

*Egyptian masked priest: There is a direct religio-cultural link between the 'Hallowe'en masks' of modern America and the animal masks shewn here. This temple painting from Denderah, Egypt, shews the masked priest being led by his companion to a religious ceremony. Later the masks were so made that the wearer's vision was not obscured. This dates from the XXVI Dynasty.*

Whosoever, at the beginning of January, ventures forth disguised as a young stag (fawn) or a cow-calf, (13) that is to say, to change himself into the likeness of wild beasts by dressing himself in animal-

skins and masking himself with their heads: to any such as truly, in this wise, so disguise themselves, let there be a three-year penance, for such things are devilish.

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[13] 'In cervulo aut vetula' is translated by Margaret Murray (The Witch-Cult in Western Europe) 'as a stag or a bull'. The diminutive forms are very clear: cevulus is not 'stag', but 'fawn', and vetula is certainly not 'bull', but 'calf' - and female at that. Dr G.B. Gardner's rendering of Theodore's slipshod Latin is such a botch as to be less exact than the original.

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This, of course, was a mild punishment, compared with the punishments which, nearly a thousand years later, were awaiting unbelievers.

Theodore also forbids eating and drinking in a heathen temple, a prohibition which seems to imply that the heathen had meeting places more permanent than is implied in such names as Woden Law, 'Woden's Grove'.

But perhaps the heathen were using abandoned temples of Roman origin; which would have irritated Theodore, who would have seen in them buildings easily adaptable to the True Faith.

For the next four centuries, earnest enjoinders to 'support' Christianity and eschew heathenism issued from kings and ecclesiastics. The unenthusiastic, apologetic tone of even those prohibitions issuing from ecclesiastics is not easy to explain, unless we assume that Christianity in England was still only the faith of a minority, though perhaps, those issuing the prohibitions did so under orders. Since the tone of these constant reminders to uphold Christianity and forswear heathenism reminds us of the regular 'affirmations of solidarity' with Soviet Russia made by that Empire's colonial dependencies, we may not be far wrong in thinking that kings and prelates were speaking with the voice of, and on the orders of, Rome.

This, for instance, sounds half-hearted and distinctly lacking in spontaneity; a mere duplication of a propagandist hand-out:

Let every Christian man do as is needful to him; let him strictly observe his Christian duties. ... Let us venerate right Christianity, and totally despise every heathenism.

The unhappy likeness to the 'Socialist solidarity' resolutions will not pass unnoticed. This quotation is from the Laws of King Aethelred (978-1016).

Unlike the Penitential of Theodore, later exhortations to right conduct rarely threaten penalties, which looks as though heathenism must have made rapid advances at the expense of Roman Catholicism. The Laws of Wihtraed, King of Kent (690), impose fines on 'those who offer to devils', but Kent, first of the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms to be Christianised, was always under direct and exceptional Roman influence; the Confessionale and Poenitentiale of Ecgberht, first archbishop of York, are far more

moderate. Published between 734 and 766, they merely forbid offering to 'devils', auguries, vows taken at wells, (sacred) stones or trees and the gathering of herbs with any incantations save Christian ones.

There is a certain tightening up of laws against 'witchcraft', especially after the beginning of the tenth century, when 'paganism' had been reinforced by new waves of heathens, mostly Norse and Danes. Conversion had soon gathered these invaders into an uneasy partnership with the now settled English; but that the Danish invasions had 'given a shot in the arm' to the Old Religion is evident from the warnings which were officially issued against commerce with heathenism.

Fines are threatened, but the system of fining is often hard to understand, as when, by the laws of Athelstan (924-930), a person ('witch' is not mentioned) kills another by sorcery and cannot deny the crime, the killer must die. But if he deny the guilt - even though the threefold ordeal shall prove him guilty - he is punished with only 120 days imprisonment.

But mostly what the kings and prelates publish are nothing more than pious exhortations to defend Christianity and abhor heathenism. As the Ecclesiastical Canons of King Edgar (959) urge: 'We enjoin that every priest zealously promote Christianity, and totally extinguish every heathenism; and forbid well-worshippings, necromancies and divinations; enchantments and man-worshippings, and all the other vain practices which are carried out with various spells, and with frith-splots,(14) and with elder-trees and trees of other kinds; and with stones, and with many other delusions, with which men do much of what they should not. And we enjoin that every Christian man zealously accustom his children to Christianity and teach them the Paternoster and the Creed. And we enjoin, that on feast-days, they abstain from heathen songs and devil's games.'

This is very mild indeed, and is preached from no position of strength. The fact is that the religious situation, as the first millennium drew to an end in only-just-politically-united England, was sadly confused; and even the most zealous guardians of Christianity hardly knew how to distinguish between friend and foe.

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[14] I cannot accept Dr Murray's translation of frith-splot as from 'frith = brushwood, splot = plot of ground; sometimes used for "splotch, splash".' 'Splot' is a plot of ground; but 'frith' is peace' - and 'frithsplot' is 'holy ground' or ground where men may meet in peace.

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The Danes, for instance, have always been represented as providing as it were a 'boost' for Paganism; but numismatics -as its evidence so often does - flatly contradicts the legend of the 'anti-Christ Dane'.

The Viking coinages of England, Ireland and Man are liberally endowed with what appears to be Christian sentiment, and it is hard to maintain that this was 'propaganda' to popularise the Viking invaders with the now fully-Christianised inhabitants of England if, at the same time, the theory of the 'ruthless, pagan' Viking is maintained. Obviously only one of these theories may be correct.

The coinages of Danish East Anglia (circa 885-915) include silver pennies produced as 'memorials' to St Martin of Lincoln and St Edmund, that King of East Anglia who had been defeated and killed at Hoxne, in 869, by the very invaders who now issued a penny to commemorate 'the Saint's death!' (But see page 150). Both pennies are 'piously' marked with a Cross.

And though the coins of Danish Northumbria (circa 898-915) are not, in their designs or legends, ostensibly 'Christian' (though they do all bear the Cross), one penny carries the name of Plegmund, Archbishop of Canterbury (890-914) coupled with that of the King; and a Danish copy of an English penny reproduces the original Plegmund design intact.

In the Viking coinage of York, the 'Christian' sentiment is even more apparent - and more puzzling. Not only do the silver pennies and halfpennies bear the Cross - an elaborate 'patriarchal' design joins the now usual long and short crosses and the cross-crosslet - but at least two quotations from the Liturgy, in Latin, appear on the coinage: MIRABILIA FECIT ('He hath worked wonders') and DOMINVS DEVS REX ('The Lord, God and King'). The Viking coinage of York and the English coins of the Hiberno-Norse Vikings (circa 919-954) both include a 'St Peter of York' issue, with a cross pattee, and the legend SCI PETRI MO (contracted Sancti Petri Moneta, -'money of St Peter'), with the addition, on the Hiberno-Norse coins, of EBORACEI ('struck at York'). (15)

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[15] The spelling, on the York coins, of the Latin name for the city, Eboracum or Eburacum in classical Latin, varies greatly, varying from Eboraceum to Earices, most forms being in the locative-ablative case. The distortion of original Eboraco has produced one interesting (unintentional?) form, Ebraice, 'Jewish'.

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Some of this coinage was struck in France, which may account in part - but only in part - for the fact that all legends are in Latin: King Siefred is SIEFREDES REX; Earl Sihtric is SITRIC COMES. Within the Hiberno-Norse Viking coinage, two issues are of particular interest: those of Anlaf-Sihtricsson. In the issue of his first reign, 941-944, Anlaf calls himself, on his coins ANLAF CVNVNC ('King Anlaf'), but on the coins of his second reign, 948-952, he has changed his style, not only to ONLAF REX, but also to ANLAF REX TO [TIVS] B [RITANNIAE] - the first time that the Roman name for 'England' has been brought back on an English coin.

And all this 'Christianity' is accompanied with emblems of undoubted 'Pagan' provenience and significance: the Hammer, the Sword, the Raven, the Bow-and-Arrow. A possible hint of some religious 'deal' is perhaps suggested by the double symbol on a penny of uncertain origin, but possibly of Sihtric: a sword and key. As this coin is associated with the York issues, and thus (again possibly) with the 'St Peter' issues, the sword may represent the (pagan) Viking; the key, 'St Peter' - though the sword is also Peter's emblem.

That this possible religious deal was, in fact, made, seems to be proven by the fact that King Guthred,

who reigned at York between the reigns of Haldene and Siefred, provided a resting-place, at Chester-le-Street (whose name means 'Roman fort on the stone-paved road'), for the relics of St Cuthbert, Bishop of Lindisfarne, who died three hundred and more years before.

However, though Cuthbert, originally a pillar of Celtic, as opposed to Roman, Christianity, submitted to Rome, and counselled his followers to accept the metropolitan authority of the Archbishop of Canterbury, he may have been revered, by the Pagans, as an opponent and victim of Roman tyranny.

As Stenton says:

... it is significant that between 670 and 690 Archbishop Theodore found it necessary to appoint penances for those who sacrificed to devils, foretold the future with their aid, ate food that had been offered in sacrifice, or burned grain after a man was dead for the well-being of the living and of the house.

It is still more significant that he was asked for his ruling whether altars might be hallowed or masses said in churches where heathen were buried, (16) for the fact that such a question could be put indicates the survival of heathenism among the higher orders of society. It is also clear that this survival was not merely the result of conservatism in remote parts. In Kent itself, a generation after King Eorcenberht had ordered his people to destroy their idols, the laws of Wihtraed contain provision against offerings to devils. There is no doubt that Christianity was the dominant religion throughout England in 664.

*The Witch of Edmonton: Though this engraving of Elizabeth Sawyer (note again the 'Witch' forename)*

*comes from Caulfield's Wonderful Museum of Remarkable Portraits, published in 1794, Elizabeth, the Witch of Edmonton, was hanged as a witch over 170 years before. Note the hat, with its origins in a remote Mediterranean past - another striking example of survival.*

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[16] This looks as though churches had been appropriated by the 'pagans' for regular use.

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But it is equally certain that the older beliefs of the English people, though driven underground, (17) were still alive.

Taking leave to doubt the assertion that Christianity was the dominant religion throughout England, either in 664 or at any other time, I cannot but agree with all that Stenton says in the passage just quoted; adding my own opinion that what applied to English religion in 664 applied with even more force in 984.

As the year 1000 drew near, the superstitious everywhere looked for anything from the appearance of Christ-in-His-Majesty to Ragnarok, when gods as well as men would perish, and only Vidar and Vali would survive the world-cataclysm, to rebuild the universe on an eternal basis.

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[17] My italics - M.H.

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## 7 - The Language Of The Witches

In the preceding pages, I have several times mentioned that such-and-such a word, found in the Old Fertility vocabulary, is Basque or Basque-derived. Now that our history of Witchcraft has brought us within sight of Witchcraft's extinction as an organised religious system, the time has come to ask whence the Western Fertility religion was derived, and how it became disseminated throughout Europe. In identifying the traditional language of the Cult, preserved, astonishingly free from serious corruption, in the inherited rituals, we shall, I maintain, be able to answer those questions.

Many years ago, examining the racial origins of the English people, Bradley sought the evidence of a pre-Celtic tongue in the names of rivers, mountains and other permanent features of the landscape - it being widely recognised that such names survive many changes of overlordship. Bradley thought that he had proved the currency, in pre-Celtic times, of a language allied to the Arabic; and before we dismiss this supposed discovery as so much 'vapid balderdash', (1) we must pause to consider the significance of the numerous Arabic town and village-names that Isaac Taylor noted in Switzerland, and my own theory that the alternative name of an ancient German tribe (their 'real' name, Teuta, modern German, deutsch, simply means 'The People') - Alemanni (or Alamanni), as recorded by Tacitus - is the Arabic al yaman, 'on the left hand side', i.e. 'the South' (because, if one faces the East, the South is on the left - compare the name of 'the Yemen', from the same Arabic phrase).

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[1] The contemptuous term with which C.L. Ewen (Some Witchcraft Criticisms, 1938) dismisses the theories of the late Dr Margaret Murray, an opinion which is quoted, with obvious approval, by H.R. Trevor-Roper in his The Witch-Craze of the 16th and 17th Centuries. Trevor-Roper describes Ewen as 'a real scholar'.

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Well; the explanation of Arabic names in Europe - not unconnected with the fact, that the greatest number of Arab coins have been found in Sweden — is something to which another investigator must give his time and patience. Here it is only necessary to say that Bradley was what the children call 'very warm' - for it was a language from North Africa, as Morris-Jones later surmised and proved, which was spoken here before the Celts came. By one of those happy accidents, it has survived, even as a spoken language (as Ancient Egyptian survives in the Coptic dialect), and it was my identifying this millennia-old tongue as the language of the Witches which enabled me to do the following most important things:

1. Translate many of the ritual texts, now supposed by the sceptics to be mere gibberish, and by the faithful to be so corrupt as to defy analysis and interpretation.

2. Restore, through those translations of the texts, enough of the ancient ritual, so as to clarify the philosophy inspiring the ritual.

3. Determine, through the restored ritual, much more closely the type of religion with which I was

dealing.

4. Date, to within fairly close limits, the introduction of language-and-religion into Western Europe.

5. Demonstrate, by the continuous appearance of new names in the record, but still in the old, yet surviving language, that the closest contact had been maintained between the Centre of the Cult and its outlying 'parishes' - a contact not less close (and often, one feels, closer) than that subsisting between the Pope and, say, a rural dean.

6. Give proof that local changes in ritual practice, e.g. Italian Witchcraft's subordinating the Male to the Female Divinity, were not 'heretical' breakaways, and that the tight-knit organisation - Continent-wide - survived until it could no longer survive against the totalitarian fury of monastic (2) monomania.

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[2] The crusade against Witchcraft was conceived and carried through, as we shall see, not by the established clergy of the Roman Church (very many of whom were rightly suspected of being more 'pagan than Christian) but principally by one self-dedicated order of monks and priests, the Dominicans. The Jesuits, to their credit, were almost always opposed to the witch-hunts, and two famous Jesuits had the courage openly to denounce the persecution of the witches.

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How greatly - and how quickly - does a language change? There may be no dogmatic answers to this question; for any language may, given the right conditions, be almost completely protected from change. Of all the languages descended from the parent-language, Indo-European ('Ayran'), Lithuanian reveals itself as the most sturdily conservative of all. Its forms are often of such incredible antiquity that comparable archaisms are to be found only in Sanskrit, which ceased to be a spoken language (if it ever was a spoken language, that many now doubt) more than three thousand years ago. To illustrate my point by the example of a single word of Indo-European origin, surviving in six languages - I select the word for 'snake'.

**Sanskrit** - circa 1000 BC - ahis
**Greek** - circa 800 BC - (ophis)
**Latin** - circa 300 BC - anguis
**Old High German** - circa AD 800 - unc
**English** - modern - snake
**Lithuanian** - modern - angis

Some three thousand years of world-change separate modern Lithuanian angis from Sanskrit ahis, yet how eroded has become the Old High German of a thousand years ago - unc -whilst only a philologist could recognise in English snake the Indo-European word from which both ahis and angis developed.

Yet Lithuania is not cut off from the world; she has had, for centuries, great cities, thriving ports: no

one may explain this curious conservatism which has guarded her ancient language from serious deformation through the pressures of perhaps more than five thousand years.

Greek is another ancient tongue which has changed far less than one might have thought, though the conscious conservatism of the Byzantine emperors inhibited change for more than a thousand years. Still, even though there is a 'popular Greek', modern literary Greek, with its carefully preserved spelling, could easily be understood by Socrates or Plato.

What made for the relative preservation of the Witches' language was the traditionalism that one always finds, amongst all people and at all times, in the highly conservative mentalities of Religion and Law. In these two disciplines, archaic forms not only survive, but are carefully guarded against neglect, erosion and decay. The archaic forms of English and Scottish law are outdone in a sentimental attachment to antiquity for its own sake in the United States of America, where legal practices which have been swept away by successive reforms in England still make up much of corpus of United States federal and state law.

I expected, all the same, to find that the original language of the Witches had undergone some change, especially as the area in which the language was still spoken had been constricting seriously for the past three thousand years; a fact which meant that, though the 'outlying parishes' in communion with the Centre maintained, throughout this long period, close, even intimate contact, the language had ceased to be a spoken one away from the Centre, with the result that it would tend ever more to become deformed as it ceased to be understood. (Listen to the average Roman Catholic priest's pronunciation of the last words of the Ave Maria: '... Blessed art Thou amongst women, and Blessed is the fruit of Thy'm Jesus,' where 'Thy'm' stands for a correct, 'Thy womb'. With no written text for reference, to cover the original and halt corruption of the text, the ritual speakers of the Witches' language, I feared, would have had a full opportunity to play -I nearly said, 'merry Hell' - with the original tongue.)

Decipherment, as I have learnt by experience, is a matter of almost anything but 'inspired guessing', which never yet got the would-be decipherer anywhere. It was 'inspired guessing' which led Captain Conder, R.E., to 'guess' that the Hittite hieroglyphics were in the Turkish language - even though, when the Hittite inscriptions were written, the Turks had not even begun to move from their original home in Eastern Mongolia - so that Conder's 'inspired guessing' put back the decipherment of Hittite nearly forty years.

I tried to approach the decipherment of the Witch rituals with no preconceived ideas that might tempt me into guessing or prevent my seeing what it would not suit me to see. I was even prepared to test the texts to see whether or not they were (as so many people said they were) pure gibberish.

But if the 'gibberish' of the phrase hocus-pocus derives from a meaningful hoc est Corpus (meum) ('his is [My] Body'), I was prepared to believe (especially after some of my more difficult and rewarding decipherments) that something which made sense lay behind the apparent gibberish of the Witch rituals.

Of course, at a first glance, it was easy to see what adulteration had overtaken the language, even

though one did not yet understand it. Here were misspelt and mis-understood Latin, Greek and Hebrew - 'Athatos', for Greek Athanatos,(3) 'immortal'; 'Ciclap' for 'Cyclops'; 'Tetragammaton' in the same text as the correct 'Tetragrammaton'; Latin Semones, 'fertility spirits', rendered Semonei; (4) etc., and to crown the absurdities of the ignorant repetition of rituals no longer understood, the old V form of ampersand has been misread as a mysterious divine or semi-divine being, 'Z', who is included amongst those spirits conjured to provide the gift of invisibility.

For my first experiment in deciphering the Witch texts, I chose a fairly well-known chant from the Initiation Ritual. The chant is given both in Peter Railing's The Warlock's Book (W.H. Allen, London, 1971) and Raymond Lament Brown's A Book of Witchcraft (David & Charles, Newton Abbot, 1971). I shall give the Haining version here, partly because it is all in the ancient tongue, whereas the Lament Brown version is partly in English, and also because the text of the latter version looks to me as though it has had the misfortune to be edited by someone ignorant of the ancient tongue. As it stands, the Lament Brown version is not so much gibberish as rubbish - a fact that my attempted translation of the text as given in Haining will, I trust, make evident.

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[3] Yet original N is preserved in the English name of the flower 'tansy'.

[4] Misspelt or not, the mention of the Semones is interesting - as shewing the tenacity of ideas in religion. The Semones were fertility spirits (from the ancient root, sa, 'to sow') and were invoked in the famous hymn of the Arval Brothers, already so corrupt as to be unintelligible by the beginning of the Roman Empire.

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Here is the Priestess's chant, as she opens the ceremony of Initiation:

Eko: Eko: Azarak; Eko: Zomelak (5)

Bagohi Lacha bachabe
Lamac cahi achababe
Karellyos

Lamac lamac Bachalyas
Cabahagy sabalyos
Baryolos

Lagos atha cabyolas
Samahac atha famolas
Hurrahya.

With this text plainly written out, and lying before me on the desk, I studied it carefully, letting ideas flow into and out of my head. One or two words caught my attention. In particular, Lamac lamac ...

sabalyos ... Samahac... seemed to echo the words of Christ on the Cross: 'Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?', 'My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" But a mere consonance of sound in even one or two words is not sufficient to justify the assumption that one has broken the cipher. All languages exhibit chance coincidences of sound; but not, save in rare cases, of meaning: hay, in Turkish, means 'living, lively, alive'; in Spanish, hay means 'there is' - French 'il y a'; in English, hay means 'dried grass, used for cattle feed'. The three words, all spelt the same and pronounced not very differently, have totally different origins and totally different meanings. I decided that I was not justified in thinking that the language of the Witches might be Aramaic.

One of the first rules of cryptanalysis (an American word but a good one) is to study the undeciphered text, and, usually by counting, but in any other way which seems to get the imaginative puzzle-solving faculties working, to endeavour to detect a pattern. Now, in studying the 'Eko: Azarak, Eko: Zomelak (or Zamilak ...)' text, I was struck by the relative frequency of the suffixed particle (an enclitic? a suffixed article, as in Roumanian and Danish?) ac/ak — Azarak, Zomelak, Lamac and Samahac, Four words, with six occurrences all told (Lamac occurs three times).

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[5] Zamilak in Lament Brown.

[6] Mark. xvi. 34. The words are often spelt differently.

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Now there is a language in which the -ac termination is frequent, and I knew of only one such language: Basque.

In Basque, -ac (-ak) is the suffixed definite article, either singular (nominative case, active, of the so-called 'definite' declension) or plural (nominative case, simple, again of the so-called 'definite' declension). Were these words ending in -ok (-ac) nouns with the suffixed definite article, 'the'? I decided to check on these possible nouns first, and when I turned up the word nearest in sound to azarak I must admit that I felt something of a shock.

For azaro, in Basque, is 'November', and it is on the Eve of November ('All Hallows') that the Witches hold one of the two greatest festivals of their year. This certainly looked promising, especially since the nominative definite of azaro is azaroac - not very far from azarak, bearing in mind that Basque words differ greatly in pronunciation even from province to province of the Basque country; and here we were dealing with a word which might have been imported into the Fertility ritual of Witch Britain many, many centuries ago. The wonder would be, not that it had changed a little from the original Basque, but that it had retained, over the ages, so near a resemblance.

Now, if one be a witch, what does one - what did one - do in November? Hold the rituals and have a feast. Yes, here was a possible clue to the meaning of 'Eko'. For, in order to feast, one has to kill; and before the discovery that hay and root-crops can feed animals through the winter, November was the time for the feast which followed the (compulsory) killing of all but the basic stock.'

The cultivation of meadows, with their provision of hay, and, even more, the sowing of root-crops - turnips, swedes, mangolds, etc. - did away with the necessity of feasting, though not the voluntary participation in what had come to be, for witches and others alike, one of the most pleasant social affairs of any year. So what did 'Eko' mean? - though I more than half suspected what the dictionary was about to turn up.

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[7] Hence, as we saw on page 134, the Anglo-Saxon name of 'Blodmonath'.

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Yes. Eho (pronounce the 'h' as a chi [x] in Greek or the 'ch' in the Scots word, loch) means 'to kill, to digest, to grind'. Controlling my desire to shout 'Eureka!', I still felt that all looked most promising. As Professor Blegen wrote to Michael Ventris, decipherer of the 'Linear B' Mycenean script, 'All this seems too good to be true Is coincidence excluded?', I should have to take good care that, in my attempted decipherment of the Language of the Witches, I must exclude coincidence. And if eho meant 'kill' (or 'digest' or 'grind') and azar(o)ac meant '(the) November', what did Zomelak (Zamilak) mean?

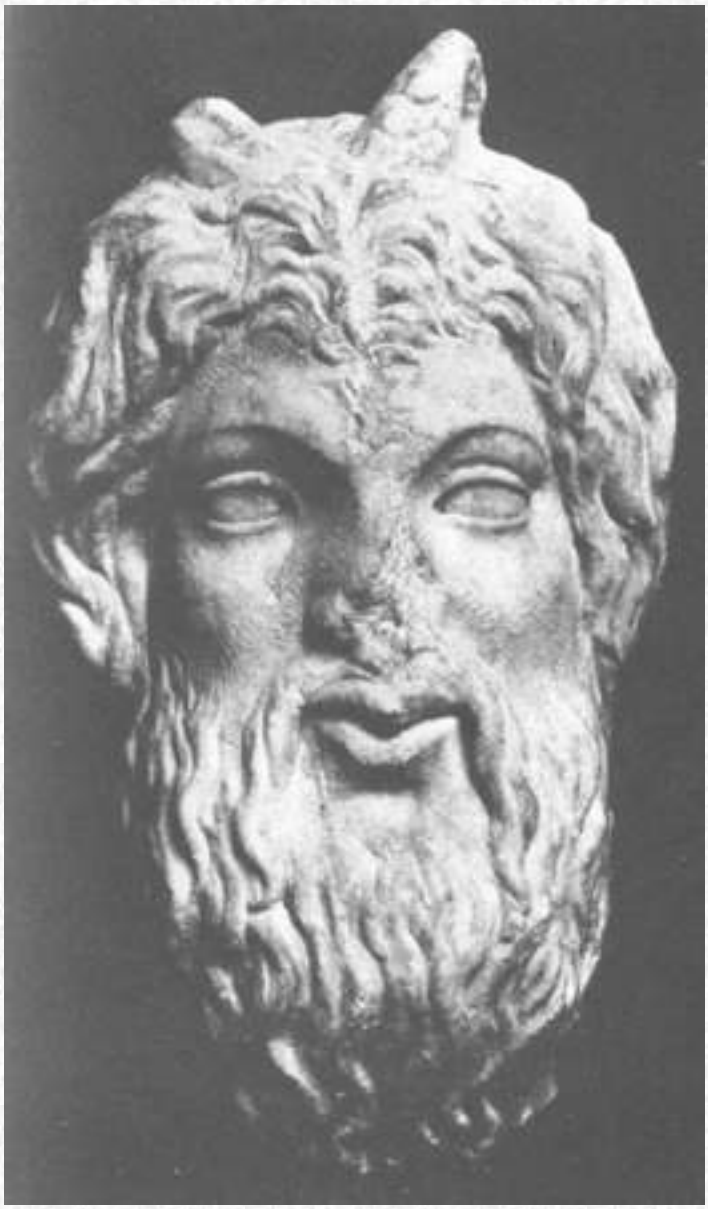
Remembering that, in strangers' pronunciation of Basque, as of other languages, the sounds of I and r seem to be interchangeable, there were two promising words in the dictionary, both from the same root: zamariac, 'the horse', and zaramat, 'I shall transport thee thyself.

Deciding to make, for the present, no attempt to link the supposed Basque words, as I discovered them, in the intricate syntax of the language, I wrote down the words of the ritual chant, and tried to suggest a Basque original for each word. Here is what the list looked like after I had finished what, I knew, must be only the initial stage of a decipherment:

| *Ritual word* | *Possible Basque original* | *English* |
|---|---|---|
| Eko | Eho | 'kill', 'grind', 'digest' |
| Azarak | Azaróac | '(the) November' |
| Zamilak } | zamariac | '(the) horse' |
| Zomelak } | záramat | 'I shall transport thee thyself' |
| Bagabi | bahe-gabe } bah'gabe } | 'without a sieve' |

Now this, I thought, is strange! In many a witch-trial, the ability of the witches to transport themselves in a sieve is mentioned. But, in any case, the words of the First Witch in Macbeth echoed in my memory:

A sailor's wife had chestnuts in her lap,
And munch'd and munch'd and munch'd: 'Give me,' quoth I:
'Aroint thee, witch!' the rump-fed ronyon cries.
Her husband's to Aleppo gone, master o' the Tiger:
But in a sieve I'll thither sail,
And, like a rat without a tail,
I'll do, I'll do, and I'll do ...



**9** *Pan - God of the 'Everywhere'. Pan, the 'Universal', was the semi-human personification of the Goat, in its aspect of a Fertility symbol. The Goat rivalled the Bull in the Old Religion as the archetype of Fertility, and, as Pan, the Goat (who later became the Devil of Christian mythology) was one of the most powerful gods of the early pantheon. (Photograph British Museum)*

**10** *The 'Christ of the Old Religion'. Unfinished sketch for a mosaic found on a wall of a Roman catacomb of the second century. Painted perhaps within a century of the Crucifixion, the portrait is instinct with those gentle, generous characteristics that the Old Religion would have sought and recognised in their Incarnate God. (Page 92) (Photograph Count Romeo Gallenga, Rome, through Contrad Research Library)*

**11a** *Analogical symbolism. The symbolism of any 'enclosed' order or society tends to become ever more catachrestic - and so less instantly comprehensible to the outsider. The Fish, an ancient fertility symbol, acquired a special ritual significance in primitive Christianity, perhaps because the name of the Mother, Maria, means 'the Seas' in Latin. And because the Fish, and so its home, the Sea, were sacred, so also was the symbol of Man's dominance on the Sea: the Boat - a potent religio-sexual symbol to this day. Illustrated is a finely modelled bronze funerary lamp, found in a Christian catacomb of the second century. (Contrad Research Library)*

**11b** *Funerary survivals. The Fertility element in early Christianity. This funerary lamp, dating from the second century and found in the catacombs at Rome, combines the symbolism of Life and Death: the latter in the palm-wreathed 'living' face of the deceased; the former in the pattern of the lamp, which consciously symbolises both male and female organs of generation. (From the Author's collection)*

**12a** *The 'Bull theme' spans the centuries. The pottery bowl, made under Mycenaean inspiration at Enkomi, Cyprus, at some time between 1300 and 1200 BC, shews the ancient symbols of the Bull, archetype of Divine Fertility, and the Bird, archetype of Divine Omniscience. The Bull was the 'cult object' par excellence throughout 'Mycenaea', where elaborate rituals cent: around his sacrificial*

*death. (Photograph : British Museum)*

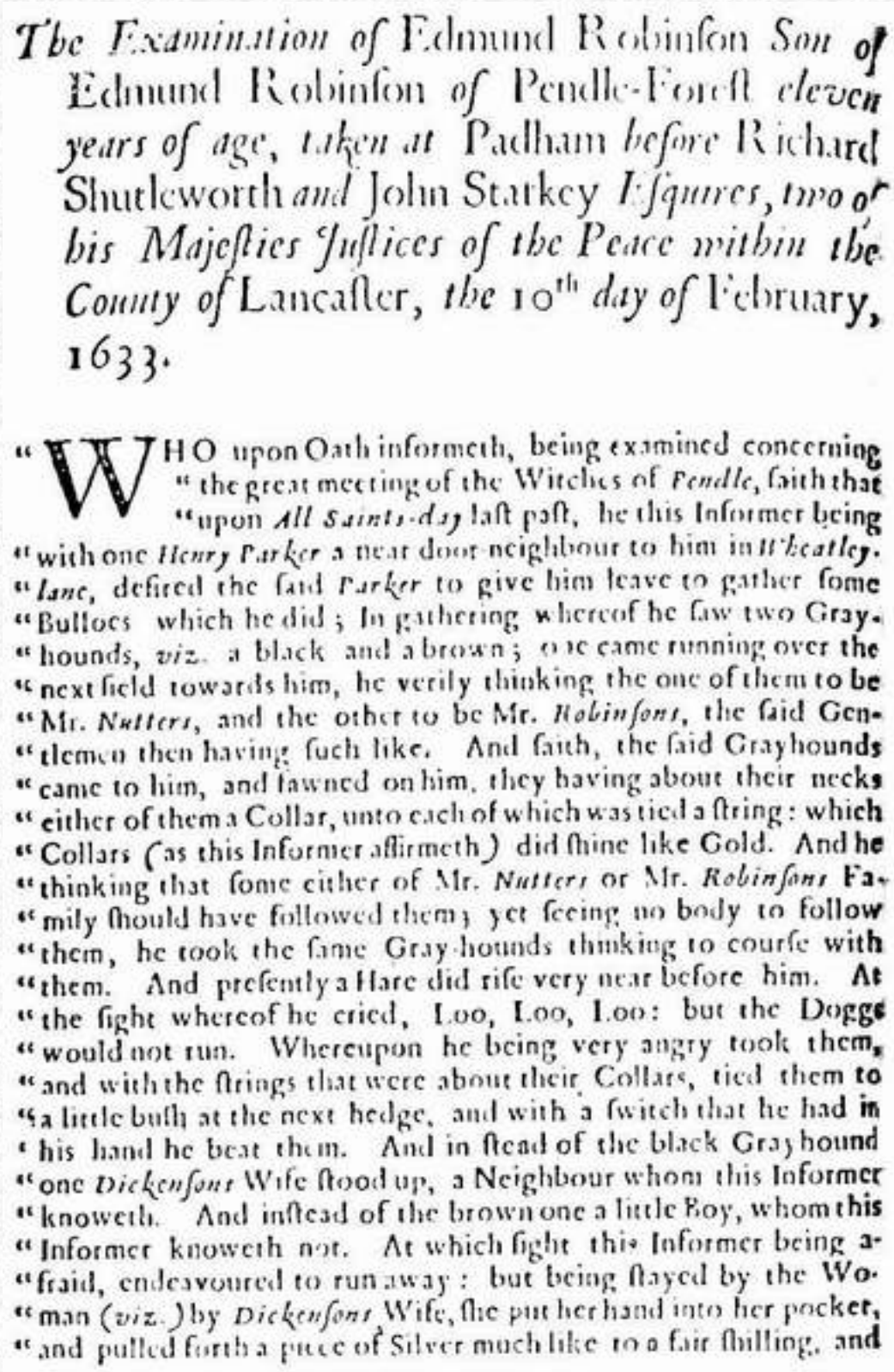
**12b** *The 'cult object' dominates men's minds still, though it is over 2,0 years later, and 2,000 miles away. See how the 'Bull theme' persists on this silver-gilt cup, the famous 'Halton Moor Cup', found with a coin hoard in Lincolnshire, and dating from AD 1027. (Photograph: British Museum)*

**13a** *'No Christianity here!' The not-so-cryptic announcement, in an officially Christian place of worship, that 'Believers in the Old Faith are still welcome here!'. Commonly described in Church and Government publications as 'animals playing musical instruments', this carving, from a Norman capital in St Gabriel's Chapel, in the crypt of Canterbury Cathedral, shews the two Horned Gods - Ram and Goat - and the Fish-Serpent; all three, either separately or together, symbolising the principal of Universal Fertility. It was for no Christian worship that these three ancient symbols were so carefully - and joyously - carved for the instruction and reassurance of the Faithful. As I have explained elsewhere, the 'saint's' name, Gabriel, indicates a former temple (in Roman times) of the Cabiri, Samothracian demon gods. (Photograph: National Monuments Record)*

**13b** *The 'Serpents' of Lanmeur. These 'serpents' - as they are locally called -guard the tomb of St Melar in the church named after him at Lanmeur, Finisterre, Brittany. The crypt was traditionally built in AD 779 to house the body of the dead saint, who lies buried in an unmarked grave between the two 'serpent' pillars: a prophet of the New Faith guarded to eternity by the ever-potent symbols of the Old. The 'serpents' are, in fact, one of the two most ancient symbols of the Sun - the footed cross (swastika, fylfot) or the 'three-foot' (triskeles), still used as a national symbol by the Manx and the Sicilians. By making the members of the triskeles resemble serpents - themselves, because of their likeness to the male organ of generation, a potent Fertility symbol - the designers of the Old Religion, obviously very active at Lanmeur in 779, ensured the utmost 'mana' for their symbols. (From the Author's collection)*

**14** *The ritual killing of Thomas Becket At the altar of Canterbury Cathedral, Christmastide, 1170/1, as surrogate Victim for King Henry II, the Incarnate God of the Old Religion Note that Becket's cap is of the Mithraic 'Phrygian' type, and that the knight actually delivering the fatal stroke is Sir Reginald FitzUrse ('Son of the Bear') whose name shews him to be a priest or at least a worshipper of Artemis, the Bear-Goddess (Photograph British Museum)*

**15** *Absolution for the 'Incarnate God' The ritual 'penance' undergone by King Henry II after the equally ritual 'murder' of Thomas Becket The King, tripped to his underclothes, but wearing the royal crown (with the Fertility symbol of the living plant), prepares to be 'punished' for Becket's voluntary death as the Divine Victim Note that the instrument of punishment is a birch of broom (Latin, planta genista), from which the Plantagenets took their name. (Contrad Research Library)*



*The Examination of* Edmund Robinson *Son of* Edmund Robinson *of* Pendle-Forest *eleven years of age, taken at* Padham *before* Richard Shutleworth *and* John Starkey *Esquires, two of his Majesties Justices of the Peace within the County of* Lancaster, *the* 10th *day of* February, 1633.

"WHO upon Oath informeth, being examined concerning "the great meeting of the Witches of *Pendle*, saith that "upon *All Saints-day* last past, he this Informer being "with one *Henry Parker* a near door neighbour to him in *Wheatley*. "*Lane*, desired the said *Parker* to give him leave to gather some "Bullocs which he did; In gathering whereof he saw two Gray- "hounds, *viz.* a black and a brown; one came running over the "next field towards him, he verily thinking the one of them to be "Mr. *Nutters*, and the other to be Mr. *Robinsons*, the said Gen- "tlemen then having such like. And saith, the said Grayhounds "came to him, and fawned on him, they having about their necks "either of them a Collar, unto each of which was tied a string: which "Collars (as this Informer affirmeth) did shine like Gold. And he "thinking that some either of Mr. *Nutters* or Mr. *Robinsons* Fa- "mily should have followed them; yet seeing no body to follow "them, he took the same Gray-hounds thinking to course with "them. And presently a Hare did rise very near before him. At "the sight whereof he cried, Loo, Loo, Loo: but the Dogge "would not run. Whereupon he being very angry took them, "and with the strings that were about their Collars, tied them to "a little bush at the next hedge, and with a switch that he had in "his hand he beat them. And in stead of the black Gray hound "one *Dickensons* Wife stood up, a Neighbour whom this Informer "knoweth. And instead of the brown one a little Boy, whom this "Informer knoweth not. At which sight this Informer being a- "fraid, endeavoured to run away: but being stayed by the Wo- "man (*viz.*) by *Dickensons* Wife, she put her hand into her pocket, "and pulled forth a piece of Silver much like to a fair shilling, and

**16** *'A little child shall lead them.' England knew no such savagery as was practised for centuries on the continent. However, here is the evidence of an eleven-year-old boy, taken in 1633, which on 'Dickenson's Wife' was both charged and condemned. (Contrad Research library)*

So ... perhaps ... Zomelak bagabi is really zaramat bah'gabe, 'I shall transport thee thyself, without a sieve.' Again, as Blegen said, 'All this seems too good to be true. Is coincidence excluded?' Is it? I decided to go on.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Lacha | laxa (pronounce either *latsa* or *lasha*) | 'to wash' |
| Bachabi | bachera | 'plates and dishes' |
| Karellyos | garalláz (pronounce *garalyáz*) | 'with sand' – the ablative of use ('instrumental') |

Let us pause here a moment. We have, in these last three words, a group which 'makes sense'. 'Wash the plates and dishes with sand' - still a favourite cleaning material in many parts of the world. Let us now recapitulate. Without claiming that we have already solved the puzzle, let us see what we think that we have found:

'Kill (the victim) in November (at the great winter feast), (to which) I shall transport thee thyself, without a sieve. (And afterwards) let us clean the plates and dishes with sand.

The next word, as we say when doing the crossword in the home-going train, certainly seems to fit. It is:

Lamac - lanac - '(the) work'

There are many precedents for the m/n, n/m alternation; a famous example being in the witch-rituals themselves, where the name of the ritual sword, athame, is obviously the Greek [Insert pic p161a] athanatos, 'undying, immortal, eternal' - the Greek word which has given us our English word, tansy, a plant to which magical life-prolonging qualities were once ascribed.

Bachalyas - Bacheraz - 'with plates and dishes' - once again the instrumental case, or 'ablative of use' (suffix -az)

The alternation 1/r, r/1 is as old as the parent language, and is a speech phenomenon of world-wide distribution. (For example, Old French lossignol, 'nightingale', becomes Modern French rossignol. And so on.) The pronunciation of intervocalic r in all the Basque dialects is so faint that many people cannot detect the sound, and this fact is so much recognised by the Basques themselves that the Basque word for 'white cheese' may be spelt either cembera or senbea (note again, by the way, the alteration, m/n).

Cabahagy - khoporagei - 'destined for the drinking cup'

The particle, -gei, suffixed, means 'destined for'. Aphezgei, 'destined for the priesthood', means a seminarist or novice. That there is a possible - even a likely - connection between 'plates and dishes' and 'the drinking cup', one might well believe. But the exact syntactical link between this word and the preceding I cannot, for the present, determine. But that the connection is capable of being established, I have little doubt.

Sabalyos - sabelaz - 'with the stomach, entrails, belly, etc.'. Another instrumental case, or ablative of

use.

Baryolos - balijoaz - 'if they went' or 'if they were to go'' or 'if they had gone'. (3rd person plural, subjunctive preterite imperfect of the verb joan, 'to go'.)

Note again what seems now the regular 1/r, r/1 alternation.

Lagoz - lakhaz - '(with) a full measure, full quantity'. Lakha means now a measure of 2 1/2 litres, but originally had rather the sense of 'a jugful', and thus of any full measure.

atha - (probably) eta - 'and'

Cabyolas - khoporaz - 'in the goblet or drinking vessel'.

Samahac - semiac - 'the sons'. The cases may be nominative, either singular or plural or accusative plural. But the -ac termination is also the sign of the vocative plural, which would translate as 'O Sons!'

Seme, Basque for 'son', is obviously a word borrowed from the Latin, though it is curious that, in abandoning their traditional word for 'son' (for they must have had one), the Basques anciently selected, not the 'ordinary' word in Latin, filius (French, fils; Spanish, hijo; Italian, figlio; Portuguese, filho; Roumanian, fiu), but the word, semen, 'seed', used for 'offspring, progeny', etc. only in its most affectedly poetic sense, i as used by, e.g., Ovid.

The abandonment of a traditional native word for a foreign phrase, even where the abandoned word is, One would say, indispensable, is paralled in other tongues. For , example, in Greek, where the old word for 'king', anax, was abandoned in favour of the word of unknown origin, basileus, 'king'. However, the adoption of semen for 'son' could even be pre-Roman, but in any case is certainly an importation into the Basque language of no modern happening.

atha - eta - 'and'
famolas - familiaz - '(who are) with the Family'

This may well be from the most ancient Latin word for 'family', familia, and not from the more recent French famille, since French words ending in -aille, when imported into Basque, take the termination -alla. Examples: French battaille, bouteille, caille; Basque batalla, boutilla, calla.

Hurrahya - (ritual cry) - Bodin, writing in 1604 and 1616, reports that the invitation to the witch-dance began with the words, 'Har, Har...'' in Guernsey, the version was 'Har, Har, Hou, Hou, danse ici, etc.', 'Hou', according to Margaret Murray, became the name of a local deity whose name forms part of that of several small islands in the region: Lihou, Jet-hou, Brecqhou, etc. 'Haro' is also called upon by any Channel Islander who asks for justice. This ancient custom is called 'Crying Haro!' 'Hurrahya', here seems to be same as 'Har-hou'.

Now, allowing for the fact that Basque whose existence we have, I claim, plainly established beneath

the not-so-corrupt 'English' text, is most ungrammatical to any modern Basque, let us see, all the same, what we have deciphered. The declensional endings have become deformed or lost over the centuries, but the words, though not linked together in the precisely orderly Basque syntax (a very complicated system), are, though worn down to simple radicals, still comprehensible. And their totality does, as I have already claimed, 'make sense'. But which sense?

Ignoring the missing or incorrectly used Unking case-endings and conjunctive and other particles, let us try to make a continuous and intelligible 'narrative' out of the chant as given in Mr Haining's book.

It now runs - the English version - like this:

Kill (or the Feast) in November; kill! I shall transport thee there myself, and without the aid of a sieve, to scour the plates and dishes with sand: work (which must be done) with those plates and dishes. (We shall meet our friends) ready for the drinking-cup if they shall go (to the Feast), their bellies full with quaffing from the drinking-cup. O Sons (of the Master) with your Families (shout His praises with the cry)'. 'HURRAHYA'!

Languages, transposed from one geographical context to another, often change far more than the original of the 'Eko: Eko: Azarak ...' chant has changed in its present environment. Who would find it reasonable that Latin libella, our 'level' (same word), would have become niveau in modem French? Or that the original of the nursery-rhyme which begins Hickory-dickory dock ... is a Breton rhyme which begins Digoret dor, digoret d'eoc'h ... ('Open the door; open it to yourself ...' i.e. 'let yourself in!'), or that Eeny-meeny-miney-mo is a counting rhyme, of which, so corrupt has the original become, only two words remain intelligible: eeny ('one') and a word for 'four' which is the first part of the phrase, catch a nigger ..., where catch a is almost certainly Irish Gaelic ceathair, 'four', now pronounced [k'ahir']? And other words have become even more perverted on unthinking lips as they pass, parrot-fashion, from generation to generation.

It says much for the tenacity, not only of the faith but of the purpose of the Old Religion that its members should have retained, without the corrective aid of the written record (which began to be made only at the end of the fifteenth century - and then by the Religion's enemies), the ancient rituals so well.

In deciphering the 'Eko: Eko: Azarak ...' text, I was struck by a haunting sense of familiarity, and not until I had completed the draft translation of the sub-Basque did I track down what was nagging at the fringes of memory. The 'trigger' was the double reference in 'Eko: Eko' to 'plates and dishes'. Ritual meals, from the Roman lectisternia (for male gods) and sellisternia (8) (for female gods) to the agape, the 'love feast' of the early Christians, were a standard rite of all religions in past times; but there was something nearer to fret my sub-conscious, something not quite connected with religion, as we think of religious things. And then ... I remembered. The 'meaningless' rhyme to which the children of the farm-hands would skip in the dusty, narrow road by Sparrows' Farm:

Cups and saucers,
Plates and dishes -
Here comes Sally

With calico breeches!

Good lord! I hadn't thought of the children and their absurd jingle for more than forty years. But now, as it came back to me, I began to examine it - for the first time in my life - in the light of what I had discovered already, not only about 'Eko: Eko', but about so many other sounds within the context of the Old Religion.

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[8] Because the men ate whilst lying on sofas, lecti, but the women ate sitting upright on sellae, chairs or benches.

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The macarontic - the rhyme in two (or even more) languages - was a well-known literary device of the early and late Middle Ages (there has been at least one popular macarontic song recently: English and French - Darling, je vous aime beaucoup - ); and now it occurred to me to wonder if the 'intelligible' part of the children's jingle ('Cups and saucers, / Plates and dishes') had not been originally part of a macarontic, prefacing, as the correct English translation of the Basque original, two lines left in the Basque; the last two lines which, in the mouths of generations of children, had degenerated into the nonsense about Sally and her underwear. I wrote down the principal words:

SALLY
CALICO
BREECHES

- and considered what I had written from the point of view of the 'hidden Basque'. Was there a clue here?

Well, the (English) word, calico, was promising. Co, a suffix is a particle of very frequent employment in Basque; it not only does duty for our own preposition-conjunctions, of and for, but expresses shades of meaning that the word of and for are Unable to express. I wondered of which Basque word the twentieth century children's 'calico' was the far distant echo?

Well, after I had finished with Basque dictionary and grammar, the results, coincidental or not, were certainly startling:

English - Basque - Meaning

Sally - salhi - 'skimmer, strainer, sieve, etc.'
calico - callaco - 'for the curds'
breeches - beituzu - 'thou hast (it)': 2nd person singular, 'respectful form', present indicative, 'incidental form', of verb, ukhen, 'to have'. As Basque has no special construction for interrogative sentences, beituzu here should probably be considered interrogative - 'hast thou (it)?'

- or, in connected form:

Cups and saucers, plates and dishes [are all ready] - hast thou the skimmer for the curds?

Once again, we are in the presence of food - or, rather, a simple, innocent, ritual feast. The dish itself is significant: curds ... one of the main constituents of the diet of the hardy Scythian nomad, whose descendants still thrive on the koumiss and yoghurt made from the curdled milk of their equally hardy little mares. And it was in the Chinese province of Ch'ang-sha, on the eastern borders of the Scythian territory, that the antler-crowned head of the Horned God was made in the fourth or third century BC. (9)

Indeed, as one turns the pages of book after book on that obviously never-failing source of interest, the Witch-cult, one is struck by the predominantly Basque character of names at every level, from that of the strange legless dog, Jarmara (Basque, chamara, 'the blouse, the shirt', because Jarmara's hair hung down to cover his paws), to the daughter of Queen Diana, Aradia (Basque, Araldia, 'the reproduction of one's kind, fertility, fruitfulness' - what better name could there be for Queen Diana's daughter?). One of the most curious 'leakages' of the ritual tongue into the currency of common speech (compare such Masonic idioms as 'on the level', 'on the square',

etc.) is represented by the obsolescent exclamation 'By Jingo!' I was, I confess, somewhat astonished to see that its Basque, though not its Old Religion, origin was recognised in the last

century by the Rev. E. Cobham Brewer, whose invaluable Dictionary of Phrase & Fable (12th Edition) has this: 'By Jingo, or By the Living Jingo. Basque "Jainco", the Supreme Being.' (It is also spelt, Jinco.)

I was inclined to see, in the modern word, jinx, an adaption of an older word also based on Jainco or Jinco. But, on reflection, I prefer to derive this word from Basque jeix, 'to milk'. To be under a jinx is to be 'milked' of one's good fortune, reasonable expectations, etc.

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[9] See illustration, Plate 6

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The Romans expressed a similar semantic concept in their word, mulcta, 'fine, penalty, emercement', from the same root which gave them the old word, mulgeo, 'I milk'. (10)

Often, the traces of Basque (as a ritual tongue) are so unrecognised as such that puns dependent upon a knowledge of Basque go completely 'over the heads' of those who ought to have taken the verbal point. For instance, Christian Green, one of the Somerset witches tried in 1644, confessed that 'The Devil doth usually suck her left Brest about Five of the Clock in the morning in the likeness of an Hedghog ...' 'Hedgehog', in Norman French (another respected tongue, since its importers were Old

Religionists to a man) is herisson (from which the earlier examples of the common English and Irish name, Harrison, derives).

Somewhere in the course of the phonetic development of Basque and Norman-French in England, the two languages became somewhat confused in pious but muddled heads, and Norman-French herisson got itself mixed up with Basque harritze, (11) 'to petrify with astonishment'. One may see how the confusion arose; but the mix-up conferred unexpected (from the hedgehog's point of view!) blessings on this harmless but unfortunately edible creature, and from being a gypsy's plat du jour, Mr Hedgehog became a witch's familiar.

Pierre de l'Ancre, than whom the Old Religion never had a more dedicated, more ruthless or more subtle enemy, was under no illusions as to the centre from which the strength to maintain the Faith, despite the most savage persecution, supported witches throughout Western Europe. A lawyer who, like so many of his time-serving kind, had joined the religious orders in their persecution of witches, De 1'Ancre moved down to the Pyrenean country of the Basques, so as to be as near the 'storm-centre' as possible.

To write his two books, Tableau de l'Incon-stance des mauvais Anges (Paris, 1613) - 'How Evil Spirits Betray Mankind' - and L'lncredulite et Mescreance du Sortilege (Paris, 1622) - 'Of the Folly and Wickedness of Casting Lots' (i.e. for 'magical' purposes) - De l'Ancre not only tried (and, inevitably, condemned) as many witches as he could, but also interviewed them - perhaps 'grilled' would be the better word here - and carefully, in his pettifogging lawyer's way, kept a detailed record of all the evidence.

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[10] This opinion is expressed in conscious defiance of the etymologists, who deny the connection between mulgeo and mulcta.

[11] Even more so in respect of the genitive case, harritzen.

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*Toads as familiars: The toad, ugly and venomous, but wearing a precious jewel in his head, was, by popular report, greatly favoured as a familiar of witches. In 1579, at Windsor, Mother Button kept 'a Spirite or Feende: in the likeness of a Toade'; in 1582, at St Osyth, Margerie Sammon had two devilish 'toades', named Tom and Robbyn. The name of the Essex woman who owned a toad-familiar called Lunch, in 1588 (the year of the Spanish Armada), is not given. Here is a witch of 1630 feeding her toad-imps.*

Whilst wishing that such a man had not lived, we may still be grateful, in a resigned sort of way, for the full record that he left of the conditions under which the Old Religion was struggling to maintain itself in the Basque country at the turn of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

By his own standards, De 1'Ancre shewed considerable courage in writing down what the witches 'confessed', in their own words, for it was a widely-held belief of the time that the incautious repetition of witches' 'spells' could bring about the direst results. However, in the interests of the honest record, De 1'Ancre undertook to - literally - defy the Devil by writing everything down.

Thus, we have some of the very words that the Basque witches used, though there is a grim humour in the fact that all the 'diabolical spells' and 'fearful blasphemy' that De l'Ancre's shorthand-writer was taking down were phrases of the most innocent kind. It is certain that the witches, faced with torture or not, were careful not to betray their real secrets to this murderous and murdering attorney.

If the Basque that De l'Ancre records seems to be often incorrectly written, one must remember that apart from a few words and phrases, our knowledge of Basque dates only from 1545, and that even today there are wide variations in spelling, not simply because the Basque dialects, like those of Brittany, differ greatly among themselves, but also because, for all the efforts at standardisation and the establishment of a standard orthography regardless of regional differences (as was done for Breton in 1941), Basques continue to pronounce and write their words with a remarkable independence.

Some of the phrases and sentences in Basque recorded by De 1'Ancre are the following:

1. Stated to have been said by the witches of the Basses-Pyrenees in 1609, after having anointed themselves, but before starting off for the Sabbat (on broomsticks, says De 1'Ancre): 'Emen hetan; emen hetan!' - that De 1'Ancre translates as 'Ici et la; ici et la!' Translation is correct - 'Here [and] there!' - but the modern spelling is more usually 'Hemen han!"

2. 'At the elevation of the Host, the congregation cried [in 1609], "Aquerra goity, Aquerra beyty, Aquerra goity, Aquerra beyty," which means Cabron arriba. Cabron abaro.' (The last word, abaro, should have been spelt abajo - 'below, beneath, underneath', as the sense of the translation makes clear.)

This is correct, though archaically spelt, Basque; in modern orthography, the salutation would read: Akhera goiti, akhera beiti, 'The He-goat on high, the He-goat below!'

3. 'At the elevation of the chalice at a Christian service, they said, "Corbeau noir, corbeau noir."' Certainly, to French ears, what the congregation said may well have sounded like corbeau noir, 'black raven', but what was probably said was not in French but in Basque - cordoan ori, 'grasp (thou) the cord'. A cord, string, lace, was, as we shall see, a ritual object amongst the witches. If my interpretation is correct, here is Basque misheard by a Frenchman as French. (Not the only instance of mishearing. Margaret Murray has suggested that the cry of "A Boy" is possibly the Christian recorder's method of expressing the Bacchic shout "Evoe":' - 'a joyous shout in the festival of Bacchus.')

4. 'There were two forms of words to be used when making the sign of the Cross; the first was "In nomine Petrica, Agora, Agora Valentia, Iouanda, goure gaitz goustia", translated [i.e. by De 1'Ancre] "Au nom de Patrique, Petrique d'Arragon, a cette heure Valence, tout nostre mal est passe".' Patriarkha is 'patriarch' in Basque, but I think that we have here a misheard and misinterpreted Basque bethiereco, 'eternal, everlasting, immortal'.

Agora, with the sense of 'now, at this moment', could be an old spelling of modern Basque oral, 'now, at this moment', but it looks more like the Latin phrase, hac hard, 'at this hour'. Of course, there is no reason why a Latin phrase should - not have been adopted by the Basques; most European languages have such phrases. Cf. modem French recta: 'punctually, promptly' - payer recta, 'to pay on the nail'. The words reported as names are obscure. 'Ar(r)agon' may be Basque aragien, possessive genitive plural, definite declension, of the word aragi, 'flesh, meat, victuals'. The rest of the invocation is fairly pure (and correctly reported) Basque: 'Iouanda goure gaitz goustia.' De l'Ancre's clerk's reported 'Iouanda' is (modern) joan da, 'he, she, it goes'. Goure is 'our'; gaitz, 'misfortune, trouble, evil'; goustia (modern gucia), 'all'. 'All our trouble passes at this moment' - a remark that even the most devout Christian might make when signing himself with the Cross.

5. The second (invocation at the sign of the Cross} roused De 1'Ancre's horror as peculiarly blasphemous: 'In nomine patrica, (12) Aragueaco Petrica, Gastellaco Ianicot, Equidae ipordian pot.' (Translated by De l'Ancre as:) 'au nom de Patrique, petrique d'Arragon. Iannicot (sic) de Castille faictes moy vn baiser av derriere.' Ianicot' (French spelling, with silent final t) is Jainco, Jinco, 'God'.

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[12] Basque patrica and petrica can have no connection with either Peter (Petrus) or pater, 'father'. The former - Peter - is Phetiri, the latter, aita. That 'petrica and patrica' are plays upon the Latin word pater, 'Father', in the phrase, In nomine Patris, etc., is evident, but in what the double meaning consists I am as yet unable to say.

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The reporter has made a fearful botch of egidu (egizu), with a spelling, 'Equidae', which suggests a Latin name for a Celtic tribe of horse-totemists (perhaps that's what he thought he had to write down). Egidu means 'do thou this!' Pot is 'kiss', (13) in modern as well as old Basque.

The corruption discernible here, so far as the Basque is concerned, is, I believe, unintentional. People write down, not only what they truly think that they hear, but, subconsciously, what they wish to hear: the well-known 'Freudian slip'. It is obvious that the clerk who, knowing no Basque, wrote 'Equidae' for 'egidu', must have heard that, in former times, the Celts had inhabited this part of France, and his spelling reflected the fact of his reflections.

But it must be noted that people credit power to the imperfectly understood; that gibberish commands respect and trust simply because it is gibberish - that is, words which, to the speaker, and listener, are unintelligible.

When Martin Tulouff was charged in Guernsey in 1563 with having bewitched his neighbours' cattle, he 'explained' how he had caused the beasts to yield blood instead of milk by pronouncing the powerful spell, the meaning of whose words was evidently unknown to Tulouff. Yet all that the dog-Latin 'spell', 'Butyrum de armento!', signified was simply 'Butter of cattle!' (14) - but perhaps these were only the first three words of a long Latin curse?

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[13] The resemblance to Old Irish poc. 'kiss', may be noted. Poc is supposedly derived from Latin pax (i.e. the kiss of peace) - but is it?

[14] Properly, armentum (old form, armenta) means, not 'cattle', but specifically 'cattle for ploughing; any beast of burden', including horses. But, by 1563, the word, even in the mouths of persons better educated than was Martin Tulouff, was used to describe cattle generally.

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One of the gravest charges against the 'heretical' Cathari and Albigenses of the thirteenth century, and a prime reason for the ferocity with which the Dominicans urged totalitarian war on them was that they preached the Gospel and conducted their services in the language of the people. The Roman Church has recently conformed to a custom that, in England at least, dates from as far back as

Wycliffe's reformation of the fourteenth century.

No doubt he and similar earlier reformers had heard of the demon Tutivillus, mentioned in Piers Plowman, the Towneley Mysteries and other medieval writings, who collects all the words skipped over or mutilated by priests in the conduct of their sacred offices. These scraps Tutivillus takes with him to Hell.

A similar reformation was carried through in the services of the Old Religion, though, just as the Jesuits at Farm-street and Spanish-place offer Latin to the more conservative Roman Catholic worshipper, so the Old Religion retained its ancient ritual language, Basque. But for everyday affairs the European witch used the vernacular, preserving, all the same, the meaning and intention of her invocations and conjurations with remarkable fidelity.

Thus Issobell Gowdie, on trial as a witch at Auldearne in 1662, gave the words of the charm that she used for her habitual shape-changing:

'I sail goe intill ane haire,
With sorrow, and sych, (15) and meikle caire;
And I sail goe in the Divellis nam,
Ay quill [that] I com horn againe.'

She always managed to come home again, for the 'return charm' was equally efficacious:

'Haire, haire, God send thee caire.
I am in an haire's liknes just now,
Bot I sal be in a womanis liknes ewin now.'

Almost exactly 1,600 years before Issobell Gowdie stood before her interrogators and gave her 'purely voluntary' evidence, (16) another strong-minded woman - a Celt also - faced and astonished her persecutors.

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[15] Sych = 'sigh, sighing".

[16] According to Margaret Murray, The Witch-Cult in Western Europe; Oxford: The Clarendon Press, reprint (paperback), 1963.

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After having beaten off the Roman soldiery, causing them to retreat to the south-west, Boadicea (Boudicca) marched on London, putting the inhabitants to the sword - Tacitus says 70,000 perished in the three cities that she sacked - and burning the City; traces of that almost total combustion confirming at least that part of the story. But at last, under the decisive leadership of Suetonius, the Romans recovered from the shock of defeat - especially of defeat at the hands of a woman - and in the

last great battle fought outside King's Cross, a few hundred yards from where I am writing this book, Boadicea was overcome.

And what joins Boadicea, over the span of more than a millennium-and-a-half, with her fellow Celt, Issobell Gowdie?

This.

As the Romans, armoured in leather and bronze and iron; the helmets of their officers sinisterly gay with feathers and fur and horsehair; and every constituent part of that ruthless military machine in its appointed place - from the third-rate spearmen to take the shock of the first enemy assault to the war-elephants at the rear; as this glittering parade awaited the howling charge of the British war-chariots, leading the battle-mad onrush of the naked Celtic warriors; there was a pause ... and a silence the deeper for all the calm of that sunlit morning in the summer of AD 61.

The Queen, in her scythed covinnus, led the van; behind her, her naked soldiers - for the Celts always shed their clothes to face their enemies - awaited the signal to charge. The Romans, too, waited, for even if the common soldier was ignorant of the Celts' military efficiency, the older officers recalled the number of important contributions that the Celts had made even to the Roman mastery of the warrior's art.

Though they bore Latin-sounding names, the cateia, a sort of boomerang; gaesum, javelin; lancea, thong-thrown spear; parma, the Celtic light shield; sparus, the spear, and essedum and covinnus, the war-chariots, had all been copied by the Romans from the Celts, and their names, for all the Latin look, were still originally Celtic. The Romans watched the Queen, who had smashed the crack Legion IX Hispana, with respectful interest, not at all unmixed with apprehension. Uneasy in the emotional silence, the armoured elephants, with spiked balls chained to their trunks, moved restlessly beneath the turbaned mahouts.

What was she up to? every Roman asked himself, as the Queen — not herself naked, as Tacitus tells us - stepped from the war-chariot on to the tender Middlesex grass.

They saw that she had gathered up her tartan plaid, and was holding something concealed within. What was it? What could it be?

The Queen, raising her voice in a prayer to Adraste, let her plaid cloak loosen, and then all saw what she had been carrying within its folds. A hare ....

And no ordinary hare, as Issobell Gowdie was to point out, sixteen centuries later. A magical hare, trained to see the outcome of event, and to read the riddle of the future.

The Queen let the animal go, and, after a pause, he scampered across the 'empty space between', straight through the Roman lines. What his swift passage seemed to tell the Queen and her Druids, no one now can say. But whatever the omens, they were not, that day, of victory ....

In view of the long prevalence of the hare in the magical 'working' of the Old Religion, I was a little astonished that so great an authority as the late Margaret Murray had failed to take the point (in her The Witch-Cult in Western Europe') of one of her own quoted cases: of Alexander Hamilton, charged in Edinburgh, in 1630, with having had consultations with the Devil, evidence being presented against Hamilton that 'afoir he devill his away passing the said Alexr was in use to cast to him ather ane kat or ane laif or ane dog or any uther sic beast he come be'. Dr Murray, in a footnote, says 'the meaning of the word laif is not clear. The Oxford dictionary gives lop-eared, the Scottish dictionary gives loaf. By analogy with the other accounts, one would expect a word meaning hen.'

By analogy with other 'magical' beasts, I myself should expect to find a lop-eared quality amongst the creatures of die rabbit and hare genus. I am surprised that Dr Murray should find difficulty in discovering the meaning of the word 'laif. It is the English word, leveret (French, lievre) 'a young hare'.

On the other hand, I am much indebted to Dr Murray's incomparable research for a fact which beautifully illustrates the tenacity with which tradition protects folk-customs against the attack of the insidious.

'The remembrance of the numerous male devils at the (witches') Sabbath,' Dr Murray writes, (17) 'survives in the Salmassain dance in the Basses-Pyrenees, where the male attendants of die King and Queen of the dance are still called Satans.'

One undeniable advantage to students of the Witch-cult evident in my identifying the ritual language with Basque is that it will enable them to interpret many of the names encountered in the records. I have already explained that the familiar, Jarmara, which appears to be wearing a coverall of hair, is so called because of his coat's resemblance to a garment - Basque, chamara, 'blouse, shirt, etc.' But the name of a lively playmate familiar to Jarmara's (see illustration opposite) also lends itself to a Basque etymology: Sacke & Sugar, in English a name merely of wayward whimsy; in Basque, azaco sugar, 'flame of the cabbage' - that is, the darting red shape amongst the cabbage-heads; a far more likely name for a red hare than that of a then fashionable hot grog.

The other familiars' names hint, too, at Basque originals. Take, for instance, that curious name, Pecke in the Crowne. What does it mean ... in English? Nothing. Yet, if one recalls that pek, in Basque, means 'imbecile, weak in the head', then Pek (rather than Pecke) in the Crowne does make sense. Vinegar Tom, now, might come (a long way, indeed) from Basque innaga (popular pronunciation for correct ingana) 'to deceive', and thona, (18) 'task, work-to-be-done'; a plausible name, as though for 'master of deception', that an animal half-dog, half-bull and wholly Devilish must be.

Newes, the tiny, lively ferret familiar, might, in affectionate derision, have been called originally 'The Master, or His Lordship' (19) - nausi, in Basque. The other familiars' names will doubtless yield later to analysis.

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[17] The Witch-Cult in Western Europe, op. cit. She is quoting A. Moret, Mysteres Egyptians, Paris,

1913.

[18] TH, in Basque is an aspirated T, not the sound of English TH.

[19] As a dwarf used in England to be called 'Lord', perhaps from Greek lordos, 'bent'.

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*Witchfinder General: Quite the most loathsome product of Revolutionary England was Matthew Hopkins, self-appointed hunter-out of witches under Cromwell. Hopkins was a successful user of the blackmailing tactics so successfully employed by the late Senator McCarthy; any opposition to Hopkins's witch-hunting could bring the opposer under grave suspicion. This cut is the frontispiece of his own book, Discovery of Witches, 1647. It is mainly interesting for the named familiars.*

Dr Murray, commenting upon a list of witches of the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries,

mostly in England and Scotland, remarks on the prevalence or otherwise of certain names and speculates on their origin. She ends with this passage:

As regards the name Joan, I can offer no explanations or suggestions. / can only call attention to its overwhelming preponderance in comparison with the others. (20)

But now, with our knowledge of the underlying Basque, I can offer a plausible explanation, both of the name Joan, and of its popularity in the Witch-cult.

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[20] My italics - M.H. 12 177

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The explanation lies in the meaning of the Basque word, jaun, 'lord'. (21) That jaun is of masculine gender need present no difficulty; 'professed sisters' in the Roman Church often take such names as 'Sister Francis de Sales'; and, in support of the argument that female witches bore the name of their 'Lord' -Jaun Jincoa, 'The Lord God', we have the highly suggestive name of a male witch, Andro Man, charged at Aberdeen in 1597.

This Christian name is commonly regarded as merely 'Andrew', spelt in the whimsical Scots sixteenth-century fashion; but andere in Basque is 'mistress, lady'. 'Our Lady' is Andere gurea. If all the witch Joans bore their name in honour of their Lord, might not all the witch Andros (it is mostly spelt in the usual way, Andrew) have borne their first names in honour of their Lady? Dr Murray remarks upon the large number of Elizabeths - with all the variants on this name: Bess, Bessie, etc. - in the list of witches charged. It is a curious fact that the name of the sparrow - a lively, yet self-effacing creature which can fly quickly from point to point - is elizachori (22) in Basque.

The taking of animal names for the priesthood was a common phenomenon in the religions of the ancient world: the Ephesian priests of Artemis called themselves 'King-Bees'; the temples of Demeter, of Proserpine and of the Great Mother had their Bee-priestesses. The Oracle of Jupiter at Dodona was served by its 'Doves'; the ritual feast of Poseidon at Ephesus by its 'Bulls'; the Bear-priests supervised the Brauronia, where the Greek maidens were 'dedicated to the Bear'. And the 'Wolves' howled in the riotous merrymaking of the Lupercalia (Latin, lupus, 'wolf). Were some of the Witch handmaidens given yet another of these religious zoonyms -'Sparrows'?

I have already mentioned a long invocation, to be said by those desiring to acquire the gift of invisibility.

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[21] Like all such titles - senor don (elder lord), Heir (lord), sir (senior; elder), etc. -jaun can now mean plain 'monsieur' or 'senor' or 'mister'.

[22] Supposedly 'church bird', from eliza (Latin ecclesia), 'church', and chore, 'bird'. But I am not convinced by this etymology.

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There is no space in this book to give my etymologizing of the sixty names, some of which are (originally) Latin, Greek and Hebrew, with, some curiosities amongst the 'infernal spirits" names - 'Helateroy' (Helena Troiae, 'Helen of Troy'! - poor Helen!) and the aforementioned 'Z' - an ampersand promoted to infernal spirit. But of the other names not evidently corrupt Latin, Greek or Hebrew, three-quarters at least echo Basque words appropriate to demon nomenclature.

Even when the name of an invoked demon looks to be Latin, corrupt or otherwise, a kinship with an original Basque will often - almost always - be found. Take, for example, the name Bellis. Now, as a schoolboy could tell you, bellis is either the dative or ablative, both plural, of the Latin neuter substantive, bellum, 'war'. So it is.

But not, I think, here. I think that here, despite the Latin form of the word, we have, not so very altered, the Basque word, beltz, (23) 'black'. The Black One', I feel, does well as a name for a demon.

If all these be coincidences, then they form the most numerous body of coincidences, associated with one enquiry, that I have encountered in many years of puzzle-solving.

To 'get her man', a woman is advised, in another spell, to seek out the chamber where the desired male is sleeping, strip herself naked in an adjoining room, and enter his chamber, reciting to herself this potent cantrip: Kay o kam, avriavel. Kiya mange lei beshel. Is it then, by pure chance, that the first three words of this spell, kay o kam, seem to resemble Basque khe(n), 'strip oneself naked'; o(h)e, 'bed'; and kambera, 'chamber'?

'It has always been recognised,' the late Dr G.B. Gardner wrote in his The Meaning of Witchcraft, 'that Witches had certain words such as Coven and Athame, (24) which did not seem to belong to any known language, and the matter was complicated by the fact that people who were not necessarily witches were known to have used these words in the old days. I was in the Craft a long time before I realised that some of them were aware that there was an "Old Language" known to only a few; I don't think there is anyone who can speak it well, but they do have a tremendous number of words, chiefly relating to things which affect the craft.

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[23] Especially as, in sixteenth century English and Scottish orthophony, the pronunciation of bellis would have been bell's. Cf. pronunciation of surnames, Faults and Sandys.

[24] See page 161.

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'Nowadays it has become only a sort of amusing slang, and some of what are said to be "Witch Words" are obviously "cant", as "Kicking the Wind" - their word for being hanged. Obviously dating from the days when Witches and others were publicly executed by being slowly strangled (before the "drop" was invented).

'Some words,' Dr Gardner continues, 'such as "Vavasour" (one who holds land for another) are probably Norman-French. (25) Other words are seemingly Celtic, but the main Corpus of the language is made up of words like "Halch", "Dwale", "Warrik", "Ganch", etc., which seem to belong to some other tongue. Unfortunately they [i.e. Dr Gardner's fellow-witches] will not permit me to give their meanings, or more of the old words.'

Now this is a passage of the highest interest. No etymologist, Dr Gardner cites two words, 'which did not seem to belong to any known language', which are, in fact, English Greek and English Latin. Athame, from the Greek athanatos, 'immortal', we have already considered; coven, an English word derived from the Latin, is the same word and has exactly the same meaning as 'convene', the n of 'convene' (Latin, convenio, 'to come together, to meet together, to assemble') being dropped, and the n of convent has been dropped in the well-known London place-name, Covent-garden.

But Dr Gardner's statement that 'the main Corpus of the language is made up of words ... which seem to belong to some older tongue' is valuable testimony to the correctness of my theory, coming as it does from a self-proclaimed witch.

It is a pity that Dr Gardner could not have let us know the meanings of Halch, Dwale, Warrik, Ganch, etc., for I could hardly begin to trace their origin in Basque unless I knew the meanings that these words bear amongst today's witches.

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[25] 'Vavasour' is Norman-French; it is our word 'vassal', with the common r/1 alternation already noticed several times.

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## 8 - The Historical Conclusions

What are we now to conclude from the demonstration that the ritual language of the Old Religion was - and is still -Basque? I maintain that, if we accept the fact that the Old Religion, in its first fully defined form, was a product of Neolithic times, then it must have acquired its special language at the same period, when Basque was a spoken language covering a far greater area than it does today.

May one go as far with the theory of Basque's wider dissemination as to claim that the Basque-speaking area of Europe included Britain (or, at least, a part of Britain)? Or may one compromise by claiming that Britain was a Basque-speaking colony of the Basque 'empire'? In either case, there seems support for the theory that Basque is a Neolithic language; the language spoken in Britain before the arrival of the Celts (whose tongue displaced it in all but Old Religious circles; turning Basque from a spoken tongue to a ritual tongue).

Against that theory only one argument could be brought forward: that Basque arrived in Europe after the languages whose appearance on European soil we may date with a fair degree of accuracy - Celtic, Teutonic, Italic, Gothic and the later arrivals, Etruscan, Sicel and the Western Slav dialects such as Old Prussian, Sorb, Wendish as well as Magyar.

All these languages - Magyar and some other less enduring tongues entered Europe only during the present era - ringed the extreme West of Europe, so that, though access to, and exit from, what eventually became the 'Basque Country' was possible through its several good ports, it is hard to believe that Basque arrived in Europe later than, say, the earliest Celtic. As for the Indo-European Teutonic languages, the parent Teutonic exhibits the same phenomenon as does Welsh: that of a language originally non-Indo-European, upon which was imposed an Indo-European vocabulary.

The Teutonic system by which changes of meaning are contrived by alteration of the internal vowel or vowels - Umlaut - is so strikingly reminiscent of a similar device common to the Semitic family of languages that one might be forgiven for thinking that Common Germanic was. a formerly Semitic tongue on to which had been grafted an Aryan word-list. (A thought to make the supporters of 'race purity' ponder!)

In support of the theory that Basque, if not an autochthonous language, is at least one of the most primitive languages of Europe, in the sense of its being here before any of the existing others, is the fact that Basque, for all the plausible arguments of such scholars as W. von Humboldt, H. Schuchardt, R. Lafon, R. Menendez Pidal and E. Hubner, is still a language with no proven congeners. It is alone, not only in Europe, but, it seems, in the world. Schuchardt compiled a list of 'fundamental' words from Basque, and found parallels - he claimed -in Berber, Copto-Egyptian, Nubian, African Semitic, Cushite, Nilotic and Sudanese; altogether a total of 105 words, a list which included such basic words as 'go', 'give', 'take', 'do', 'come', 'good', 'new', 'cold', 'big', 'without', 'who?', 'sun', 'moon', 'man', 'woman', 'town', 'people', 'name', 'bread', 'meat', and so on. All 'fundamental', but not, as the choice of that adjective by Schuchardt would imply, indispensable.

No one denies the possibility of contact - and very close contact - among all the peoples of the Mediterranean; and even quite casual contact may impel a people to abandon a 'fundamental' word in favour of some linguistic novelty.

Take, for instance, the way that the Spanish word, hombre, has for all practical purposes displaced the corresponding English word amongst the English-speaking Americans on the Mexican border. Begun possibly in a joking manner, this use of 'hombre' for 'man' has now acquired the strength of habitual usage. And why did the Greeks suddenly drop their old word for 'king', anax, and adopt, from some as-yet-undiscovered source, the new word, Basileus?

Indeed, that Basque should have many words in common with the members of all the North African group of languages is not surprising, since modern opinion ever more inclines to credit the Basque with a North African origin - or, to be more precise, so credits the Basque language.

The other extremely ancient tongue of what we now call Spain is Iberian; a language which, though its texts remain undeciphered, seems to exhibit affinities with the Basque. That it was not identical with Basque is evident from the fact that, though the Iberian script may be read, it may still not be deciphered. Yet, as William J. Entwhistle says in his The Spanish Language, (1) 'In its vocabulary and structure [Iberian] probably resembled Basque closely, but the gap of a millennium between its documents and the earliest Basque texts prevents an accurate identification; it was used over a wide area of the central and eastern Peninsula [i.e. of Spain], and contributed at least place-names to the west and south.' That the Basque language was spoken over a very wide area in the past was recognised and recorded as a fact by the Romans, who followed the Carthaginians in considerably reducing the size of Basque-speaking territory.

The probability is that both Iberian and Basque - if, indeed, they were different languages and not merely two rather widely differing aspects of the same language, as Oscan and Latin in the past, or as Dutch and Danish, English and German, French and Italian, are today - arrived in the Spanish Peninsula from North Africa; at the beginning of our era the Straits of Gibraltar were only one-and-a-half miles across - swimming distance for a hardy North African.

Nor need the Basques have originated in North Africa, at a point close to the Straits; that may have been only a late stopping place on their way from an origin much farther to the east.

There appears to me to be a clue in the form of the name given to the Basques by outsiders - their own name for themselves Euskara (Uskara); the form of this name, 'Basque', nearest to the present territory of the Basques being 'Vasca'.

Now, a people considered to be either the descendants of the neolithic inhabitants of the Italian lake district, or one of the earliest immigrants to Italy, are the Ligurians, who, from their Italian 'centre', moved out, down the valley of the Po, and - according to some authorities - reached as far as Latium and Rome.

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[1] London: Faber & Faber, 1st edition, 1936.

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They migrated to Sardinia, Sicily, and had settled solidly in Gaul long before the arrival of the Celts. Whether or not the Ligurians were Indo-Europeans (or, at least, speakers of an Indo-European tongue) has been long and warmly debated: some of their words are obviously Indo-European, as are many of their place-names, but what would a scholar of the remote future make of the linguistic origins of English, if all that survived of the language were such words as tobacco, tomato, shekel, algebra, admiral, episode, etc.? 'So it has been affirmed with no less confidence that Ligurian is non-Indo-European (H. Krahe), and that the IE. character of some of the place-names is to be explained by the hypothesis that an IE. people superimposed itself at some stage on the neolithic population.' (2)

The archaeological researches into the prehistoric cultures of the Italian lake district reveals no trace of an invasion, and therefore no evidence that the Ligurians were an irrupting IE. people. Here archaeology supports the theory that the Ligurians were the descendants of the indigenous neolithic inhabitants of northern Italy.

One word-ending is so restricted to Ligurian that its occurrence is regarded as the proof of a former Ligurian settlement; this is the ending -asca, which is found in Italy, France, Switzerland and Spain. This termination is also found in river-names - Vinelasca, Tulelasca, Neviasca, etc.

What is important to note is that this is precisely the ending of the name applied to the Basque by their neighbours - and, on consideration, one sees the root in the actual name that the Basque use for themselves: esca-ldun, euska-ra. (Gascony of the Gascons exhibits the same root, -asca, so that it is clear that, either the Gascons were the same as the Basques or that Basques once held Gascony - and gave it its name.)

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[2] The Latin Language, op. cit.

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Were the Basques, then, originally Ligurians - a neolithic people from North Italy? Or were the Basques people who, on their long migration from North Africa, had been for some time in close contact with the Ligurians, sufficiently close to have learned to call themselves by a Ligurian-type name? - as a Teutonic tribe, the Alamanni, learnt to call themselves by an Arabic name. (3)

Whatever the answer to these questions, it must be apparent that the Basque arrival in Western Europe, if later than that of the earliest Ligurians, must have preceded, by perhaps more than a thousand years, the earliest of the Celtic irruptions into the same region.

There remains, in all justice to possibility, one hypothesis to be maintained: that, though it may be admitted that the Basque were settled in south-west Europe at a very early date, they need not have brought their Old Religion and Language to Britain until a date very much later. I do not support this theory, but I give it in fairness to the argument The Basques were - and are still - daring and competent sailors, who are believed to have fished regularly off the Great Banks long before Columbus set sail from Palos in 1492. If they arrived in Spain from Africa by sea, they could - I repeat that the theory

holds that it was at a much later date - have followed the historical (pre-historical, in strict fact) 'Iberian' route around Spain and along the Biscay coast, and so to Britain, where they founded a colony, not necessarily before the Celts arrived.

Against this argument is the powerful one that, after the Celts arrived - the first wave possibly as early as 1800-1500 BC - non-Celtic invaders did not manage to gain a foothold in this desirable land until the Romans, but they only on the second attempt, and after a century of assessing the military situation, invaded Britain and succeeded in wresting control of the island from the Celts. I think that it would have been unlikely that a Basque colony would have been permitted by the Celts to establish itself in Britain; all the evidence tends to shew that the Basques - to have established themselves in Britain at all - must have been already in Britain when the first wave of Celts arrived.

There is one last possibility which should be mentioned: that the Old Religion, as developed, defined and 'codified' by the two forces of Druidism and the 'Basque-centred' Fertility Cult, was a product of established Celtic religious thought and Basque proselytising, following a contact which may not have needed to happen in Britain.

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[3] See page 153.

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When they broke into Europe and penetrated into almost every part of it - even modifying traditional Teutonic pro-nounciation as they made contact with the Germanic tribes -the Celts did what every invader, every immigrant does: follow the trails that necessity has driven earlier immigrants to follow. The Celts trod the paths into Europe that the Ligurians - and perhaps the Basques - had followed long before. As the Ligurians had already done, the Celts penetrated Europe by moving notably along the Rhone Basin, into the Franche-Comte, Switzerland, the Alpine regions, and settling, eventually, a great part of northern Italy, where they remained for a long period, 'taking breath', before moving south to Latium and Rome, and west along the northern Mediterranean seaboard and its hinterland. At some point in their long pilgrimage to the western outposts of the then known world, they encountered the Basques - perhaps in south-western Gaul (I use geographical names which were not then introduced), perhaps in Britain.

One important, one basic, fact would have made for a sympathetic meeting: the fact that the Celts, for all their military genius, for all the mechanical ingenuity shewn in their development of the wheeled vehicle's potential, with its extensive 'range of models', were primarily agriculturalists. As Dechelette has shewn, the Celts knew and used the sickle; indeed, so far as the metal sickle is concerned, they may well have invented it - the wooden (non-hooped) sickle, set with sharp blades of flint being known, of course, from the earliest Neolithic cultures.

With a people so dedicated to the soil, the Celts could have been dedicated to only one faith, the Fertility Cult; and, to this day, the surviving descendants of the Celts, whether in Scotland or Ireland, whether in Asia Minor or the Crimea, whether in Switzerland or North Italy, whether in France or

Spain, are the people most linked with the soil - with agriculture, with horses (the Irish), cows and dairy produce (the Swiss, the French, the North Italian, the South German, the Irish). Seeing how tenacious of ancient ways of living are the descendants of the Celts, one may well understand how they have been equally tenacious of that early religion which centred about the production of good food from the good earth. The Roman Church has claimed the Irish Catholic as the most devout of all that Church's members, yet as late as the twelfth century, Giraldus Cambrensis was complaining of the prevalence in Northern Ireland of old, barbaric and 'obscene' customs, that all the priests' and monks' teaching and threats could not abolish.

One custom in particular filled the monkish historian with horror. The essential part of the 'coronation rite' of the Irish Kings of Donegal was the ritual coupling of the King-to-be with a rutting white mare; the candidate for royal honours being admitted to kingship only by satisfying priests and people of his worthiness not merely by going on all fours and achieving penetration of the mare, but also of encompassing an emission into the creature's vagina.

If the Irish could have remained as faithful to the Fertility Cult after some seven centuries of 'devout' Christianity, one may well imagine that even now their Roman Catholicism is not unmixed with the 'insurance' of a regard for the Power which causes mares to be in foal (for Derby and National winners), which causes butter to 'come', and which renders prolific and well-fleshed the family of 'the jintleman that pays the rint'.

Out of courtesy to those whose opinions are against the theory that Basque preceded Celtic as one language of Britain, I have given alternate theories, which - though I did not say so -might almost have included that which could hold that the Witches' ritual language was introduced here by those Basques who followed the Pope-given purple gonfanon of William the Conqueror. Or even that Basque had been introduced into British witchery when the persecutions of the Church had driven many Basques to seek refuge in less dangerous territory, as the Sephardic Jews had settled in Britain after their expulsion from Spain in 1492.

One might argue in favour of a relatively late introduction of 'ritual' Basque into Britain save for one - to me, decisive -piece of evidence that Basque/Ligurian settlement in Britain occurred at an early date: that is, evidence of the same type which assures pre-historians that the Ligurians settled in Italy, Switzerland, France, Spain, Sardinia and Sicily before the erruption of the Celts into western Europe. This is the evidence in Britain of Ligurian-type names: the -asca, -aksa (4) termination mentioned on page 184, to which may be added other names of Ligurian type, such as Entella, Eryx and Segesta.

Now, not only are names of these distinctive Ligurian types found in Britain; names which are now considered to be more Basque than Ligurian also appear.

To take the Ligurian names first, outstanding is the 'Celtic' Isca of both Isca Dummoniorum (Exeter) and Isca Silurum -'Isca' of the Dummonii and 'Isca' of the Silures.

Now I am well aware of the popular derivation of isca from one of the common Celtic words for 'water' (Modern Irish, uisce). But is isca a Celtic word? It looks, now that I come to think for myself, instead of unthinkingly accepting the too-often-heard and too-often-repeated dictum of the more traditional etymologists, remarkably like a Ligurian word. I used to think that Matlock - the name of

the town - came to us from the Latin through the British (or Welsh), and was originally some such phrase as sedes metallicorum, 'headquarters of the miners'. But Matlock, in Roman and earlier and later times, was notable for its production of lead; and I note a town in north-east Spain once named Medubriga; a compound name, of which the first element is not Latin, but Basque - medu, 'lead' (the metal) - and the second, Celtic: 'Lead-town', or 'Leadsville'. The -briga ending occurs, of course, all over Britain, where such names as 'Stockbridge', 'Robertsbridge', etc. are very common, and in which the second element is almost always supposed (erroneously, I think), to be Anglo-Saxon.

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[4] Metathesis, the internal transposition of sounds in a syllable or of syllables in a word, is a phenomenon of speech-habits confined to no one language at no one time. It is a fruitful source of language change. Cf vulgar English 'articifer' for 'artificer', or 'ocifer' for 'officer'. It is particularly common in Spanish. A very early example is the contrast of Greek skeptomai, 'to view, to see' with Latin specie, 'to look, to behold', both from an IE. root, spak, whence Sanskrit spat• Thus in modern Basque, 'without, lacking' may be rendered indifferently as gabe or bage.

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In such names as Medubriga, we have the evidence of one culture's having imposed itself on another - or, maybe, more than one other - culture. 'It is supposed that the Iberians were invaders from Africa, racially akin to the Kabyle tribes of the Riff, who thrust north into the centre and east of the (Spanish) Peninsula, and hedged the Cantabro-Basques within their mountains.' (5) If this theory be correct, it pushes the immigration of the Basques into western Europe exceedingly far back in time.

The very evidence which indicates the former presence of Ligurian/Basque, Iberian and Celt in Spain and Southern France - the evidence of simple or compound place-names - is also available in Britain; notably, though not exclusively, in Cornwall.

I have already mentioned the significant occurrence of 'Ligurian' isca; other Cornish names with the evidential ask(a) or aks(a) element are, or seem to be, Axminster on the River Axe (obviously a variant of isca), Exmoor, Saltash and Ashcott, in which the original -sk- has been softened (as in modern Basque) to a 'shin' sound; Flax (Bourton), Boscastle, Liskeard, Portscatho, the last perhaps to be analysed 'Port-scatho'.

But the most significant of all these names is surely that of Askerswell, where the first element is not only Basque, but the Basques' own name for themselves: uskara or euskara.

The name, south of Exeter, of Alphington, is significant. Taking off the Anglo-Saxon termination, we have Basque alphor, 'vapour, mist, fog' - natural phenomenon or phenomena likely to impress those sailing up the River Exe for the first time.

To begin to seek the linguistic traces of the pre-Celtic inhabitants of Britain is to be forced to shed some received opinions. It is admitted - and admitted by me, also - that the first element of Hartland (Point) refers to the Greek divinity, Herakles; but what is so strange is that the name of a well-known

cape on the Lleyn Promontory, that of Pwllheli, should not only be in Basque, but should be an exact translation of the Greek name of a cape famous in history.

I refer to Cape Marathon - marathon, meaning 'fennel' in Greek. But, in Basque, puhullu also means 'fennel', and the same name, in slightly different form, also occurs much farther south: Philleigh, on the northern extrusion of the St Mawes Peninsula, Cornwall.

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[5] The Spanish Language, op. cit.

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Cornish Marazion may well be Basque, from marro 'ram' (the animal) and zien, 'your' - 'the ram that you were seeking (was this the Golden Fleece? - and was Cornwall Colchis? [Basque kholco, 'a hidden pocket in the blouse; a secret receptacle']).

Certainly, it is hard to deny the derivation of Cornish Gorran-(Haven) from Basque gorri, 'red'. And surely we may see, despite the traditional etymologists, typical Basque words, such as berri, 'new', iri, or ili, 'town', ara, 'plain', in such 'typically English' names as Canterbury (the French spelling much closer to the original sound: Cantorbery); Cornish Modbury 'new lead (mine)'; the very common Lee and Leigh; Cornish Horrabridge. And so on.

To have established their names so tenaciously, so that all the invaders since - Celts, Teutons, Scandinavians, Normans, etc. - have been unable to efface the original names (some, of course, have been replaced) argues that the Ligurians, the Iberians and the Cantabro-Basques arrived in Britain before either the Celts or the Greeks. And if that is so, the Basques (or whatever name we care to give to the pre-Celtic Neolithic inhabitants of Britain) cannot have come here as missionaries, but as ordinary immigrants, looking for metals and other precious things, and staying on to settle down as tenant agriculturalists.

## 9 - New Blood for an Old Religion

Despite C.L. Ewen's contemptuous dismissal of Margaret Murray's theories as 'vapid balderdash' (1) - an opinion echoed with approbation by H.R. Trevor-Roper, (2) Dr Murray's writings on the history of the Old Religion brought an originality to the treatment of the subject to which such self-approving critics as Ewen and Trevor-Roper have made no comparable contribution.

The late Dr G.B. Gardner, the eminent Mr T.C. Lethbridge - one of the greatest authorities on the Old Religion in Britain - Eric Maple, Colin Wilson, and many another authority on the ancient Fertility Cult: all these have accepted, more or less wholly, the theories first advanced by Dr Murray in her now famous The Witch-cult in Western Europe.

For those who are still unacquainted with Dr Murray's theories, let me here give the briefest resume, since it will be necessary frequently to refer to Dr Murray's ideas in the pages to come.

I shall quote the summary; at once admirably brief, yet admirably complete; from Mr Eric Maple's The Dark World of Witches: (3)

[Dr Murray] put forward the theory that witchcraft was possibly a surviving element of Palaeolithic worship which had continued into historical times and that the great persecutions of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were, in fact, a determined effort to suppress these practices once and for all. She suggested that the witches were organised in covens under the leadership of magician priests and that among their activities were fertility rites which had been handed down from the remote past.

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[1] Some Witchcraft Criticisms, 1938.

[2] The European Witch-Craze of the i6th and 17th Centuries, 1969.

[3] London: Robert Hale, 1962. Also available in paperback. Pan Books, 1965.

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To this should be added that in her later The God of the Witches and The Divine King in England, Dr Murray enunciated and developed a theory, derived from the theories expressed in her first book, that many of the English sovereigns, both pre- and post-Conquest, were not Christian at all, but more or less secret adherents of the Old Religion. She expressed the view that the Norman kings were of a race traditionally 'pagan', and that, despite an association with, and a formal submission to, the Roman Church, they were never members of it. Dr Murray goes further, and suggests, with much impressive evidence to support her contention, that the tradition of 'paganism' in the English Royal Family outlasted the pure Norman blood, and has survived, as the 'royal religion', until very recent times.

She puts forward the theory that an essential element of the ancient Fertility rites, the 'Divine King', was chosen as the earthly representative of the vis omnipotens Natures, and held his office for

(originally) seven years, a term which was later, in some places, extended to the Pythagorean 'square number', nine; a number which may have been selected through Druidical influence, since an odd number (seven), in Pythagorean estimation, is 'male'; but a still odd number (nine) with 'square' characteristics, is androgyne or hermaphrodite. (One may imagine that the Divine King, respited for a further two years, was in hearty agreement with this mathematico-mystical reasoning!)

At the end of his seven or nine years' reign, the Divine King (he had merely a year's 'reign' in Aztec Mexico) was killed, his body being partly eaten by his people and partly burned ceremonially; the remains were given as 'food' to the Earth whence he came.

Dr Murray argues that, from perhaps the remotest period, a beneficent or patently 'lucky' King could be granted an extension of his reign - consonant to the wishes of those subjects enjoying unusual prosperity - through his finding a substitute willing to act as the Royal surrogate, and endure the ritual death properly the destiny of the King.

In the view of Dr Murray, the presence and availability of such a substitute became traditional through the centuries following the collapse of Roman imperial rule; and that some of the most eminent 'martyrs' of the Middle Ages were, in fact, rather 'martyrs' of the Old Religion than of the New - and that such persons as Thomas Becket, Joan of Arc and Gilles de Rais, were Divine Victims; one Divine King who had accepted his fate without having sought out a substitute Divine Victim being William Rufus.

William the Bastard, Duke (4) of Normandy, came of a Pagan family, and was himself a pagan. His father's nickname, 'Robert the Devil', is usually taken in a metaphorical sense; it should be taken - as it was originally meant to be taken - in a strictly literal sense. The Norman rulers were 'devils', in the sense that they were pagans. They made no secret of the fact, and the fact was admitted by their contemporaries.

The 'devil' family was a law unto itself. '... principles which governed the political association of longer-established peoples could still be defied in eleventh-century Normandy. The recognition of Duke Robert's illegitimate son as heir to his father's lordship would have been impossible in any country where the church, and the theory of the state for which it stood, had their accustomed influence.' (5)

Much has been written of the events preceding William's conquest of England in 1066: the escape of the English royal family to Normandy, flying from the Normans' blood-brethren, the Danes; the promise supposed to have been given to William by Edward the Confessor that William should have the reversion of the English throne on Edward's death (an unlikely story, seeing that, of all contemporary kings, Edward was the most besottedly Christian!), the alternate risings and fallings of Earl Godwine; the rise of Harold to influence at Edward's court - and so on.

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[4] The Norman (Norsemen) rulers of Normandy seemed quite indifferent to titles, and bore them only because such marks of distinction were employed by the more cultured French and English who

were now the Normans' neighbours. In early Norman charters, the 'Duke' is known variously as 'Count', 'Marquis' or 'Prince' (Latin, Princeps, literally 'first head', i.e. 'first man,' and so 'leader, ruler, prince').

[5] Stenton, op. cit. My italics - M.H.

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Who yet has asked the pertinent and important question: why did William covet the throne of England?

'Ambition' is the usual answer— but 'ambition' is no answer at all. Having set his mind on gaining England, William's ambition, backed by a most powerful will, inevitably drove him on; but why did he set his mind on England in the first place?

The answer surely lies in the facts of William's religious beliefs: because England was a great deal more Pagan, a great deal less under the domination of the Roman Church, than was France. It was as a Pagan that William gathered his forces - pagan Normans, dubiously Christian Bretons (joining William to recover 'their' country from the Saxons!), definitely Old Religion Basques, eager to see a land where the members of the Old Religion still spoke (or, at any rate, ritually used) their own immeasurably old language; with some odd elements from the Belgic territories where the most important fact of life was the duhin, the non-human forest-dweller, in name and character so like the Scottish drow or trow that there can be no doubt that both names (as well as the German troll) are linked with the root of 'druid' - perhaps the Greek, drus, 'oak'.

William could not afford to purchase a large army; those who volunteered to accompany him did so on a 'commission only' basis; and the bulk of his invading force was made up, not only of the rootless soldiers-of-fortune, but also those whom unstable social conditions had driven out to find fortune elsewhere than at home. Thus, the Normans who had gone to chase success with their swords in Saracen Sicily or in other parts of the Mediterranean, now returned, on the hunt for loot and power somewhat nearer to Normandy.

The civil war in Anjou had sent many Angevins flocking to the banner that Pope Gregory VII (Abbot Hildebrand) had 'blessed' and presented to William as a sacred luck-piece - but with sinister implications which have an important bearing on the Conqueror's later relations with the Church.

William's 'reason' for the invasion of England was that Harold, whilst staying with William at Bayeux as a sort of prisoner-guest, had sworn to forfeit the inheritance of the English crown in favour of William, who had been 'promised' that crown by the saintly Edward the Confessor, who had no 'heirs of the body'.

William's relationship with the Roman Church had always been traditionally Norman, and as traditionally ambiguous.

Wishing to strengthen his position by allying himself to some more powerful family, William chose as

wife the daughter of Baldwin, Count of Flanders: Matilda. On the grounds that the proposed marriage would be within that degree of consanguinity forbidden by the laws of the Church, Pope Leo IX, at the Council of Rheims in 1049, peremptorily forbade the union. By 1053, in contemptuous defiance of the Papal ban, William had married Matilda.

But, like many a potential or actual dictator before him and after him, William was always prepared to avail himself of the political advantages that well-organised, well-established religion may offer to the ambitious power-seeker. Just as Henry IV, Louis XIV, Napoleon, Bismarck, Mussolini, Hitler and Stalin were later to do, William did: made a deal with the society-regulating forces of the Church. In 1066, after Harold had 'broken his sacred oath by accepting the crown of England, William submitted his own claim to the Papal curia, thus accepting 'a position which superficially was that of a litigant maintaining his right in the court of a superior.' (6)

The Pope was not slow to point out the implications of William's appeal to the highest European ecclesiastical authority.

[William] afterwards denied that he had made any offer of fealty to the pope, and there is no reason to doubt, that the papal decision in his favour was given honestly on the facts as they were understood at Rome. But it was inevitable that the Hildebrandine papacy, in the interest of its claim to secular domination, should make a political use of William's application, and although it was never put forward as the pretext, it was certainly the ultimate basis of the demand for fealty which Alexander II and Gregory VII made upon him.

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[6] Stenton, op. cit.

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As presented by Alexander II, the demand was supported by a tendentious piece of reconstructed history, which asserted that the English state had formerly been subject to the Roman see, that Peter's Pence had been its tribute, but that evil men had lately seduced it from the pope's obedience. (7)

William's reply to Pope Alexander has not been preserved, but to Gregory VII, who renewed the demand, apparently in 1080, he addressed a masterly letter defining his position. On the feudal question he refused fealty outright, saying that he had never promised it, and that none of his predecessors had entered into such a relationship with any former pope. On the question of Peter's Pence, acknowledging that its collection had been interrupted while he was in Normandy, he assured the pope, that arrears should be sent to Rome as soon as possible. No statesman has ever settled a major issue in fewer words, or more conclusively. (8)

The reference to William and his loot-bribed accomplices as 'Frenchmen' has blurred and obscured the perception of historical fact. William was a Teuton, with not only the traditional Teuton ruthlessness, but with that superior organising ability so often to be found in the Teuton (think of the powerful organising quartet of Schacht, Speer, Hitler and Goering, before and during World War II).

And William was a superb organiser. It has been remarked upon that the Norman dukes brought nothing new to the science of war; that they took what had already been invented by others and merely used the already invented things well. They employed the tried opportunist's trick of profiting by the quarrels of neighbours; setting laggard quarrellers by the ears, so as to promote profitable animosities.

Perhaps even today, but certainly in my boyhood, Norfolk children used to cadge for what they called 'largesse'. Nine centuries ago, in a Norfolk systematically as well as ruthlessly laid waste by the Conqueror, those who were left learnt to beg in the tongue of the invader - 'largesse!', as little Arab boys at Cairo or Alexandria or Port Said used to learn to cry, 'Penny please, Mister!', in the tongue of the invader.

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[7] My italics. That the Pope should complain that England, formerly, as he claimed, subject to the Papal See, had been wrested from its allegiance by 'evil men' is a statement of the greatest importance.It seems to declare openly what the pattern of events in the tenth and eleventh centuries reveal only by somewhat vague hints: that there had been a major secession from the Roman Church's authority, and that the gainer by that wholesale secession could have been only the Old Religion ('evil men').

[8] Stenton, op. cit.

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Once the general register of English inhabitants, English land-holdings and English wealth had been compiled, and into Domesday Book had been written all which was to be known of the country with the exception of the northern counties, William felt that he had fastened the Norman yoke securely on the necks of the English people. (He died in the year after Domesday was completed.)

He did not, as is too often claimed, oust the English from all employments of profit, and replace them by Normans or the allies of Normans. Those who did their work efficiently and were prepared to continue under the more exacting conditions imposed by William's 'New Order', could be assured of 'continuity of employment'.

The ingenious Teutonic ability to control private enterprise is well shewn by William's device for securing absolute authority over the moneyers - producers of the nation's coinage. They were permitted to continue to produce the coins, as in Saxon England, but the dies from which they worked, and which might not be replaced by 'home-made' substitutes, were a Royal monopoly. Only the King might supply them, and only the King's dies might be used.

Bullion could be sold to, and coinage issued only from, the exchange (cambium) established at every town of borough status. As the cambium was the only channel through which the licensed moneyer could circulate his coins, the warden of the exchange (custos cambii) was the watch-dog who checked

the moneyer's output for true weight, fineness of metal, and use of the authorised dies. The penalty for malfeasance on the moneyer's part was punishable by mayhem (mutilatio hominum). The moneyers, though, were apparently willing to risk the savage penalties in the noble cause of forbidden profit: no fewer than ninety-six moneyers had their right hands cut off even as late as the reign of the third Norman king.

But the list of just over four hundred moneyers licensed under William I and William II shew not one name which is patently non-Old English. There are some names familiar to us from Norman nominal rolls, but the holders of such names could have emigrated to England - or their ancestors could have done - long before the Conquest. It is obvious that the skilled English worker or craftsman was not deprived of his living simply because of his race.

With so single-minded a dictator as William shewed himself to be, no one escaped the payment of some tribute to his power. His use of the Roman Church to serve his sordidly money-grubbing purposes is well illustrated by his forcing a commission of Norman bishops, held in 1070, to impose 'a set of penances on all ranks of the Conqueror's army'. The contemporary old sweats must have been more astonished by this order than any more recent soldier getting a long-overdue and quite unaccountable demand for cash from the Army Pay Corps.

The 'penances' covered everyone - the commission had made sure of that. For every warrior who had fought at Hastings, a penance of one year for each man killed by that warrior; the order even punished clerks who had fought in, or merely armed themselves for, the battle 'as if they had sinned in their own country'.

The far-ranging gather-up of these warrior 'criminals' even succeeded in including men who had fought for William in Normandy: a year's penance for the death of a man killed by a Williamite soldier whilst resisting the seizure of food (even though William had invaded England whilst desperately short of stores); three years for a death caused to one resisting wanton plunderers.

All 'penances' in those days might be discharged on the payment of a fine; and, as possibly as many as 10,000 'criminals' were indicted in the commission's order, the fines helped greatly to build the churches and cathedrals which, today, remain to give so mistaken an idea of William's 'piety' and 'generosity' to an unlearned generation.

The English Archbishop of Canterbury, Stigand, who had been appointed to the Primacy of England when popular agitation had sent the Edward-appointed Norman, Robert de Jumieges, flying for his life, was kicked out by William, and Lanfranc, (9) an Italian from Pavia, appointed to the now vacant see. For different - and far less 'pious' - reasons, William was content to follow the policy of Edward the Confessor, and appoint foreigners (mostly, but not exclusively, Normans) to English sees. But many English bishops - including Leofric of Exeter, Siward of Rochester and Wulfstan of Worcester - were permitted to retain their sees.

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[9] Real name: dei Lanfranchi.

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William's feelings were not hidden; even a Pope who had 'obliged' the King by regularising his forbidden marriage with Matilda of Flanders (through Lanfranc's diplomacy) got from William no more than the formal recognition of the debt; the Pope certainly never managed to inspire William with a sense of gratitude. Thus, when Gregory VII was expelled from Rome, and the Anti-Pope, Clement III, was consecrated as Gregory's successor, William not only stood aside, but ordered all members of the English church to maintain a strict neutrality in the Papal struggle. William saw, in the troubles at Rome, nothing but his own opportunity of freeing the English church from the too ambitious and too demanding authority of the Papacy.

As Stenton says, 'The Conqueror's need of papal support ended with the disposition of Stigand and the establishment of Lanfranc's primacy. For the claim of Gregory VII to universal dominion, William had no respect, and the whole tendency of his later government was to emphasise his own supremacy over the English church. According to a writer of the next generation he insisted that no pope should be recognised and no papal letters received in England without his command or permission; that no legislation should be proposed without his approval in any council of the English church; and that no bishop should implead or excommunicate any of his barons or ministers without his leave. As a further safeguard, he forbade his bishops to go to Rome, even when summoned by the Pope; an infrangible rule that even Lanfranc dared not attempt to break'.

With that cynicism that we are to meet later in the relationship of dictators with the Roman Church, William let Rome's appointees grab the best sees, build themselves churches and cathedrals, monasteries and nunneries; let Rome enrich itself in her own way. For William, as Napoleon, Hitler and the rest, warmly appreciated the Church's capacity to impose opinion and order upon the Faithful; and for the same reasons that Hitler confirmed Bismarck's arrangement with the Roman Church in Germany that it should receive its 440,000,000 marks annual income from the Reich, (10) William permitted the Roman Empire - phoenix-resurgent now as a Church reverting to a secular empire - to enrich itself in a land that William's avowedly pagan arms had conquered.

When Margaret Murray produced her (to me impressive) evidence of William Rufus's adherence to the Old Religion, she overlooked the strong evidence in favour of his father's no less loyal membership of that same ancient creed.

I have mentioned the fact that the 'Divine King' of many a primitive faith, from China to Mexico, enjoyed all the privileges of royal rank until, at the end of a one-, seven- or nine-year period, he was sacrificed to the World-Spirit of Fertility (however he was named by so many different tribes across the earth's surface); his body burned, and partly eaten by his late 'subjects', and part buried, to be 'eaten' by Mother Earth, to Whom all things must, in the fullness of time, return. ('Thou fool! That which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die!')

William, no matter what he was to the Roman Church; no matter what he seemed to the Old English Roman Catholics and the surviving members of that much more ancient British Christian Church against which Rome had battled so long, so bitterly and so cruelly; William was, to those members of the Old Religion possibly superior in numbers to the members of the Roman Church in England, their

Incarnate King - come to uphold the Ancient Mystery and extirpate the New.

In Britain and in its successor, England, the Divine King must have had a seven-year rather than a nine-year 'reign'. Or, to be more precise, an Incarnate King's reign, however long it might be, was never more than an extension of a basic seven-year period. And each extension had to be purchased by the death of a volunteer Divine Victim. William gained - or demanded and was granted - two such seven-year extensions of the original reign. Assuming that his reign as Incarnate King began in 1066, the first seven-year period would have ended in 1073, the second in 1080, the third - which will be most diligently examined - in 1087. Let us also remember that William's reign probably began, by his estimation, on the night of Friday, October 13, 1066 - a day that all chroniclers are agreed was chosen by William despite the fact that in hurrying to open battle on this day he deprived himself of important advantages as a military commander.

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[10] Diligently and scrupulously paid by Hitler's government up to the somewhat abrupt end of the Fuehrer's regime.

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I have not yet been able to trace the two Divine Victims who substituted for William in the years 1073 and 1080, though it is possible that a victim was found at the time of the rebellion in the Norman possession of Maine.

To regain Maine for Normandy, William had to fight Fulk 'le Rechin', Count of Anjou, and did not succeed in regaining Maine until 1073 - a fact which may provide the reason for William's asking an extension of his reign as Incarnate King. There is something mysterious about the period immediately before the end of the first extension. William seems to have been absent from England between 1077 and 1080, and what he was doing cannot yet be stated with certainty.

Was he having difficulty in arranging to provide a second Divine Victim, to extend his own reign from 1080 for a further seven years? One cannot say, but that there was no Divine Victim forthcoming for a third extension is clear; and knowing that he himself must now play the part of the Divine Victim, William prepared for the end.

It is possible that the second Divine Victim available to gain William a further seven years extension of life was Walcher, Bishop of Durham, who was cut down by a party of anonymous Englishmen as he came out of the church at Gates-head, set on fire by the English who awaited him. There is much in the circumstances of Walcher's death which "is more familiar from the well-known story of Thomas Becket, another Divine Victim. (The presence of fire in the episode at Gates-head is also reminiscent of the ritual killing of Joan (11) of Arc, yet another Divine Victim.)

But, as I said above, there was no Victim forthcoming for the year 1087 - and so William began to settle his affairs, in ways that historians still find inexplicable, since the explanation that William behaved as he did because he was a member of the Old Religion is not yet considered a reason by

orthodox historians.

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[11] Note the 'Witch' name.

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On August 1 - the Eve of Lammas, one of the Four Great Sabbats of the Fertility Cult year - William held a council at Salisbury, at which, so the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle tells, 'all the landowners of any account in England, whosoever men they were, did him homage, became his men, and swore him fealty that they would be faithful to him against all other men'. 'The nature of this assembly', says Stenton, 'has been much debated. It is obvious that while it cannot have included all the freeholders of substance in England, it was a gathering of wholly exceptional size and importance.' (12)

It was; it was William's leave-taking of the principal members of the Old Religion. He was due to die in the following year; both he and all the assembled company knew that. And in the following year, 1087, exactly twenty-one years after he had assumed the crown, both as 'earthly' and Divine King, he did die, in circumstances whose reporting is sufficiently vague that we may know that we have here, once again, a Divine Victim's death.

William attacked Mantes, in the Vexin-Francais; set fire to the town - the flames again - and, as he rode through the burning town, 'received an internal injury', which caused him to be taken, first to Rouen (obviously a holy place of the Old Faith, seeing that it was there that Joan of Arc met her ritual death), and then to the monastery of St Gervais. He lived long enough to bequeath England to his openly pagan son, William Rufus, who was to reign, as Incarnate King, for two seven-year periods, and to shew himself a loyal and liberal member of that ancient Faith which, in his reign, was to emerge from hiding.

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[12] My italics - M.H.

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## 10 - The Old Faith Regenerated

Abbot hildebrand (born 1013), who reigned as Pope Gregory VII from 1073-1085, was the first Pope effectively to set about realising the second phase of the plan to regain, in the Papacy, the temporal authority of the Roman Empire. Though Gregory was deposed in 1085, in favour of the 'anti-Pope', Clement III, the Roman Church had no fault to find with the rejected Pope's pro-Vatican legislation. It might have rejected the Pope; it did not reject his political theories. It was happy that Gregory had subjugated the power of the German 'Holy Roman Emperors'; it was more than content with the device by which Gregory had prevented any further alienation of Church property - the imposition of the rule of celibacy on all Roman Catholic clerics.

This did not mean, as has so often been 'explained', that the Church insisted on the perpetual sexual chastity of its priests; it meant, more importantly for the now empire-building Roman Church, that its priests could never contract a valid marriage, and could thus never beget a legitimate heir. With no heirs possible, the priests and prelates would not be tempted to will 'their' property to those heirs - what they held would be returned to the Church. Thus the Church would never grow poorer, and ought well to grow, as the years passed, richer (to quote Dr Johnson's phrase) beyond the dreams of avarice.

(It is interesting to reflect that Gregory came to power in the year in which William ended his first seven-year period as Incarnate King; the year in which, if our theory be correct, William sought and found a willing substitute for himself as Divine Victim. It is tempting to pursue the speculation that, somehow, there is a connection between Gregory's assuming the Tiara and William's securing an extension of life and rule for another seven important, constructive years.)

But, as Hildebrand must have detected, and the succeeding Popes, over a period of a century-and-a-half certainly did, the rise of Papal power - especially in the field of temporal authority - was unhappily marching step-by-step with a comparable revival of the Old Religion's influence.

In all lands and at all times since the advent of 'civilisation', Man's religious beliefs have been classifiable between the 'official' and the 'unofficial'. The 'official' belief is always that of the dominant ruling class, whose acceptance of religious theories may - and almost always is - influenced more by political and economic advantages than by the more abstract benefits of theological conformity. With the non-ruling, and therefore subordinate, part of the population, where emotion and superstition, rather than sociological reflections, incline the mind towards Higher Things, religious views may well not accord with those of the 'official' religion.

By returning, as the Roman Church, to those countries where the prestige of the Roman Empire still earned men's respect, the Roman State had succeeded in re-imposing Roman laws and Roman taxes (Offa, King of Mercia, proposed to send a mancus a day, (1) in perpetuity, to Pope Leo II - Offa died in 796) on the governments of most of those states, great and small, inheriting the former Roman Imperial lands.

Outside of these lands; the lands, that is to say, which had been ruled directly from Rome; the 'new' Roman Empire had had less success in imposing its restored authority. East, northeast and north, stretched a Teutonic-Celtic hinterland which had never known Roman authority; far to the north were

the Scandinavian territories; on both sides of the Baltic were tribes and peoples - Lithuanians, Courlanders, Esthonians, Finns, Letts and assorted Baits - who had hardly heard of Rome; and what southern influence had come to civilise the proto-Swedes had come rather from the Arabs than from the Romans.

Only on Ireland, of all the lands which had never known Roman temporal rule, had the Roman Church succeeded in imposing the ecclesiastico-temporal authority of its new 'image'.

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[1] Partly paid with one of the strangest coins ever to be minted in England: a copy of the current gold dinar of the Caliph Al Mansur, dated Year of the Hegira 157 (AD 774). The English king has caused his simple title, OFFA REX, to be added on the reverse of the copy.

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Almost from the beginning of the Great Return, the revived Roman power had made no secret of its (theoretical) direct link with the officially extinct Empire of the West. Even as far back as the end of the eighth century, when Pope Hadrian sent two Italian legates to England, George, Bishop of Ostia, and Theophylact, Bishop of Todi, the council summoned by the legates instructed the kings and princes of England to obey their bishops, to do justice to the poor, to suppress violence, and to exact nothing more from churches than is allowed by Roman law and the practice of ancient emperors'

Rome, then, had always intended to return; Jordanes the historian, had been correct in including Saxon Britain amongst the still Roman provinces of the Empire. In Hildebrand's ultrapontifical ambition, the dreams had become a reality -Rome was once again back in control, spiritually and materially, of a greater part of Western Europe.

Unfortunately for Papal ambitions, so was the Old Religion.

I have pointed out reasons - including the fact that he called his last great 'valedictory' council on Lammas - why we should concede the paganism of William the Conqueror. In her famous The God of the Witches, Margaret Murray makes out an even more convincing case for the paganism of William's son, 'Rufus'.

Why William Rufus was so much more openly pagan than his father was, in all probability, because he had not the need of the Church that the elder William had had. The Roman Church had aided William the Conqueror to gain the crown of England; William the son was now firmly established on that throne. What need had he of Rome?

Rufus, as Dr Murray points out, was 'pagan' on both his father's and his mother's side. She calls attention to the fact that his favourite oath was not, as reported, Per vultum de Luca, 'By the Face of Lucca!', but rather Per vultum Lodi, 'By the face of Loki' (the Norse Evil One). At times, William Rufus would vary this oath to Per vultum Dei, 'By God's face!' - shewing (to those who understood) with which name Rufus equated his 'God'.

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[2] Stenton, op cit.

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The most curious incident in the short (7 + 7 = 14-year) reign of this pagan king is his judgement in the matter of the young Jew who had embraced Christianity, and on whose behalf (though Margaret Murray, recounting the story, does not add this important point) the boy's father had appealed to the King. Whether or not the Jewish father realised that William was not a Christian, we cannot now say; but it is evident that the father felt emboldened to appeal to the King because, in the older Jew's eyes, the son had been tricked or 'pressured' into abandoning his Faith.

Rufus's method of getting at the truth has a ring of the first Elizabeth about it; a blunt, be-damned-to-you, common-sense attitude which can uncover the truth, however hidden by cultured sophistries. He asked the Jewish father to defend his Faith against that of a Christian, whose arguments were as unconvincing to the King as they were to the Jew.

And this was Rufus's justice: Let the young Jew return to the religion of his Fathers ... or be put to death.

One may imagine the howl which went up from the members of the One, True Faith! Here was a young man, saved from Hell by God's grace, and -

'By God's face!' Rufus shouted; 'if you won't condemn him according to my will, I shall condemn you!'

Crowned King in 1087, William gained one extension of his seven-year period as Incarnate King in 1094, almost certainly through the intermediacy of his chief adviser, Randolf Flambard, (3) son of a 'pagan' mother, and as little friendly towards the Church as was his royal master.

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[3] The name, Flambard, would seem to be derived from Latin, flammearius / flammearium, 'a maker of bridal veils' (which were flame-coloured among the Romans). If the derivation be acceptable, then an ancestor of Flambard's might have been a pagan priest officiating at the ceremony of the Sacred Marriage.

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'The monkish writers,' says Margaret Murray, 'make much of the fact that Rufus met his death in the New Forest, and affect to regard it as a judgement upon him for destroying for his own pleasure villages and churches, great stress being, of course, laid on the destruction of the churches.' It is a fact that the King met his death in the New Forest, but, as it is also a fact - pointed out by Dr Murray - that the King went into the Forest to accept that ritual death, 'on the morrow of Lammas', it would appear

that he wished to die, as a member of the ancient Fertility Cult, as near to Nature as possible.

He chose a Forest that his 'pagan' Father had made. More, in the Forest, protected by, to us, the most savage game laws and laws against 'unauthorised entry' and trespass, William was sure of being alone when he went to his death as Incarnate King.

No English monarch, and few other monarchs, have been so openly anti-Christian as was Rufus: 'One aspect of the reign of William Rufus,' says Freeman, 'sets him before us as the enemy, almost the persecutor, of the Church in his realm.'

But it was not his remorse for having jeered at Christians, robbed their shrines - 'Have ye not chests full of the bones of dead men, but wrought about with gold and silver?' - or set them to arguing with Jews which kept Rufus awake on the night before his death. He ordered lights to be brought to his sleeping-room, and made his chamberlains sit up and talk the hours away until that fateful 'morrow of Lammas' dawned.

Then he dressed carefully, and spent the morning arranging his affairs. He dined well, eating, it is said, more than usual, and drinking deep. Then he dressed himself for the hunt, and whilst his boots were being laced, a smith brought him six new quarrels for his cross-bow - the King, with a smile, handed two to Sir Walter Tyrrel, with this deeply significant remark: 'It is right that the sharpest arrows be given to him who knows how to deal deadly strokes with them.'

At that moment, a letter was handed to the King; it had just arrived from Abbot Serlo, warning Rufus that a monk of the Abbot's household had been warned in a dream that Rufus's proposed hunt would end in his death.

Rufus laughed, made a lightly sarcastic remark about snoring monks - but ordered that a handsome present be sent to the monk.

Then he turned to Tyrrel, and said solemnly:

'Walter, do thou do justice according to those things that thou hast heard!'

'So I shall, my lord,' Tyrrel answered.

At the scene of the ritual killing, the words that Rufus shouted to Tyrrel admit of no other construction than that they were an order to Tyrrel to 'do his duty':

'Draw, draw your bow, for the Devil's sake! Let fly your arrow, or it will be the worse for you!'

Ordericus Vitalis tells how the poor, the widows, the beggars, came out to meet the funeral procession, and accompany it to its grave. The 'little people' could now safely practise their Old Religion, since a King had declared himself for it.

The death of Rufus, being of a ritual character, was not only known in Europe within a few hours after

its happening (probably by one or more of the effective signalling systems introduced by the Romans) (4); it was also known before its occurrence. Hugh, Abbot of Clugny in Belgium, was warned of Rufus's death on the previous night. That Anselm received the news in Italy, on the same day, is uncontested.

The knowledge of why the King died as he did is implied in the quality of the tale that the Earl of Cornwall, walking through the New Forest, met a large hairy goat carrying the body of the dead King on its back. Questioned, the goat replied that it was carrying the corpse to the Devil for judgement. If the 'goat' had been a man in ritual robes, the story may well be true. Perhaps, between the ritual killing and the splendid funeral, there had been the ritual feast ....

The 'pagan' tradition continued in the English royal family. Henry I, though reputedly 'Christian', came to the throne on the morrow of Lammas, and reigned (1100-1135) a hand-count of seven-year periods, which may hardly be coincidental in an age when the majority of Scandinavian-descended monarchs were never more than nominally Christian. Of Stephen, whose reign is almost unrecorded because of the Anarchy, we know nothing; but his successor, Henry II was, if we accept Dr Murray's views on the death of Thomas Becket, certainly of the Old Religion.

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[4] Vegetius, De re militari, iii.2; mentions fire, smoke and semaphore signalling codes; Polybius the historian mentions a torch-using, time-interval-based code in use as early as the Punic Wars, and cites a letter-based code of his own design. The maintenance or restoration of some effective telegraph system - the word 'telegraphum' is used in a ninth century London charter - would explain the rapidity with which news was transmitted throughout Europe in the early Middle Ages.

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Dr Murray has called attention to the curiously intimate relationship between the King and the Archbishop of Canterbury - an intimacy detectable before as well as after the Conquest. This intimacy, Dr Murray argues, indicates 'a relative position of King and Archbishop from Saxon times onwards ... so peculiar that it suggests a closer connection between the two offices than appears at first sight.' 'The death of Thomas Becket,' she maintains, 'presents many features which are explicable only by the theory that he was also the substitute for a Divine King.'

She calls our attention to 'the most remarkable instances' of this symbiotic union - my phrase - as: Edwy and Dunstan, William the Conqueror and Lanfranc, Rufus and Anselm, Henry II and Becket, to which, I think, we may certainly add that of Henry VIII and his three beheaded Chancellors. Dr Murray finds it significant not only that 'Dunstan's behaviour to Edwy was that of the mock king to the real king,' and that 'the people regarded ... [Dunstan] ... as having more than mortal powers, but also that Dunstan died on February 2, one of the four great quarterly Sabbats.

The relationship between Joan of Arc and the French King seemed a connection of this peculiar type. That Joan (she is often called 'Jane' (5) in English texts up to the end of the last century) was a 'pagan', Dr Murray has well argued. In the first place, Joan came from Lorraine, a district which, both before

her time and after, was denounced by the Christian inquisitors as a very focus of witchcraft. It was from this district that the noted lawyer-inquisitor, Nicolas Remy, drew hundreds of victims a century and more after Joan had suffered the penalty of 'heresy' at the Church's hands.

A romantic legend has grown up that it was the English - especially Talbot - who 'arranged' that the Church should execute Joan; but, in the first place, Talbot needed no excuse to kill either an enemy or a witch; and, in the second, that paganism which, in her soldiers, had let Joan dominate them, would likely have been prevalent among the English. Talbot whose family totem was a hound (talbot) - would probably rather have seen Joan go free.

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[5] This variation between 'Joan' and 'Jane' (with 'Janet', 'Jonnet', etc.) is notable m the records of the British witch-trials.

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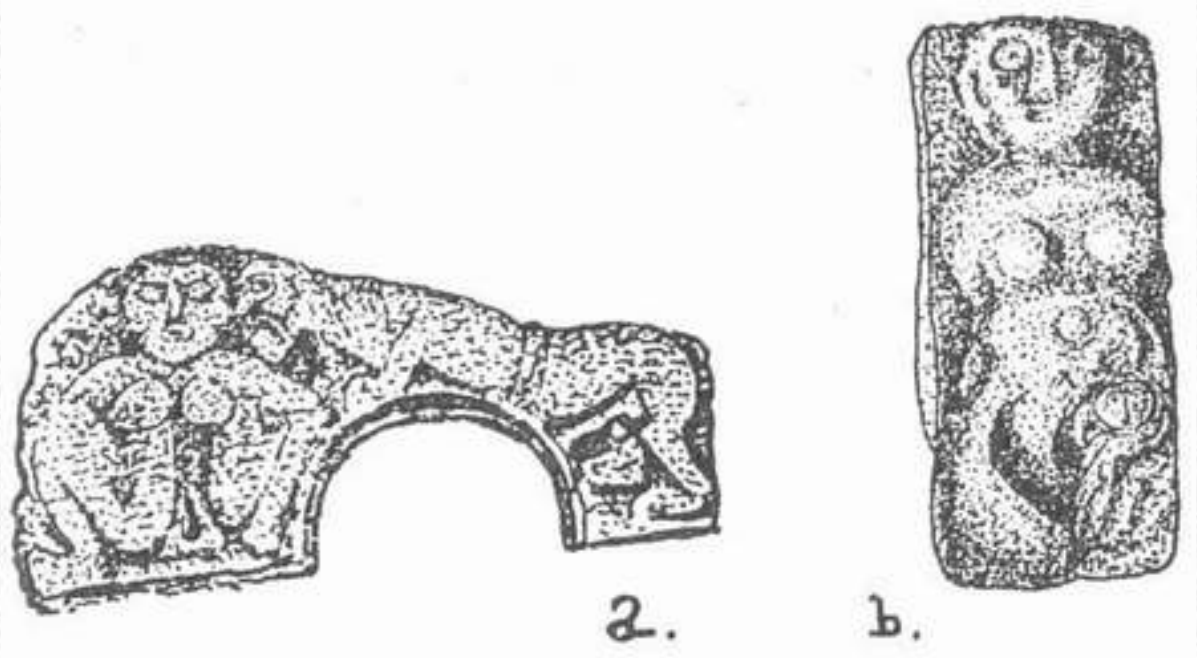
The Church, jealous of her pagan authority over pagan soldiers; and jealous, too, of her success-based popularity with the masses; needed no urging by the English to see Joan as 'dispensable'. It was the Church which tried and condemned her; the Church regarded her - rightly, of course - as an enemy; and the Church was glad to get rid of her.

The open adherence of so many kings, princes and other members of the ruling class to the Old Religion emboldened lesser men to make no secret of their beliefs. But the Old Religion could not have come to declare itself so openly had it not been for the example, and so the protection, of those too powerful for the Church to attack. With kings licensing at least 'double allegiance' to the Old Religion and the New -men and women of high, though not supreme, rank began to practise openly what, before, they had done in secrecy.

For nearly three centuries after the accession of William the Conqueror, the growth of the Old Religion in England, and a lesser, though still vigorous, growth in France, Germany, Italy and those states on the German-French and French-Swiss borders, was permitted by the Church to go relatively unchecked; a fact underlined by the date of the first witch-trial in the British Isles: that of Dame Alice Kyteler, of Kilkenny, accused of both operative and ritual witchcraft in 1324.

During this long period, and for almost a century afterwards, the churches, big and small, of Christian Western Europe, were being made to carry more and more - and more and more outspoken - indications of the true nature of the worship for which the church or abbey or cathedral had been built.

From corbel and roof-boss, from misericord and lintel, from gargoyle and pediment, the art of the Christian church, for more than three centuries, is an art which is anything but Christian. The grotesque faces and complete figures which 'decorate' our ancient European churches have been designed and set up, first to indicate that 'the Old Religion applies here'; and, secondly, to mock, in every possible way the beliefs and tenets of that newer Faith to which the churches were 'officially' dedicated.




*Shiela-na-Gig: Still to be seen over a Norman window above the south door of St Mary's, Whittlesford, is this carving of Shiela-na-gig and her half-canine lover Baal, the All-Father. This non-Christian carving (a) was added after the church was built. Drawing (b) is of a Shiela-na-gig said to have been fixed to the wall of a priory at St Ives, Hunts, built about AD 1008 and burnt down in 1207.*

In these carvings, now preserved rather because of their antiquity than because of their anti-Christian sentiment, priests and monks are ridiculed and libeled. Their anti-Life asceticism is mocked, from Chalk (Kent) to Paris, by carvings which not only flaunt an animal sexuality, but dress up that sexuality in the more wayward of its impulses. The carving over the porch of Chalk Church, Kent ('delicately' drawn attention to by Charles Dickens in Great Expectations') shews a jolly little fellow, obviously a contortionist, about to practise fellatio on himself in a literally roundabout way; and over Notre Dame, Paris, a female (human worshipper or succubus?) is rendering the same pleasurable service to a horned demon.

In the church of St Mary at Whittlesford, Cambridgeshire, which is in the very centre of an important Iron Age settlement, there is what is perhaps the most candid of the Fertility carvings to be found in our post-Conquest churches.

A round-headed early Norman or late Saxon window has been capped with a single piece of stone, assymetrical in shape, whose irregular, unbalanced outline has been skilfully used by the ancient sculptor to carry out his design.

Squatting on her hams, facing the observer, is a naked woman, with her genitalia exposed, and depicted as of that exaggerated size notable in all Fertility Cult statues of women from even before the time when the Venus of Willendorff was modelled perhaps six thousand years ago. Leaning over the arched window is a man, his chin resting on the woman's left shoulder, his legs and grossly exaggerated phallus hidden behind the spring of the arch. But there is something more: though the man is moustached and bearded, with nothing inhuman or non-human in his somewhat 'average' features, his body is not at all human. The long body with the sagging belly, held in with what looks to be rather

a surcingle than a man's belt, is more equine than human; but the legs and the phallus have more of the dog about them.

This naked woman, with the exaggerated and well exposed genitalia is usually known as a Shiela-na-Gig, a phrase of obscure origin and as yet 'officially' undetermined meaning; though I shall now suggest an interpretation of this obscure phrase.

It is clear that she - and all the others - are crude renderings of the Great Mother with her consort, Lucifer, Baal, Bel, Tammuz, or whatever name he has borne throughout his long wanderings over the miles and the millennia, the most earthily significant name being Scotch Tlutcock', Lord of the Underworld, a name current certainly up to the beginning of the last century.

The Great Mother, Shiela-na-Gig surely is - and the Great Mother in her crudest, least ambiguous aspect: the Female Generative Principle, completely 'despiritualised', and free from all irrelevant 'higher5 associations.

But what of the name, 'Shiela-na-Gig'?

'The whole question of Shiela-na-gigs,' says T.C. Lethbridge, (6) 'is somewhat confused by their name. The sole authority for its use comes from an English-speaking gentleman in Ireland, who asked an old countryman what one of the figures was.

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[6] Witches: Investigating an Ancient Religion. Op. cit.

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The old man was thought to say that it was a Shiela-na-gig. The term as it stands is difficult to translate. Remembering that Erse was a dying language, being steadily ousted by "quaint English" for a long time, and that some enquirers are a little hard of hearing, we may well wonder whether Shiela-na-gig is the correct term at all. (7) Some people have translated it as "the lady of the castle" and others "the lady of the breasts".

Since the real name of a goddess must not be mentioned by believers, it is probable that the old man only used an epithet. The first word is not difficult; if it is not simply a girl's name, Shiela, and referring to some notorious character in the neighbourhood, it seems probable that the word was Sithlach (pronounced Shiela) and meant 'Holy Lady'. 'Na' simply means 'of the', but what is 'Gig'? Supposing it was 'breast', the word would have been 'cioche', pronounced something like 'keesh'. Margaret Murray has pointed out that many Shiela-na-gigs have hardly any breasts at all. The emphasis is on other parts of their anatomy.(8) In any case, 'keesh' would hardly become 'gig' in any language. 'Castle' seems equally improbable.

It seems to me that 'gig' is simply a form of 'Gog', of 'og', 'ug', and perhaps 'hog'. It appears to be a variant of God. If this is the right explanation, the old man was really giving a correct description. The

figure represented 'the holy lady of the god'; she was a Mother Goddess. She sits in the attitude of Baubo, in the Mediterranean countries in classical times, to emphasise this side of her activities. Baubo of the Mediterranean is the Badb of ancient Ireland. At Wandlebury and presumably Whittlesford she was Ma Gog, the Mother Goddess.'

I have quoted Mr Lethbridge at length, because he tells us here all which is known of the origin of what has now been adopted as a convenient name to describe this class of cothic (9) sculpture. Let us now see if we may not find the correct meaning of the term, 'Shiela-na-gig'.

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[7] My italics - M.H.
[8] My italics - M.H.
[9] I have introduced this word as the complement of 'phallic'.

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It is easy to see how an incorrect origin was ascribed to the phrase. The old man encountered in the road did tell 'the English-speaking gentleman' that the cothic figure was a 'Shiela-na-gig', but the uncertainty of the meaning of this phrase - heard perfectly correctly by the questioner - arises from the fact that the answer was heard, in Ireland, from an Irishman, and so the questioner 'reasoned' that what he had heard was a phrase in Erse; an error made the most possible in that both 'Shiela' and 'na' are Irish words.

What the old Irishman said sounded like 'Shiela-na-gig', indeed; but the old Irishman wasn't speaking Irish. He said, 'It's a chilo-nagi' - Basque chilo (pronounce it 'sheeloh' or even, 'shiela'), 'hole'; nagi, 'lazy, idle'. Chilo-nagr. 'The Idle Hole'. Not, indeed, by our standards the most delicate way of describing an unemployed but we are dealing here with the concepts of 'predelicate' thinking. And we must remember that, in the nominal rolls of the 'pagan' Norman invaders, the women of the conquered people were listed as so many trous -'holes'.

The term, 'Shiela-na-gig', so convenient to a specific antiquarian purpose, has been generally adopted, and is here to stay. Now, however, I have supplied, by reference to the ancient Language of the Witches - the ritual tongue of the Fertility Cult - its crude but precise meaning.

A stone rescued, or merely surviving, from the burnt-out ruins of a priory building in St Ives, Hunts, shews Shiela-na-Gig - the Great Mother - even more demonstrably female; the man is not with her but his vast phallus is.

Many of these carvings have, of course, disappeared; with the Cromwellian Puritans' sensitive nose for 'pagan' survivals, it is a wonder that any have been permitted to remain.

In the fourteenth century, the Bishop of Exeter was shocked - so the Bishop's Register at Exeter affirms - to find the monks of Frithelstock (10) Priory, Devon, 'worshipping a statue like "the unchaste Diana" at an altar in the woods, and made them destroy it.'

At St Paul's, in London, what appears to be a relic of Diana-worship persisted until the mid-eighteenth century. On one day in the year, Dean and Chapter, wearing stag's horns and dressed in copes decorated with an embroidery of horns and stags, marched in procession about the great cathedral. The odd but obviously historic ceremony is described in Jem Ward's London Spy.

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[10] Note the 'pagan' Anglo-Saxon name, which means '(Sacred) Stone of Peace'.

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These statues of Diana of which we hear quite often during the Middle Ages throughout Europe are still to be seen. Did they escape the iconoclasts of the 1590s and the 1640s? - or were they, like the statue of Charles I at Charing Cross, hidden until the danger of destruction had passed?

For it is hard to see how the statue in Whittlesford Church -where the Great Mother and Baal (or Plutcock) flirt above the round-headed Saxon window - could have survived any dedicated iconoclast. But it is still there: 'the remains,' says T.C. Lethbridge, 'of a large alabaster carving of a crowned female figure with bared breasts ... Whether this figure represented the Madonna, or St Catherine, there seems little doubt that it would have been viewed as the Great Mother by those parishioners who were still that way inclined.' (11)

Here we have the clue to the 'obscene', 'indecent', 'irreligious', 'blasphemous' (they have been called all these) carvings: they indicated the true nature of the church building to 'those parishioners still that way inclined'.

And what came they to the church really to worship?

Just after the end of World War II I had a clear, detailed and perfectly unambiguous answer to that question from the late Professor Geoffrey Webb, formerly Slade Professor of Fine Art at Cambridge, and then Secretary of the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments. Professor Webb's revelations, fully supported as they were by photographs, should not, I think, have astonished me as they did. For these discoveries, though revealed only by the accident of war (Mr Webb, in discussing them, claimed no merit for the discoveries as such), should, long ago, have been deduced. The important evidence of our ancestors' True Faith ought not to have waited upon the chance revelation of accident to restore them to the sight of man.

Professor Webb, an authority on mediaeval church architecture, especially that of England and Germany, was assigned, immediately after World War II, to the task of surveying such of England's ancient churches as had suffered damage through aerial and other bombardment ('realistic war training' of Britain and her allies was not totally innocent of some of the damage inspected).

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[11] My italics - M.H. Quoted from Witches: Investigating an Ancient Religion, op. cit.

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The revelation was by way of an altar-top; a slat of stone that an explosion had shifted from its original position, thereby revealing the interior of the altar - for the first time since the eleventh or twelfth century.

Within that altar was a god - or, rather, The God.

This it was to which all those ambiguous, aberrant carvings, on ceiling boss and corbel, misericord and door-panel, hinted and pointed. It was the function of these carvings to reassure an adherent of the Old Faith that he or she 'had come to the right place'; so that, no matter how evident were the symbols of Christian worship, the holy place which had just been entered was one dedicated to the Old Faith, whose eternal symbol of Life Itself stood arrogantly proud - though necessarily concealed - within the apparently Christian altar.

Had this discovery been unique, it would still have been of the first importance. But, far from being unique, it was merely an invitation to Professor Webb to seek and find the altar-concealed, worshipful images elsewhere. He found that ninety per cent of all churches examined of a date up to, say, the Black Death of 1348 (which stopped church- and other building for purely economic reasons) had The God concealed within the altar.

And in which form was the Ancient Life-giver portrayed? Why, in a form rendered familiar to all who have visited a Hindoo temple. As a stone lingam; that master-symbol of the ancient, world-wide Fertility Cult: the universal Phallus by which all animal life was generated.

Knowing now that our ancient churches are but the Christian disguise in which the Old Religion flourished, hardly checked by the Roman Church, we may understand how easily a minister or prelate, officially credited to the Official Religion, could either practise a plurality of loyalties - as a member of the Roman Church at the same time as he observed the rites of an elder faith - or abandon the New religion altogether, in favour of the Old.

One may understand, then, how it was that charges of 'irregularity' were brought against senior members of the Church's management, as, for instance, against the Bishop of Coventry, in 1303, accused before the Pope of having 'done homage to the Devil'. Twenty years before, a more Rome-orientated bishop had prosecuted one of his parish-priests, the Rector of Inverkeithing (on the north side of the Firth of Forth, immediately opposite South Queensferry), for having led a fertility dance, at Easter, round the phallic figure of a God. (Was the figure always in the churchyard, or had it been brought out from its hiding-place within the altar, as the devout in southern Europe bring out 'special' statues of Christ, the Blessed Virgin and the Bambino, on certain feast-days?)

In 1324, Dame Alice Kyteler, the already-mentioned highborn, wealthy and - as it turned out - influential Anglo-Irish lady, found herself in trouble with the authorities. They charged her with the following:

1. That Lady Alice had met and conversed with the Devil, who had appeared to her 'in specie cujusdam aethiopis cum duobus sociis ipso majoribus et longioribus'; 'in the likeness of a Black Man, with two companions, each stouter and taller than He'. The Devil's name was 'Robin Artisson'.

2. That Lady Alice had sacrificed nine cocks to 'Robin Artisson' on the highway (at the cross-roads?).

3. That, on executing a search-warrant, the inquisitors 'in rifleing the closet of the ladie ... found a Pipe of oyntment, wherewith she greased a staffe, vpon the which she ambled and galloped through thick and thin, when and in what manner she listed.' (12)

4. That, further, still 'in rifleing the closet of the ladie', a wafer of sacramental bread was found, 'hauing the diuels name stamped thereon in stead of Iesvs Christ'. (12)

There are many points of interest in the Kyteler trial - not the least being that she fled to London, to put herself under the protection of the King, Edward II, who ordered all charges against the lady to be dropped.

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[12] Holinshed, Ireland, p. 58, quoted in Margaret Murray, The Witch-Cult in Western Europe.

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*A conjuration: Shakespeare and Fletcher's Henry VIII had made the London theatre-going public well conversant with the details of a conjuration. Here is a sixteenth-century necromancer raising the Devil (or a devil). The Church's persecution of the Old Religion had given peoples licence to believe in Black Magic; the subject fascinated them; and publishers obliged with 'veritable likenesses' a great deal more hair-raising than this illustration from John Ashton.*

When Margaret Murray published The Witch-Cult in Western Europe, she was unaware of the discoveries to be made, a quarter-century later, by Professor Webb; discoveries that I described to Dr Murray only at the very end of her long life." Had the discoveries been made much earlier, there is no doubt that she would, as I am now doing, have associated the presence of the lingam within the altar with a wafer of obviously non-Christian employment. The wafer 'stamped with the diuels name' is not evidence of a 'Black Mass', but a wafer for use in a non-Christian ceremony, held in a Christian church.

The name of the 'diuel', as he appeared (with his two bigger companions) to Lady Alice is interesting: Robin Artisson, the significance of which has been obscured by its having been 'translated' into law-Latin as Robin, filius Artis, and 're-translated' into English as 'Robin, son of Artis', a form that Dr Murray unwisely retains. The name was, in fact, Robin Artisson,- Robin (as in Robin Hood) being a well-known 'diuel's name', and Artisson being Basque (or Western Neolithic) artzan, 'shepherd' - 'I am the Good Shepherd; the Good Shepherd regardeth the life of his sheep ...'

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[13] She was over one hundred years old when she died in 1963.

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*Pan in the seventeenth century: In 1628, the well-organised, highly vocal Puritans were denouncing even maypoles as 'paganism'. It is curious, then, to find so pagan a character as this 'Robin Goodfellow', as he appears on the title-page of Robin Goodfellow, His Mad Prankes, and merry Jests. It also says much for the courage of the publisher F. Grove, 'dwelling on Snow-hill', to offer, in a laudatory guise, the Great God Pan - horned, cloven-hoofed, and as ithyphallic as the Gerne Abbas Giant. They were still burning people for 'paganism' far less open. Note that the God leads a group of twelve, making, with himself, a full coven.*

Perhaps the name, Shepherd, may explain the legend of 'The Shepherd Lord', Henry the 10th Lord Clifford, placed by his mother 'in the care of a shepherd, to save the boy from the fury of the Yorkists'. On the accession of Henry VII (who married a Yorkist princess), Clifford was restored to all his rights and seignories. But may the 'shepherd' of the tale not rather have been a 'Shepherd' - and artzan - of the Old Religion?

One important point appears to link the three cases of the parish-priest of Inverkeithing, the Bishop of Coventry and Dame Alice Kyteler - all of whom suffered no punishment. (14) This is the matter of the dates.

The parson of Inverkeithing - 1282
The Bishop of Coventry - 1303
Dame Alice Kyteler - 1324
From 1282 to 1303 is exactly 21 years (3 X 7)
From 1303 to 1324 is exactly 21 years (3 X 7)

This may all be coincidence; but Dame Alice appears to be linked, by a date, to the city of Coventry in yet another way.

In the same year - 1324 - in which Dame Alice escaped to England one jump ahead of the witch-hunters, Coventry was again in the news. Twenty-one years earlier, Coventry's Bishop had been charged with having done homage to the Devil; now twenty-seven - two covens of 13 each, and a Grand Master -Coventry citizens were arraigned on the charge of having plotted to encompass the King's death by sorcery.

As the accused's hired sorcerers all died before the case could come to trial, the accused were discharged for lack of evidence against them. They were luckier than the King, who may not have died of sorcery in 1327, but who certainly died at the hands of a sorceress - his wife, Isabella ('She-wolf of France').

The horror of Edward II's death - still too horrible that its details should appear in school-histories, even of this permissive age - has tended to blind the historian to the much more interesting symbolism of that execution, which occurred at the termination of the third seven-year period of his reign. Why the ritual killing of the Divine Victim should have been marked by such barbarity, only the She-Wolf (15) and her lover, Mortimer, could have told.

They never did tell. But they did not forget the symbolism which would tell the world that it was as an Incarnate, and not an earthly, King that Edward II had been despatched.

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[14] However, Dame Alice's maid, Petronilla de Meath, stayed behind, to fall into the hands of the local Bishop, who had her flogged until the maid had thoroughly compromised her mistress, now safe in England. Dame Alice was suspected of having poisoned her three dead husbands, and one still living husband - by 'the deuil's aid,' of course.

[15] She-Wolf' is a translation from the Latin, in which all mediaeval records were kept. But Latin Lupo, 'She-Wolf', also means 'whore'.

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Edward II suffered most painfully from haemorrhoids, a complaint not unconnected with his perverse sexual appetites. To Berkeley Castle, whither Edward had fled for refuge from his prelates, his barons, his wife and her lover, came a visitor in the guise of a Cunning Man, with a 'sure' remedy for the King's fundamental trouble.

Persuading Edward to lie, face down, on a bed, and to suffer the insertion of a lubricated bull's horn into his rectum, the Cunning Man privily summoned his confederates, some of whom threw another mattress over the King, forcing him down helpless on the bed, whilst others fetched a white-hot iron. Inside the horn - now pushed deep within the uranian monarch's body - went the white-hot iron. Hone says that the king's screams could be heard two miles away.

Why was the Roman Church so tolerant, in the three centuries following the Conquest, towards her relapsed 'children'? Why was the parish-priest of Inverkeithing permitted to keep his benefice? Why was the Bishop of Coventry not deprived of his see (at least)? And why, for all that her maid, Petronilla (16) de Meath, was eventually burned to death by the local Bishop, was Dame Alice permitted to go free?

The answer is a simple one: the Roman Church had a much more serious 'error' to contend with than any relatively harmless perpetuation of what, in Italy, had degenerated into a superstition which, affecting no class higher than that of the superior artisan or petty merchant, was now mostly the concern of the peasant.

A number of important events had coincided in time: in many respects, the eleventh century - the century after the world had realised that the Second Coming had not been arranged for the year 1000 - may well be regarded as the most important century of our era. It is important for the following events:

1. The Papacy, under Gregory VII, 'Turk Gregory', decides to make a firm bid for temporal power. With the humbling of the German Emperors, and the imposition of the rule of Celibacy on priests and monks, this bid gets off to a promising start.

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[16] The name of this Old Believer recalls the 'Au nom de Patrique, Petrique ...' of the Pyrenean ritual chant quoted on page 171.

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2. The First Crusade (1096-1100), is preached by Peter the Hermit, led by Godefroi de Bouillon.

3. William, Duke of Normandy, gathering an army with which to invade England, is joined by Normans returning from the Norman states in Italy. These repatriated Normans mark the first phase of a sudden, unexpected and indigestible access of new ideas from the current Mediterranean philosophy - ideas which are to cause the Church much trouble. After thirty years have passed since Hastings, Europe exports a large body of adult fighting men - some say as many as 50,000; though this figure is almost certainly exaggerated - to conduct the first Crusade.

Those who return bring with them a passionate admiration for 'Saracen' ways which do not stop short of acceptance of para-Christian or even anti-Christian theories. (It should be remembered that all the old heresies, which had plagued the Church in the earliest days of Christianity, were still very much

alive in the speculation-stimulative world of the Mediterranean.)

These three happenings constituted the true 'Renascence'; that emotional and intellectual restlessness which, first making men discontented with their restricted milieu, caused them to cast their regard outside their immediate surroundings - in time as well as in place.

Perhaps the most dangerous of all the products of this restlessness was the founding of the Knights Templar; a 'ginger group' - we shall meet others later - dedicated, not so much to recovering the Holy Places from the 'Saracens', as to putting constant pressure on those others who would set out (in six further Crusades) to banish Pagans from what both Jewish and Christian travel-agents call 'the Bible Lands'.

Inherent in their monastic rules were the inevitable factors of their later opposition to both Papacy and Christianity. A group of physically fit men, sworn to Celibacy, Poverty and Obedience; living in community (and so freed from all the small but vital domestic problems which so bedevil the minds and lives of less 'religious' men); sent off, from fog-bound north-west Europe to the romantic, exotic, permissive, sunny, sundrenched, intellectually stimulating Middle East (to paraphrase any travel-brochure of today) could hardly be expected to return quite normal, even if (a doubtful supposition) they had been completely normal in leaving.

It wasn't that they returned from their first brush with the Paynim confirmed in paederasty - they were almost certainly that to begin with (the monastic life would rarely make its strongest appeal save to the dyed-in-the-wool homosexual) -the trouble with the Templars was that they came back more corrupted theologically than ever sodomitically.

The Church could cope with a certain percentage of buggery amongst its servants; it certainly could not be expected to tolerate heresy. The Templars, wealthy and getting wealthier by the hour, as they cynically perfected a protection-racket with their fellow-sodomites, the Saracens - 'How many gold dinars if we don't attack?' - and erecting churches and abbeys on lands granted by sympathetic kings, were obviously due for the Papal chop. In 1303, thirty years after the failure of the last Crusade had persuaded even the religion-mad Louis IX that God. if He was anywhere, was on the side of the Paynim, the Pope's Sicher-heitsdienst moved in on the Templars in one of the more classic of the 'Night of the Long Knives' evolutions. The immense wealth of the Templars was seized by Church and King, and — though not in England and France - the chief Templars were put to the torture.

That the principal charge against them was that they had caused the neophytes to give their superiors the osculum obscoenum - 'and that thay quha convenis with thame kissis Christsonday and the Quene of Elphenis airss' (17) - sufficiently indicates the gravamen of the Church's accusation. Judging by the circular plan of their churches, it is more probable that the 'heresy' brought back from the Middle East by the Templars was either a pure Sun-worship - possibly Mithraism or, more likely, Zoroastrianism - or a Levantine interpretation of the Old Religion, with Sol Invictus as the supreme deity of its Fertility pantheon.

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[17] From the 'libel' charging Andro Man with witchcraft: Aberdeen, 1597. The 'obscene kiss' was the proof-act of witchcraft.

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The King of England, Edward II, unlikely to be shocked by the proven charges of sexual perversion made against the Templars, consented to seize their property, but not their persons; and where, rarely, the King imprisoned Templars on ecclesiastical warrants, he refused to torture them. The King of Scotland refused, not only to arrest and torture, but even to seize Templar property.

It is impossible not to connect the return of 'enlightened' Templars and other Crusaders with the sudden and widespread manifestation of the Manichaean heresy in the Mediterranean and Pyrenean districts of France.

Because the spontaneous anti-Roman Catholic movement appeared to have its centre in the city of Albi, the 'heretics' are usually called Albingenses, though they sometimes bear the alternative names of Cathari (possibly from the Greek, katharoi, 'The Pure Ones'), Perfecti or Bulgari, because this form of ancient Manichaeism had first manifested itself, at the beginning of the tenth century, in the Balkans. (The word, Bulgari, as used by the Bulgari's enemies, has given the word bougre to the French, and bugger to the English, language.)

The story of how, under the pious urging of Pope Innocent III, the Count of Toulouse and other magnates, undistinguished for an exemplary adherence to Christian tenets, undertook to exterminate the Albigenses in a full-scale war, has been told too often that I need repeat it, even briefly, here. The European crusade against the 'heretics' was at first enthusiastically supported, and then directed by an order of preaching friars, the Dominicans, which had been established by Dominic (hence the name of the Order) de Guzman, (18) in 1215, some six years after the Count of Toulouse had opened the vicious campaign against the Dualists of nearby Albi; and it seems impossible to believe that Guzman was not inspired to found his Order so as to 'get in on' the neighbouring massacre of 'heretics' and 'Demon-worshippers'.

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[18] Cynics may find it of interest to reflect that Guzman, now a quite common name amongst the Spanish-speaking peoples, is pure Arabic -Quzman. Ignatius de Loyola, founder of the Society of Jesus ('Jesuits') was a Jew. We have nothing to shew the Middle Ages in the way of a truly oecumenical sentiment!

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The Albigenses - and after them, the Waldensians (from Peter Waldo, of Lyons, who began to preach his 'heresy' in 1176) - were never 'extirpated', though they were driven well underground, only for their hatred of the Roman Church to burst out again at the Reformation, when Orthez, in the heart of the Basque country, declared itself what it remains to this day: a centre of unyielding anti-Catholicism.

With the collapse of all organised opposition on the part of the Albigenses, it became apparent to Europe, and in particular to that part of Europe's population still owing allegiance to the Old Religion, that a new force had entered the ecclesiastical-imperial power-politics of the Christian West. The Dominicans.

Experentia docet - and the Dominicans had learnt well the techniques of heresy-hunting and heretic-exterminating as they accompanied the mopping-up operations of Raymond de Toulouse and his soldiers.

The advantage of being based on the very town from which the anti-Albigensian campaign was being directed, was one that the Dominican high-command appreciated from the first. The Dominicans were not the first to war against the heretics of south-west France; but they were the first organised religious body to identify itself with the pious campaign to restore orthodox Christianity to the people of those ancient lands which lie between Bayonne and Narbonne.

The anti-heretic war, begun before the Arabic Guzman had decided to take a hand in it, had 'made' the Dominicans; shewn them clearly their purpose and destiny. God had called them to be His 'Hounds' - and the scent that they had caught at Toulouse was to keep them baying and ravening for over three centuries.

*With Ate at his side come hot from hell ... Cry 'havoc!' and let slip the dogs of war.'*

Employing a simple and effective technique made unpleasantly familiar to the world by the late Senator McCarthy, the Dominicans set themselves up as, not merely heresy-detectors, but as anti-heresy detectors. They gingered up Popes and their 'vassal' Christian kings by harshly interpreting the least reluctance to see 'witchcraft' everywhere as not merely human laziness, human lethargy, but conscious tolerance, approval even, of the Devil and all his work.

The Dominicans could not nag as bitterly as they wished; and they could not, so soon after their 'victory' against the Albigenses and the Waldenses, move as quickly as they would have desired. But they moved quickly enough. And having disposed of the more serious errors of the south-west, they turned their attention to eliminating the Old Religion which, in its simpler aspects, was rivalling, and in many places overtaking, orthodox Roman Christianity in other parts of Europe.

The 'serious' persecution of the Old Religion coincided, in time (and, to a great extent, in place) with the seizure of that persecuting power by the Dominicans that no one - least of all amongst the powerful orthodox - would have dared to refuse them. 'Warning barks' were howled - not to mix the metaphor too much! - by the now well-armed Hounds of God; though it should be noted that gentler treatment for highly suspect or positively convicted 'witches' (Inverkeithing's parish-priest, the Bishop of Coventry, Lady Alice Kyteler) was the rule, rather than the exception, only in those countries where the Monarch was either himself a practising 'witch' or was tolerant of the Old Religion for other reasons. Such was the case in England and - at that time - in Scotland also.

It was the case in Italy only because the partition of the Italian peninsula among so many small principalities made concerted effort against the Old Religion difficult of achievement. There was no

federal law in thirteenth and fourteenth century Italy to make witches dangerously vulnerable anywhere within Italian territory.

In France, where it may be accepted that the monarchy was not of the Old Religion, things were very different. It was the French king who had willingly undertaken the job of spearheading the Papal attack on the Templars; and it is in France that we find the first truly harsh persecution of the Old Religion.

Whilst witches of middle and high degree were occasionally and half-heartedly being arraigned in England and Scotland and Ireland, they were being made to feel the full force of a determined attack in France.

The accused in France were generally of higher social rank, and - so different from contemporary English and Scottish practice - they were usually hanged.

Guichard, Bishop of Troyes, was, in 1308, accused of having killed 'by sorcery' Jeanne de Navarre, wife of King Philip IV of France. The Queen had died three years earlier. The evidence purported to prove that the Bishop of Troyes had made frequent visits to certain notorious witches, who had supplied him with 'philtres and draughts'. Another bishop, Hugues Geraud, Bishop of Cahors, was accused of the same crime. The bishop's accuser was Pope John XXII, who himself came from Cahors, having been born there in 1244. Then residing at Avignon, John XXII accused the Bishop of Cahors (19) of having attempted the Pope's life by poison, 'obtained from witches', and had the bishop hanged in 1317.

There was something altogether odd about this accusation and execution. John XXII was so notorious an alchemist (a fact supposed to account for his having left a fortune of 18,000,000 florins when he died in 1344), and so dubious 'papally', that his very name was erased from the register of Popes, and his name-and-number - John XXII - to be re-acknowledged only by a pope of recent years.

During the two-year reign of Louis X, son of the witch-hunting Philip IV, one of the most notorious of these executions for 'sorcery' in high places took place: that of Enguerrand de Marigny, who had been chamberlain, privy councillor and first favourite of the dead king. The charge against De Marigny brought by the late monarch's son was that De Marigny had secured all this advancement by means of the magic with which he had bewitched King Philip.

It is now that we begin to perceive, in the charges laid against these highly-placed and ambitious men - charges which would be laid against equally highly-placed men and women in other parts of Europe before the fourteenth century came to its end - the sinister change which has overtaken the official view of the Old Religion. The degenerate diabolism which, at the end of the seventeenth century, was to involve so many high names in France, was becoming apparent at the beginning of a century which saw the destruction of the Templars, 'for sorcery'.

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[19] Only sixty miles due north of Toulouse, Cahors was well within traditional 'Witch Country'.

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What obviously had happened was that the simple faith of the Old Religion had been corrupted by ideas imported along with the returning Crusaders, or by those scholars and merchants who opened up contact with Greeks and Moors and the Levantine peoples generally. Profitless speculation upon the nature, rather than the purpose and practice, of the Deity has for long been the mental recreation of peoples whose climate encourages the irrational hypothesizing, the intellectual hair-splitting, the baroque word-twisting, the precocious-child Tweedledee-Tweedledum arguments, from which sprang all those theological whimsies, those eighty-one heresies (counted at the time of Augustine) which split the persona of the Godhead into even more fragments than, later, the Church itself was to be shattered.

Origen, an early speculator whose mystical enthusiasms did not stop this side madness, and who, in one of his religious frenzies, castrated himself, believed and taught that Christ was God's Son only by adoption; Arius, an Alexandrian presbyter of the fourth century, taught that God the Father and God the Son are distinct beings, and that the Son, though divine, is not equal with the Father; that the Son existed before His coming to earth; that He, unlike the Father, did have a beginning; and that Christ was not truly human, but only the Divine Son in a fleshly envelope. The more the 'way out' thinkers meditated upon God, the more imaginative were the theories proceeding from that meditation.

Montanus, a Phrygian of the second century, declared that he had received special knowledge from the Holy Ghost; knowledge not vouchsafed to the Apostles. But the Montanists themselves put out new heresies: best known, the Artotyrites, who not only offered bread-and-cheese in sacrifice to God (whence their name), but admitted women to the ministry.

The Alogians denied the Logos; the Theopaschites maintained that all three Persons of the Trinity suffered death on the Cross -and not merely the Son; the Incorruptibilists maintained that Christ's human body was incorruptible (a 'heresy' long since admitted to orthodoxy by the Roman Church). The Melchise-dechians believed that the Messiah was Melchisedech, and the Collyridians offered cakes to the Virgin Mary, as cakes had formerly been offered to Kore the Maiden. The Monothelites maintained that, though Christ had two natures, the human and the divine, He had but one will. The Angelics worshipped angels; the Quartodecimans kept Easter on the fourteenth day of the first month (a truly abominable heresy, calling for the harshest denunciation by the God-appointed Guardians of the Truth!); the Agnoetoe, whilst admitting the omniscience of God in all other matters, denied that He knew when the Day of Judgement would take place.

As I said, a count of heresies in the fourth century found them to be over eighty. In the centuries which had followed, the racial, social and climatic conditions which had created the habit of religio-philosophical speculation in the first place had not changed - nor had the zeal for straining at both gnats and camels. And the collapse of the Roman imperium had had the seemingly paradoxical effect of increasing, rather than diminishing, the traffic between Western Europe and the Middle East. There was an ever-narrowing intimacy between the 'Christian' and the 'Pagan' nations - their permanent frontier was, of course, in Spain, where Christian scholars, mostly monks, were hard at work translating into Latin the Greek scientific works which had been translated, by the 'Saracens', into Arabic. The Church could persuade itself that, in this admirably cultural work, the monks could learn mathematics and medicine and geography, without being in the least affected by the Arabs' religious

and philosophical speculations.

We have seen how, long before there was a Christian Rome, 'city mentality' had severed the Old Religion from its natural origins in the food-producing activities of Man, and had effected an imbalance within its theology by concentrating on the 'darker' aspects of the Life Cycle, at the expense of the 'lighter', the more apparently 'constructive', the more heartwarming and joyous aspects.

There is a disastrous heresy inherent in the Fertility Cult or Old Religion; the heresy that 'Life is a "product" of Death'. Death is, of course, an indispensable element in the life-cycle, or, to be more accurate, the cycle of generation, of reproduction. But, because there is a death between life and a life, this does not mean that 'death produces life', even though death were always to precede life. This attribution of 'constructive' powers to death - particularly to Death - is the prime characteristic of that wrong-thinking which occurs when the Old Religion is perverted by those who forget its origin in Nature herself.

By the time of the Crusades, Europe was not merely emerging from the Middle Ages, Europe was entering the Modern Age. For all the 'religion', the 'chivalry', the 'mediaevalism' of the Crusades, they had, both in their conception and in their results, something of the extremely practical in their composition and conduct. As Sir Ernest Barker pointed out, (20) 'When Palestine became the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem, early in the twelfth century, Italian quarters were established in the coast-towns of the Kingdom, and the Italian traders of these quarters enjoyed a privilege and almost "extra-territorial" position, analogous to the "concessions" of traders of a later age on other and more eastern shores. They were exempt from tolls and taxes, and they exercised their own jurisdiction in courts of their own.'

It must not be forgotten how large a part trade, for its own sake, played in the phenomenon of the Crusade; nor how immensely important, from the practical point of view, were the contacts between West and East that the Crusades made possible. After they had captured Samarkand in the ninth century, the Turks had learnt, from Chinese prisoners of war the secret of making rag-paper; in the eleventh century, the Crusaders learnt it of the Turks.

Long before the Emperor Diocletian ordered, in 296, the burning of the library at Alexandria, Alexandrian chemists had invented, described and drawn all the necessary apparatus for the laboratory operations of fusion, calcination, solution, filtration, crystallisation, sublimation and - especially - distillation. Their methods of heating included not only open fires and lamps, but also the use of sand- and water-baths.

The drawings in the Alexandrian MSS of circa AD 250 are indistinguishable from those in scientific MSS of the late eighteenth century. The majority of the Alexandrian MSS surviving the two great fires at the Alexandrian library eventually found their way westward through the Arabs and the Christian translators; Arnold of Villanova (1243-1313) describes the distillation of spirits of wine, and Chaucer, in his Canterbury Tales, mentions two Islamic medical authors.

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[20] Article in Far & Wide, Winter 1950-1: The Significance of the Crusades.

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The technical knowledge made available by the East to the West was disseminated throughout Europe by such scholars as Gerard of Cremona (1114-1187), who is credited with at least seventy translations, including that of Avicenna's (Ibn Sina's) Encyclopedia of Medicine, a work of vast extent. Other scholars engaged in disseminating the new-old knowledge were Robert Bacon, Richard Grosseteste and Raymond Lully, the last-named describing, in his De Secretis Nature, the preparation of nearly anhydrous alcohol by rectifications and dehydration over potassium carbonate (salt of nitre). Lully, the Majorcan, died in 1316.

The Crusades themselves gave the West knowledge of the following: the magnetic compass (which made ocean-voyaging possible, and so opened up the long sea-routes, to the Far East and to America), gunpowder, high-grade steel (originally discovered by plunging a red hot sword into an enemy!), rag-paper and — through Islamic intermediacy from China -printing.

To the traditional 'rustic' lore of 'simples' - the Wise Woman's and Cunning Man's inherited knowledge of the properties of herbs - might now be added a highly technical toxicology, with chemical processes to distill the healing or destructive principles from the leaves and flowers of the countryside. It is from this period of scientific enlightenment that the poisoner-witch makes a reappearance, and accusations of 'encompassing death by poisoning' become as common at the high political level as are accusations of 'sabotaging Socialist effort' in present-day 'progressive' states.

The Dark Age of Witchcraft had begun. And it had begun because technical and technological advances had split an important section of the Old Religionists from their 'grass roots'. Let us not forget that, at the same time that the Dominicans were 'masterminding' anti-Albigensian persecution from Toulouse, and the French king was 'master-minding' the persecution of the Knights Templars from Paris, the modern banking system was being soundly established in the Italian cities of Genoa, Florence, Lucca and Leghorn.

The 'dark aspect' of Witchcraft is essentially the result -in the late Middle Ages as it had been in late Republican and early Imperial Rome - of the separation of the city from the countryside on which the city depended for its food; the result of forgetting whence food comes; the result of forgetting that all human activity depends on the fruitfulness of plant and tree and fish and animal ... and on nothing else. It was also the result of too much interest in the destructive, as opposed to the constructive, powers of Nature: in the venoms of berries and leaves and reptiles, of roots and flowers and insects.

The revived knowledge of the Alexandrian pharmacopoeia shewed itself in the revived interest in toxicology, as well as in the technical mastery of that sinister art.

Into the standard accusations of 'witchcraft' now comes the new element of poisoning; and even where the traditional charges are still brought against the accused, it is clear that 'charms and incantations' ought to be read to include 'the administration of toxic substances'.

Margaret Murray has pointed out the likelihood that the founding of the Order of the Garter by Edward III in 1348 has strong indications of an association with the Old Religion. Dr Murray notes that the accepted history of the founding abounds in unlikelinesses, and proposes her much more plausible explanation of the events which led up to the founding of this 'most noble' order of chivalry.

The school-book legend is that, as King Edward III was dancing with 'the Fair Maid of Kent', Joan, (21) Countess of Salisbury, wife of the Black Prince, her garter fell off Covered, as they say, with confusion, the Fair Maid would have retired from the dance, had not the King, with quick-witted gallantry, picked up the garter and tied it about his own leg, with the defiant remark, addressed to the staring, sniggering courtiers around: "Honi soit qui mal y pense!" - 'Shame to him who thinks bad of it!'

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[21] Note the 'Witch' name, Joan. Margaret Murray could have added that the Black Prince was the Fair Maid's third husband, a further reason for thinking that a dropped garter would not have embarrassed her.

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And, the legend continues, the King, there and then, instituted the Most Noble Order in honour of St George, Patron Saint of England; (22) the Order to consist of twenty-six members, twelve knights for the King, twelve for the Prince of Wales.

'Though the story may be apocryphal,' says Margaret Murray, 'there may be a substratum of truth in it. The confusion of the Countess was not from shock to her modesty -it took more than a dropped garter to shock a lady of the fourteenth century - but the possession of that garter proved that she was not only a member of the Old Religion but that she held the highest place in it. She therefore stood in imminent danger from the Church which had already started its career of persecution. The king's quickness and presence of mind in donning the gaiter might have saved the immediate situation, but the action does not explain his words nor the foundation of the commemorative order.

If, however, the garter was the insignia of the chieftainship of the Old Religion, he thereby placed himself in the position of the Incarnate God in the eyes of his Pagan subjects. And it is noteworthy that he swiftly followed up the action by the foundation of an order ... It is remarkable that the King's mantle, as Chief of the Order, was powdered over with one hundred and sixty-eight garters which, with his own garter worn on the leg, makes 169, or thirteen times thirteen, i.e. thirteen covens.'

Perhaps by itself this evidence, though impressive, would not be enough to prove the King's membership of the Old Religion. However, there is a further piece of evidence, possibly unknown to, but certainly not mentioned by, Margaret Murray. This evidence, impressive in itself, is even more so when taken in conjunction with that of the Garter's foundation.

It is this.

Whilst at war against the French, in France, Edward III created an Order of twelve knights and their Sovereign: another thirteen; another coven. This order, which vanished in circumstances even more mysterious than those in which it had its origin, was named 'The Knights of the Hare'. It was founded thus.

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[22] Alas! - no longer 'officially' a saint of the Roman Church.

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Advancing against the French, Edward heard 'a great shout'. He took this for the traditional announcement that battle had been joined; 'but found afterwards that it was occasioned by a hare's running between the two armies'. One is irresistibly reminded of the hare that Boadicea slipped to run between her own and the Roman army. With the French shouting their welcome to the magical creature and Edward III celebrating the event in the founding to an order of chivalry, it is evident that, on both sides, the influence of Old Religion sentiments was very strong.

It is, indeed, hard to believe that, even with the coming of the Tudors, the British monarchy forsook its ancient allegiance to the Old Religion. Richard II adopted the White Hart as his badge, and caused all his courtiers and supporters to wear it; his mother's cognisance had been the White Hind: a genus of horned creature very closely associated, in a specific symbolism, with the Old Religion.

In their attitude towards the Roman Church, both Richard II and his murderer and successor, Henry Bolingbroke, shewed themselves the reverse of generous or even respectful. Richard II listened sympathetically to the remonstrance of his barons in parliament, when they complained that the revenue of the Roman Church in England was fourteen times the revenue of the state, and that the larger sum was leaving the country. And though Henry IV introduced a statute condemning heretics, De Hoeretico Comburendo, and actually condemned and burned Sir John Oldcastle, Lord Cobham, according to the statute, he also bit deep into the Church's entrenched wealth with his Alien Priories Act of 1414.

By this Act, many priories whose 'mother priories' were established abroad were suppressed, and their lands and revenues expropriated by the Crown. The Plantagenets had no objection to the order-keeping capabilities of the Church; they felt, however, that they had no duty to permit the Church to overcharge for its disciplinary services.

The Tudors, too, may not escape the suspicion of having belonged to what was evidently the 'family religion' of the British Royal Family. Apart from the fact that Henry VIII carried his anti-Roman prejudices to the point of a complete expropriation of what property remained to the Church of England and Ireland, he retained on his coins some of the dubiously 'religious' Latin legends adopted by the certainly non-Christian Edward III. One of these legends in particular had, long before even Edward III, acquired a 'magical' association, for all that it was a quotation from Luke, iv. 30. IESVS AVTEM TRANSIENS PER MEDIVM ILLORVM IBAT -'But Jesus, passing through the midst of them, went His way.'

An anonymous MS of the fourteenth century (23) - and thus contemporary with Edward III (1327-77) - describes the construction and use of a 'Ring of Gyges', (24) to be worn on the little finger of the right hand. Made of 'fixed mercury', the ring was to be set with the small stone which is to be found in a lapwing's nest. Then, around the bezel of the ring must be engraved the words quoted from Luke iv. 30, and given above. (The MS gives the words in French: Jesus passant + par Ie milieu d'eux + s'en allait.) 'You may then become visible or invisible at will, simply by turning the stone inwards or outwards.'

This magical legend, introduced on the new English coin, the gold noble, by the 'Pagan' Edward III, remained as the standard legend on English nobles, ryals and hammered sovereigns from Edward III to the 'Scourge of the Witches', James VI and I, with whom the 'magical' legends vanish from British coins.

There are other coin legends, too, of a most ambiguous quality, hard to reconcile with Christian loyalties. Even on the coins of Bloody Mary, that pillar of the Church, reappears that strange Tudor legend - meaningless, surely, to all but the Initiate: ROSA SINE SPINA, 'Rose without a thorn'. (On her Father's coins, it had been RUTILANS ROSA SINE SPINA, 'Red-gleaming rose without a thorn'.)

Charge and counter-charge on the high Magical level echo in royal circles over the three centuries which precede the Reformation - nor do they cease with the Reformation's coming.

In 1232, Peter de Roches, Bishop of Winchester, openly accused the Chief Justice of England, Hubert de Burgh, Earl of Kent, of several heinous crimes, the worst being that De Burgh had, through 'charms and incantations', won the affection of the King, Henry III. Nothing happened to De Burgh, any more than the parish-priest of Inverkeithing suffered penalty fifty years later; what was already happening to heretics and sorcerers in Southern France had not yet been exported to England.

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[23] Sloane MSS, British Museum.

[24] Plato tells the story of Gyges the Lydian and his finding, far below the earth, the magical ring which conferred invisibility.

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*The storm-raisers: In 1590 John Fian was charged, with other members of his coven, with having raised or attempted to raise a storm so as to drown King James VI (and I), then returning from Denmark. Fian and his accomplices used cats (flung into the sea) to effect their devilish purpose. That witches could control the weather by spells was commonly accepted by both witches and the general public in the sixteenth century and for long after. A coven of British witches claimed in 1944 that they had secured good weather for the Allied invasion of Europe.*

But, in the following century, as we have seen, two apparently contradictory phenomena may be noted: the profession of 'pagan' principles amongst the Higher-ups becomes more open; treatment of detected 'witches' becomes harsher. It is impossible to dissociate the latter phenomenon from the arrival, in 1270, of the Dominicans in England. They came, they said, as a 'teaching order'; the thousands of dead Albigensians and Waldensians were mute testimony to what the Dominicans taught.

However, prudently gathering power to influence the Kings of England as they had influenced the Pope, the Dominicans moved slowly against the pagans of a Pagan England.

They caused the Bishop of Coventry to be arraigned as a witch in 1303, dragging his Lordship before the Pope; but the Old Religion was still too strong in England that the Bishop should have suffered; and we have seen how Edward II could protect Lady Alice Kyteler. In the great Coventry scandal of 1324, when a group of leading citizens were accused of having sought to encompass the death of the King and of his favourites, the Church's leading witness was the supplier of spells and toxins, a professional necromancer named Master John. It was John's death in prison as the accused were awaiting trial which gave them their release.

In the next reign, love-philtres and magical poison again make their appearance in scandal. Alice Perrers, the King's mistress, was accused of having seduced the King by 'occult spells', whilst her physician, a noted sorcerer, was arrested; the charge against him being that he had 'confected love-

philtres and talismans'.

The chilling conviction, in the highest circles, that emotion-control had now passed to the toxicological sorcerers, grew in strength with each generation; and perhaps it is not without the greatest significance that the First Crusade (1096-1100) coincided with the sudden catastrophic appearance of the Assassins (Arabic hashishen, 'hemp-eaters'). Under their leader, Hassan of Nishapur, the Assassins established their almost impregnable stronghold on Mount Lebanon, and Hassan's successors terrorised the Middle Eastern world for two centuries until Sultan Bibaris exterminated them.

Their name derives from the fact that they were habitual users of hemp as a drug, to madden themselves to super-normal courage and cruelty, and to stupefy their victims with a cannabis-loaded drink. Certainly that expression of savage madness at the beginning of the eighteenth century with which the name of the 'Mohocks' is associated was hashish-induced; and it is unreasonable to suppose that hemp (hashish, cannabis Indica) would have been omitted from the list of drugs imported from the East after the First Crusade. And though the refinements of toxicological practice owed their inspiration to the East, the chemical science - as distinguished from the chemicals - imported from Asia Minor and the Levant must have accelerated discoveries nearer home.

The drugs which, from about the end of the twelfth century, begin to appear in the Witches' Pharmacopoeia, are all derived from plants common to the English, Scottish and Irish countrysides, though the extraction of the drugs from those plants almost certainly owed much to the advanced chemical methods learned of the 'Saracens', as heirs of the Alexandrian Greeks.

Aconite, for instance, is easily extracted from the root of the monkshood; the root yielding about four parts of the alkaloid in a thousand. One-fifteenth of a grain constitutes a lethal dose, the alkaloid slowing, upsetting and finally completely arresting the action of the heart.

Belladonna again is extracted from a commonly-found plant, the familiar 'deadly nightshade' of our still existing hedgerows. A recorded death was induced by as few as fourteen of the berries; a sub-lethal dose induces 'wild excitement and delirium'.

The fruit of hemlock, no stranger to English woods and fields, may yield up to as much as nine parts in a thousand of the essential alkaloid, one quarter grain of which may induce death. The toxic action of hemlock resembles that of curare: both inducing a gradual motor paralysis, death supervening when the respiratory functions become paralysed. Hemlock may also induce excitement and delirium.

In the case of aconite and hemlock, little or no effect upon the consciousness is induced, save that, in 'wild excitement or delirium', normal perception is confused.

These were the three principal poisons and delirifacients used in the Witches' Pharmacopoeia; they were known from very ancient times. Socrates, it will be recalled, was ordered by his judges to drink hemlock; belladonna was known both as a poison and as a cure for acute indigestion and gout in classical times; whilst the use of aconite by Rome's professional poisoners was so notorious that the cultivation of monkshood was forbidden under an Imperial law - as the cultivation of marijuana is

today forbidden in the United States of America.

Formulae for 'witches' ointment' surviving from the Golden Age of Witchcraft reveal the fact that it was the practice, not only to mix two drugs, but to apply the mixture percutaneously, rubbing the ointment into the skin.

'The first preparation,' says Professor A.J. Clark, (25) 'which contains hemlock and aconite, would produce mental confusion, impaired movement, irregular action of the heart, dizziness and shortness of breath.

'The belladonna in the second ointment would produce excitement which might pass into delirium.

'The third ointment, containing both aconite and belladonna, would produce excitement and irregular action of the heart.'

The application of these drugs in a fatty vehicle, an ointment - as Professor Clark points out, the bat's blood and baby fat have no pharmaceutical function - was obviously adopted at the Sabbats to retard the action of the drugs. But that they were taken, percutaneously, in a water-solution or ointment, raises an interesting suggestion in respect of the famous 'Witches' Broomstick'.

Only at the very end of the Old Religion in its organised form, when it was under violent attack from all sections of Christendom - 'reformed' and 'unreformed' - do we hear of the broomstick as a levitating device.

The Council of Ancyra, that I have noticed earlier, mentions that certain women believe that they ride upon beasts with Diana; and even where the broomstick is specifically mentioned (some thousand years after the Council of Ancyra), no suggestion of levitation is made by even the most prejudiced, the most credulous, of ecclesiastical reporters. Thus, of Lady Alice Kyteler (26) it was stated in the charge that those who had examined her house after her hurried departure for London, 'in rifleing the closet of the ladie, they found a Pipe of oyntment, wherewith she greased a staffe, upon the which she ambled and galloped through thick and thin, when and in what maner she listed.'

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[25] In an Appendix to The Witch-Cult in Western Europe, op. cit.

[26] Was it by chance alone that the Old Religion appeared so active in the year 1324? In that year fell the thousandth anniversary of Constantine's adoption of Christianity as the official religion of the Roman Empire. Reactionaries of the old Religion might have wished to shew that the 'True Faith' was still alive.

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Dr Murray has called attention both to the 'dittays' (indictments) against the Aberdeen witches of 1594 and a reference to Arabian witches in Julius Wellhausen's Reste arabischen Heidenthums (27)

('Survivals of Arab Paganism'). The Aberdeen witches were accused that, 'vnder the conduct of Sathan, present with yow, playing befoir yow, efter his forme, ye all dansit a devilische danse, rydand on trees (i.e. branches), be a lang space.' Wellhausen says that 'in the time of Ibn Munkidh, the witches rode about naked on a stick between the graves of the cemetery of Shaizar.'

*Witches and their imps: Three famous Leicestershire witches and their familiars, as recorded in their own confessions. Here are Anne Baker, Joan Willimot and Ellen Green (all with 'Witch' forenames) as they appear on a chap-book of 1619. Particularly note the round, flat hat of Anne Baker; of the same type as that of 'the Lady of Elche', an Iberian sculpture of c. 300 BC. We shall meet the hat again.*

The two important clues to the truth about this notorious 'broomstick' seem to be the 'greasing' of the stick and the nakedness of the 'rider'.

I suggest here that the verb 'ride', in these contexts, is a euphemism very closely connected with that which has used the same innocuous word - noun and verb - for 'sexual congress'. And I further suggest that such phrases as 'between the witches' legs' are euphemisms, too, and that, for 'between' we might more accurately employ 'inserted between' or, better still, 'inserted within'.

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[27] Berlin, 1897.

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For here we have, in the fourteenth and seventeenth centuries, one of the most ancient ritual objects to

be found in religious celebrations: the olisbos, of boiled and moulded leather (28) that the sexually excited women bore in the Bacchic processions; the less 'religious' but more personal surrogate-penis against whose use the German bishops thundered during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries and, indeed, the artificial penis worn and used by the 'Devil' of the Sabbats.

The famed 'broom' then, was a thickish stick with rounded ends - the French records call it 'vn baston' - modern baton -which gives one a fair idea of its size (and, I suggest, purpose).

Heavily coated with an ointment of, say, aconite and belladonna, and placed against the highly absorbent mucous membrane within the labia majora, the delirifacient would soon penetrate the linings of the vaginal and urethral tracts at their meati. The inevitable wriggling movements as the women endeavoured to place the 'brooms' in their most effective positions would have suggested to any observer the bodily postures connected with mounting a horse: the raising of the skirts, where full nakedness was not the fashion; the opening of the legs and flexing of the knees, where it was.

One feels that, as the muscular sphincter at the entrance of the vagina slackened off under the excitement generated by the potent mix of aconite and belladonna, the 'broom' might have come to its full olisbotic use, and have been inserted into the orifice now physically (as the woman was psychically) prepared to receive it.

Professor Clark comments:

I cannot say whether any of these drugs would produce the impression of flying, but I consider the use of aconite interesting in this respect. Irregular action of the heart in a person falling asleep produces the well-known sensation of falling through space, and it seems quite possible that the combination of a delirifacient like belladonna with a drug producing irregular action of the heart like aconite might produce the sensation of flying.

By all accounts, this combination did 'produce the sensation of flying' - hundreds, perhaps thousands, of convicted witches went to the flames or the scaffold declaring and believing that they had flown with Diana, to keep a tryst with the Incarnate God.

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[28] The penis coriaceus of the Classical writers.

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One must remember that these and other stimulants were also deadly poison, and that the knowledge that they existed and were available to some highly expert users gave to many of the High-ups of the fourteenth, fifteen, sixteenth and seventeenth centuries what we have come to call 'the jitters'. Certainly this apprehensive consciousness of 'poison to right of them, poison to left of them' inspired the venomous - in both senses of the word - charges and counter-charges of that poison-conscious age.

It seems to me that there is some connection between the use of the word 'broom' for the witches'

olisbos and the family name of that Norman-English royal family which did not completely vanish with the Tudors (for these upstarts claimed a remote blood-relationship): the Plantagenets. 'Plantagenet' (again 'as every schoolboy knows') derives from the Low Latin planta genista, 'broom, heath'; and so long as even a diluted-blood Plantagenet sat on the throne of England, the Dominicans themselves hesitated to throw the full weight of their vested interest against the Pagan, the Old Religionist, the Witch.

The domestic broom is so called because, like the besom, it was originally no more than a piece torn from a bush - in the case of the broom, the broom-bush. But why the prickly broom should be the plant to supply the 'broom' on which female Old Religionists 'rode' is hard to say, unless, as I have suggested, there is a punning connection between the ritual 'broomstick' and the family name of those English-French kings and French and English nobles whose powerful influence was exerted to protect the Old Religion from the rising power of the Roman Church's Sicherheitsdienst.(29)

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[29] The pun may go even further, involving the similarity of sound between genet, 'broom', genet (now jennet) 'a small Spanish horse', and the well-known 'witch' name, Jennet (or Janet or Jonet). As I have pointed out elsewhere, the pun and the rebus were of great importance in the past, since they were the 'proof that the Doctrine of Correspondences, itself the basis of the Doctrine of Sympathetic Magic, was valid in the realm of sound, as in the realm of the other four physical senses. It is the 'magical' importance of the sound-similarity which explains the frequency of the 'canting' or punning coat-of-arms in mediaeval heraldry.

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The power of the Plantagenets to protect the Old Religion English may be gathered from two contrasting facts falling almost coincidentally in time. In 1324, Lady Alice Kyteler was tried for both operative and ritual witchcraft, and found guilty. She placed herself under the protection of Edward II - even though by then an almost powerless monarch - and suffered no penalty.

In 1337, the good people of Bern (the 'Bear City'; City of Artemis the Bear-Goddess), attracted the attention of non-English Europe through the publication of Nider's Formicarius, 'a detailed account of witches and their proceedings in Berne, which had been infested by them for more than sixty years'. Even the Reformation was not to lift the terrible burden of persecution from the Swiss, whose almost purely agricultural economy made it unthinkable that the Old Religion should cease to flourish among them.

In England and France, the Black Death had so upset the economy as radically to change the socio-economic relationship between Lord and Serf. In France, the feudal system recovered from the economic effects of the Black Death; in England -where, perhaps, the mortality was higher (30) - feudalism never recovered; and the serf, his labour competed for, and his wealth and standing augmented accordingly, was emancipated, in fact if not yet in legal theory.

Religious revivals are a commonplace of times of troubles; it is interesting to reflect that the religion

which was revived in the fear of the Black Death was the Old Religion - as is plainly indicated by Edward III's founding the Order of the Garter in the very year in which the bubonic plague swept murderously across Europe from farthest Asia.

Perhaps it was the change in status of the serf; perhaps it was the shortage of labourers and craftsmen; perhaps it was that the Old Religion felt itself emboldened to 'come to the surface'. Whatever the reason, the lingams are no more to be found within the altars of those churches built after the Black Death. It is certain that they must have replaced the symbols of the New Religion on that religious altar. They must have been exposed for worship on the altars themselves.

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[30] The scarcity of labour was such in England that there are still visible many jobs left unfinished because of the death of the craftsman. The clergy died so fast that boys were admitted to Holy Orders simply by being shaven. 'William Bateman, Bishop of Norwich, dispensed sixty shavelings to hold rectories and other livings, that divine service might not cease in the parishes over which they were appointed.'

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The power and the prestige of the Old Religion reached their apogee in the fifteenth century, following the reaction in its favour almost certainly attributable to the emotional shock of the Black Death. This 'visitation' the Roman Church had shewn itself powerless to halt or even (in the opinion of panic-stricken Europe) to modify, and because, for reasons which are obvious to us - though not to the fourteenth century - the plague hit hardest in the towns, the relatively plague-spared countryside seemed to have been reserved for preferential treatment by - whom? (Or rather, by Whom'?).

If the Christian God, speaking through, and always interpreted by, His Church, had shewn Himself unable to answer the fervent prayers that He banish the Black Death, might not another, and more ancient, God prove more powerful? In those parts of the continent traditionally more loyal to the Elder Gods, the plague struck with less force, sometimes not at all - 'obviously' some tremendous Power was keeping at bay that Death that New Religion was impotent to resist.

Thus, as we have seen, the Plantagenet (and so traditionally 'pagan') King threw away pretence, and declared himself openly now for the Old Religion, establishing a double-coven 'Brains Trust' - the Order of the Garter - to 'master-mind' the return to what Edward and the Fair Maid of Kent, his 'witch' Plantagenet cousin, considered to be the True Faith.

So the historical record shews the Old Religion even more defiant of the enmity of bishops and Dominicans; even more protected by the Crown than it had been in the fourteenth century's beginning, when the Bishop of Coventry had done homage to 'the Devil', as (according to Nider), they had been doing at Bern for many years past.

Yet, though the Plantageneis were, despite Civil War and the usurpation of the throne - both before and after the Wars of the Roses - to hold the crown of England until the coming of James of Scotland,

the New Religion was to triumph over the Old; and the fifteenth century, beginning with the Old Religion almost restored to its former power and influence, was to end with the Old Religion reeling under an attack which would not cease until 'all effective resistance had been overcome'.

In 1419, Henry V, Shakespeare's Wonder Boy, (31) had his stepmother, Joan of Navarre, arrested and charged before the Curia Regis with having attempted the King's life by witchcraft, 'in the most horrible manner that one could devise'. The name, 'Joan', as I have noted several times elsewhere, is a common witch name; but the fact that Joan came from Navarre, the Basque Country, would be a fact predisposing one to feel that Henry's accusation might have had some substance. That the accusation rested on something more than mere suspicion is evident by the Archbishop of Canterbury's ordering public prayers for the King's safety. It is clear that Henry V did not consider that his support of the Old Faith justified the vulnerability proposed for him at the instance of a foreign woman, even of the same Faith.

As the Hundred Years War drew to its end, the English kings seemed to become obsessed with the presence and activity of a malignant witchcraft, its perverted energies constantly directed against themselves. They knew that they were of the Old Religion, and so, in the eyes of orthodox Christians, 'heretics', 'pagans', and 'witches'.

What, then, the English kings asked themselves, were the sorcerers who were attempting to kill them?

The son and heir of Henry V, the 'pious' and mentally disturbed Henry VI, was as great a believer in, and as much a fearer of, malignant sorcerers as Henry V had been. In 1441, he ordered the arrest of Eleanor Cobham, Duchess of Gloucester, for having conspired with a 'clerk', Robert Bolingbroke, to procure the King's death, so that his uncle, the Duke of Gloucester, might mount the throne.

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[31] The military expedition to France, theme of Shakespeare's Henry V, was delayed at Southampton as two of his knights, with their retainers fought to decide which knight ought to have the concession to transport the 'Government issue' whores, English Army, for the use of. Press-ganged women reluctant to submit to their conscript role were ham-strung and transported to the base-brothels in Army waggons. This pre-invasion row would have done much to offset the weary pretentiousness of the Laurence Olivier Henry V, had the scriptwriter put it in.

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Bolingbroke, described as 'a most notorious evoker of demons', as well as 'the most famous scholar in the world in astrology and magic', was assisted in his sorcery by Canon Thomas Southwell and Margery Jourdemayne, who had been imprisoned on a strong suspicion of sorcery eleven years earlier. Bolingbroke, though it was his confession which implicated the Duchess of Gloucester, was hanged; the Canon died in prison whilst awaiting trial; and Margery Jourdemayne was burned at the stake in Smithfield. The Duchess was made to 'purge her crime' through a very humiliating public penance, and was sentenced to life-imprisonment in Peel Castle, Isle of Man.

The names and a date in this famous and comparatively witch-trial are worth attention. The Duchess was a Cobham, niece of that Sir John Cobham who had been burned for heresy (not witchcraft) in 1417, in the last year of the reign of Henry Bolingbroke, to whom the noted sorcerer Roger (Roger is a Royal Norman name) must have been related. The name, Southwell, turns up again, oddly enough, as that of an English priest, condemned under Elizabeth I for high treason. Father Southwell was a Roman Catholic, and it has been assumed that the charge against him - of plotting the death of the Queen -was the unjust expression of religious prejudice. But if plotting the death of a monarch was a traditional occupation in the Southwell family ....

Margery Jourdemayne, burned at Smithfield in 1441, (32) had been arrested on a charge of sorcery and - presumably by judges sympathetic towards the Old Religion - released. The year was 1430; the year in which Joan of Arc, certainly a member of the Old Religion, was brought to trial.

Was there any connection between Jourdemayne's arrest and that of Joan of Arc?

Now we begin clearly to see that the Old Religion has long ago given birth to a bastard offspring, and that now this offspring has itself come to power and influence; that, though the Old Religion, in its pure 'Natural' form, has survived from Man's earliest days, that darker product of Old Religion faith - that product that we encountered in Lucretius and other

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[32] She was burned for High Treason, not sorcery.

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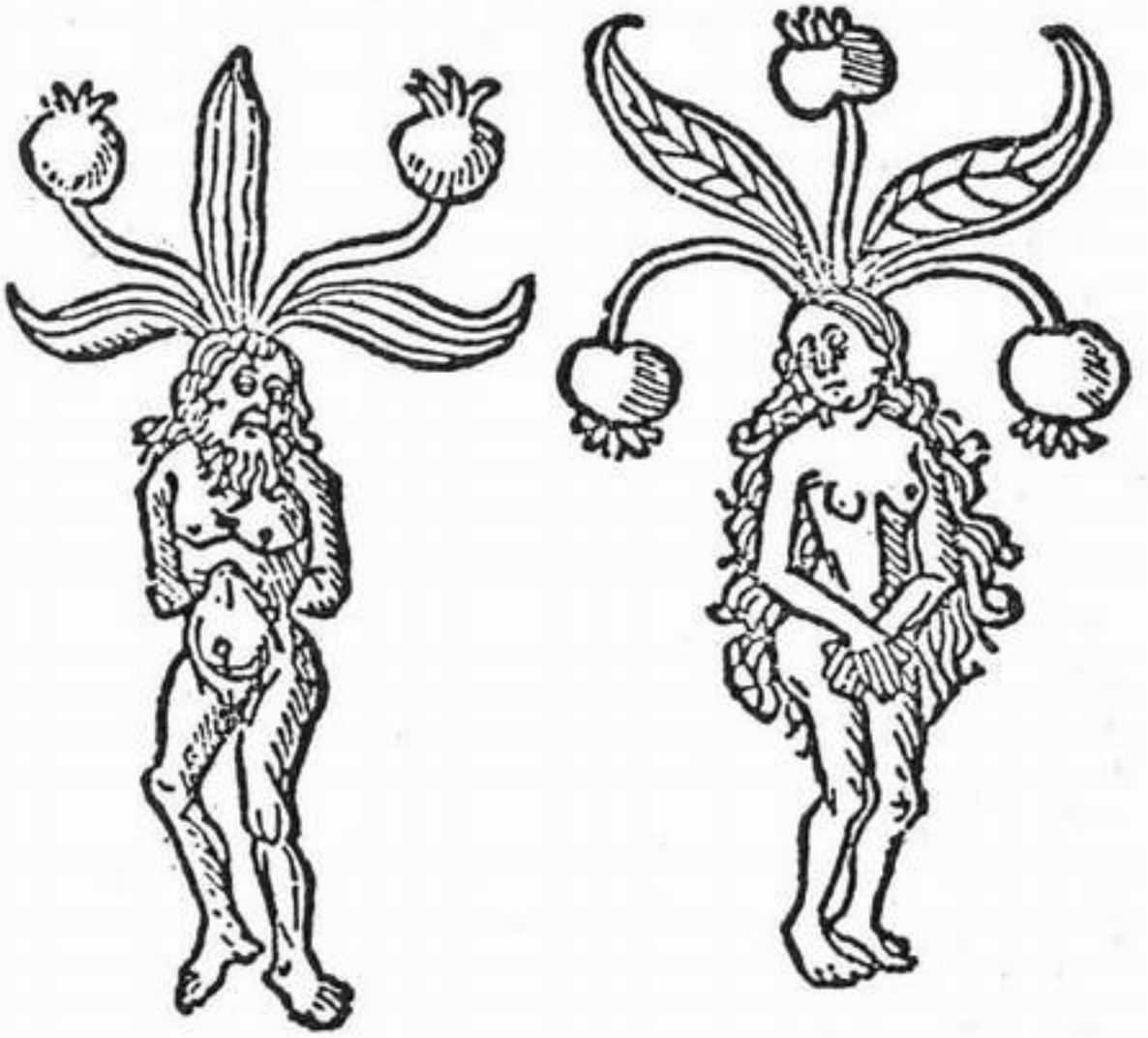

*Mandrakes - male and female: The mandrake, says Thomas Newton's Herball to the Bible, 'is supposed to be a creature having life, engendered under the earth of the seed of some dead person put to death for murder'. Love-potion, soporific, producer of fecundity in women (Genesis xxx, 14-16), the oddly humanoid mandrake was fecund itself indeed in producing a host of mediaeval superstitions. This pair of mandrakes has been imagined by a fifteenth-century botanist.*

Roman writers - has become powerful enough, in its own right, to challenge, not only the Roman Church but also the Old Religion. It is because, to the outsider, it is so easy to confuse the 'white' and the 'black' aspects of the Old Religion that the 'official' attitude of the fifteenth century seems so confusing.

For instance, who immured Walter Multon,. Abbot of Thornton-upon-Humber, in 1443 - and why? When a shaky wall in the abbey ruins was taken down in 1722, the Abbot was found sealed up in a room which contained, besides his skeleton, a table, candlestick and book. In 1845, another such immuring was discovered at Temple Bruer, (33) in Lincolnshire.

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[33] A name which may perpetuate the memory of a former temple of Artemis Brauronica, Artemis the Bear-Goddess.

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The identity of the victim is still unknown, but the name of the village indicates that, in the past, the land was on one of the nine thousand manors of the Knights Templars.

Richard Crookback, Duke of Gloucester, seized the throne in 1483. It is fashionable now to deny that Richard murdered his nephews, one of whom was the King. But the fact is that Edward V disappeared; that Richard mounted the vacant throne; and that accusations of witchcraft fly about at the time of his accession for all the world as though the Dominicans had not triumphed (partly by fraud, partly not) in Cologne, and that the death-knell of the Old Religion had not been sounded over Europe.

The marriage of Richard's dead brother, Edward IV, to Lady Elizabeth Grey had been contrived, Richard declared, 'by sorcery and witchcraft'. He accused Lady Elizabeth (note the Old Religion name!), 'that monstrous witch', of having conspired with Jane Shore, Edward's mistress, of 'wasting and withering Richard's body'. Richard did not kill Jane - again note the 'Witch' name! - but made her walk barefoot, clad only in a skirt, through the streets of a rough fifteenth-century London, with a 'placard' of her 'crimes' hung about her neck.

Mistrusting those allies who had helped him to the throne, and wishing to rid himself, in particular, of the Duke of Buckingham, Richard accused the Duke of having consulted a Cambridge necromancer, 'to compass and devise the King's death'.

## 11 - Mopping-up Operations

In his excellent book, Witchcraft, (1) Pennethorne Hughes, talking of the late fifteenth century, says that 'The Papacy fought against the new nationalism, and the new municipalities, with only partial success - and against the Old Religion with an abandon comparable to the last anti-Jewish furies of the retracting Reich in 1945'. The analogy is valid if - and only if - we may accept that the Roman Church felt itself to be as near inevitable defeat as did the Nazi high-command in 1945. May we ...? Yes, I think that we may. I think that the Roman Church realised that, if it was not precisely 'finished', then its spiritual-temporal overlordship in the West was about to be actively challenged, and - perhaps - rejected by the New Men.

Throughout the century, the Church's apparent successes had multiplied. Though the English master-heretic, Wiclif, escaped prosecution through his being protected by another master-heretic, John of Gaunt (faithful to the traditional Plantagenet Old Religion), the Church had been more successful in extirpating heretics in continental Europe. John Huss, for instance, travelling to a conference of Roman clerics under a safe-conduct, had learnt too late how valuable a Roman safe-conduct, issued to a heretic, could be. Huss was burnt in 1415.

In 1457, Bernardo di Bosco was given a commission by Pope Calixtus III to 'root up and utterly extirpate' the witches in the neighbourhood of Brescia.

In 1414, Henry IV of England, had 'obliged' the Church by burning Sir John Cobham, Lord Oldcastle, and other Lollards; but political, rather than religious, considerations induced the Plantagenet (and so Pagan) King to move against the English heretics.

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[1] London: Longman, Green, 1952.

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Yet, even with these notable fifteenth-century successes, those in charge of the Church must have reflected that Witchcraft, the Old Religion, having been designated an heretical sect by the Church two centuries before, should (as the Dominicans never tired of reminding their less energetic fellow-churchmen) have been completely stamped out long since. What put the necessary 'extirpating' power into the Dominicans' hands was a 'proof' that Almighty God - the Almighty God of the orthodox Christian, of course - had been so offended by Christian laxity, by Christian infidelity, by Christian backsliding, by Christian tolerance of the heretic and the unbeliever, that He had permitted a Pagan people to eliminate the surviving half of the ancient Roman Empire.

To the hardly Christian princes of the Church, already paganized through their nostalgic, snobbish addiction to the classic works of Greece and Rome, the fall of Constantinople in 1453 had a significance far different from that which was to be read into it by the 'Hounds of God'. The humanist Cardinal Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini, afterwards Pope Pius II, wrote despairingly to Pope Nicholas in July, 1453: 'How many names of mighty men will perish; It is a second death to Homer and Plato!

The fount of the Muses is dried up for evermore!' (2)

The Dominican of today is no uneducated man; he was not uneducated in the fifteenth century. But the possible loss of ancient Greek manuscripts was a catastrophe that he did not labour, did not even mention, when he set out to make European flesh creep at the spectacle of the Turks' conquest of the Empire of the East.

For - and this is a fact of history that hardly one person in ten thousand now remembers - the Eastern Church was not, as Constantinople fell, 'Orthodox' any longer. It was no longer separated from Rome by the Orthodox refusal to accept the 'filioque clause'. The last Emperor and his prelates and his court and his generals had assembled in St Sophia, and there, as the price of the military assistance that Rome promised (though never gave), accepted the principles of Roman Christianity, and healed the five-hundred-year breach between the two branches of Christendom. It was a city of fellow Roman Catholics that God, in His not-so-inscrutable-as-all-that wisdom, had permitted to fall to the devil-worshipping Turk.

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[2] Despite this and similar evidence of widespread classical learning in the West long before the fall of Constantinople, the foolish myth goes on being repeated, that only with the fall of Constantinople and 'the flight of Greek scholars with ancient MSS,' did the Renascence begin.

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The Dominicans, in fact, did what Hitler was to do in his search for power five hundred years later: offer to 'restore order'. It is an appeal to which the comfortably-off bourgeois and small tradesman and petty artisan can rarely be indifferent. And the fifteenth century, for all its wars and epidemics and fears of the Barbarian at the Gates, was a century in which what we know now as Big Business first made its appearance.

It was in this most formative of all centuries that a Benedictine monk established the profession of accountancy by inventing the double-entry method of book-keeping; and the great international banking families, such as the Fuggers of Austria, anticipated the wealth and the influence of the Rothschilds. As Sir Thomas More was to observe in the next century, great changes had come upon agriculture; in his telling phrase, 'the Sheep had eaten up the Men' - and landowners found it more profitable to use their land for grazing than for crops. (The Black Death, by halving the population, had forced the price of labour up, but it needed only one or two shepherds to control a flock of a thousand strong.)

To return to Hitler. It was his dangling the prospect of Order's preservation before hopeful human eyes which enabled him to convert his conquered enemies into his most active and ruthless helpers - at the war's end, the elite Waffen SS, 800,000 strong, contained no fewer than 400,000 foreign ex-prisoners of war: French, Dutch, Belgians, Poles, and so on. Every second man in the Waffen SS was a converted enemy of the Fuehrer. And why had they accepted service in the Waffen SS, these 'lifelong enemies' of the Nazis? To fight for Hitler, to fight for the Third Reich, to fight for National

Socialism? Not a bit of it! To fight for that shadowy but very real desideratum: Order. To fight - as, indeed, men have always fought - to repel the Barbarian at the Gate ....

They had been a backward people, whether or not they sprang from the abnormal union of female demons with travellers heedlessly making their way through the dark Hercynian forest. For centuries they had boasted of their contempt for, and resistance to, the luxuries which (in their opinion) had sapped in other peoples the strength, the ruthlessness, the tolerance of pain, the maniac will-to-win which (in their opinion) were the glories of the Natural Man; the particular merits of the Germans - 'The People', as they called themselves. Everything about them was simple: their way of living, their food, their huts, their abstention from city-making, their rejection of an hereditary in favour of an elective monarchy, their coronation rite (merely raising the new King on a shield), their simple theology and cosmogony, the simple attributes of their simple Gods.

Long after the rest of Europe, with the exception of their fellow-Teutons, the Scandinavians, had accepted - at least outwardly - the forms of Christianity, the Germans remained obstinately 'pagan', though, when they fell, as did the Franks, under any really established and persuasive cultural influence, such as (in the Franks' case) that of Romanised Gaul, their self-conscious Teutonism could not put up an effective resistance. The Franks accepted Roman institutions, Roman speech, Roman ideals. But the hard core of Germanism, behind the Rhine and rivers further east, remained almost unaffected of that synthetic but still essentially Roman culture which had been influencing men's ideas for a thousand years. Not until the first millennium of our present Era had passed could it be said of the Germans that they had accepted Christianity even nominally.

However, they resembled others in this: that they displayed all the zeal of the reluctant and tardy convert.

Inherent in their genetic formula must have been a genius for organisation; still with them, and expressed in many ways, from their 'neatness' and love of physical cleanliness, to their affection for written records and statistics; (3) from their passion to be regulated by 'authority' to their passion for imposing conformity to their own standards on others.

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[3] One of the least human addictions brought to America by German immigrants, and now re-exported by 'native' Americans for the threatened dehumanising and not-so-far-distant destruction of the world.

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The Old Religion had survived, in a more or less pure form, until two Germans, strong, ruthless with all that humourless efficiency which has made this regrettable racial type the Scourge of God, assumed the responsibility of extirpating the Old Religion and that corrupt aspect of it to which, properly, the name 'witchcraft' should be reserved - that is to say, the Old Religion perverted by the conversion of its original Life-Death dualism into a Faith where Death has become the dominant.

As Pennethorne Hughes says:

In 1208 the Albigensian Crusade was preached by Pope Innocent III, and the vigorous, greedy cavalry of the north, led by Simon de Montfort, uncle of the hero of the text-books, pillaged the south and brought flames and desolation to the valleys of Languedoc. The Holy Inquisition of St Dominic was deputed to move in, with the full powers of the later black-coated police of totalitarianism, to stamp out the heresy which remained ...

With persistence and with pious thoroughness the Inquisition did its work, and then turned north to grapple, aided by increased experience, with the manifestation of Satan in the north: witchcraft ...

There are many instances in the examinations of the Cathari and of the Templars ... of conceptions which were to become more apparent in the evidence of the witch-trials ... It may well be that the Master Devils of the witches, who often were educated men, had a knowledge of the Eastern cults which were incorporated in these throw-backs into increased asceticism. If so, it would account for the fact that the palaeolithic memories of the witch-cult coincided so conveniently for the Inquisitors with the external practices of the very different heresies of the south. But a skilful Inquisitor can manufacture many parallels ...

As, for the next two-and-a-half centuries, the world was to be shewn ...

In any religious Who's Who, the academic records of Heinrich Kramer and Jakob Sprenger would read impressively. Kramer's intelligence and diligence early earned him generous rewards; whilst hardly out of his teens, he was appointed Prior of the Dominican House in his native Schlettstadt, some twenty-six miles south-west of Strassburg. With the high Dominican distinctions of Preacher-general (P.O.) and Master of Sacred Theology (S.T.M.), Kramer's well-disciplined zeal soon brought him to the attention of the Highest in the Church. At some time before 1474 he was appointed Inquisitor for the Tyrol, Salzburg, Bohemia and Moravia (hotbeds of heresy, these last two!). 'His eloquence and tireless activity' - especially the latter - 'received due recognition at Rome,' and he was appointed Spiritual Director of the important Dominican church of Salzburg, and the indispensable 'Goebbels' of Salzburg's Archbishop, who - in official letters at least - had high praise for his dedicated, bigoted, zealous, man-hating 'assistant'.

Here, though not imprisoned save by the lunatic constrictions of his own mind, Kramer wrote his Mein Kampf - that treatise on Witchcraft which circulated in MS, and which, later, was to be printed and circulated throughout the West as the notorious Malleus Maleficarum - 'A Hammer for the Witches'.

Jakob Sprenger was a Dominican of similar background, and of almost identical psychic pattern. Entering the Order at the age of sixteen, Sprenger soon impressed by 'his extraordinary genius'. Graduating, as a matter of course, as Master of Theology, Sprenger earned the warm commendations of his spiritual superiors by his zeal as a reformer within the Teutonic Province of the Dominican Order, and in 1468 (when he was little more than thirty), the General Chapter of the Dominicans sent him to lecture on the Sentences of Peter Lombard at the University of Cologne.

On June 30, he was elected Dean of the Faculty of Theology at Cologne; in the following year, the Master-general of the Order, Fra Salvo Cassetta, appointed Sprenger Inquisitor-extraordinary for the provinces of Mainz, Treves and Cologne (three Roman military towns, in which the tradition of 'paganism' was still strong). 'His activities were enormous, and demanded constant Journeyings through the very extensive district in which he had been assigned.' In 1488, Sprenger was elected Provincial of the whole German Province, 'an office of the first importance'. (4)

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[4] Montague Summers. From the Introduction to his translation of Malleus Maleficarum; London: John Rodker, 1928.

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But, in the meanwhile, he had met and formed his literally diabolical partnership with Heinrich Kramer.

How did they meet? They were, we know, members of the same energetic, officious, sadistic Order; both had been 'marked for promotion' from the moment that they joined the Dominican Pabstjugend. Both were Masters of Sacred Theology; both were of the kind which is always 'news', especially the 'news' which concerns itself with interdepartmental 'shop'.

'Heard the latest about Kramer?' 'Heard what's happened to Sprenger?' And it was always interesting; even though it might have provoked jealousy among the less talented, the less zealous, the less vigorous, the less lucky ... the more human. • When they met, and the separate glittering careers were offered the brighter promise of an even more glittering partnership, the rapport must have been instantly, instantaneously, established. They can have needed no words to lay out and sign their devilish compact in all its horrible implications, any more than Burke and Hare needed to spell out the vampire dynamic of their instantaneously proposed and ratified partnership.

Who brought the pressure to bear on the weakling Pope Innocent VIII - that pressure which was necessary to secure the one essential element that Rome (and not the Order) had to supply - we cannot say. That the pressure originated in the Kramer-Sprenger partnership is beyond dispute; but who undertook the personal contact with His Holiness? - whose task was it to blackmail the Pope into commanding the Holy War against the Heretic? - the blackmail here being implicit in the request: 'Do you wish the world to know that you won't give battle to Satan?'

Pope Innocent VIII knew a losing hand when he saw what he was holding. He was a 'modern' Pope, product of the new Humanism. He certainly did not believe in the Devil; indeed, except in a highly academic fashion, it may fairly be doubted that he believed in Christianity - a Palestinian peasant, ignorant of both Latin and Greek, was hardly a Renascence Pope's idea of a worshipful God.

But he knew when he was beaten.

He signed on the dotted line ... in the warmly argued ('Yes, yes, We approve your reasoning ...')

interest of Law and Order.

On 9th December, 1484, speaking to the Faithful, urbe et orbi, as the Vicar of Christ, Innocent issued what is still the Papacy's most important and most famous Bull, Summis desiderantes affectibus.

In this Bull, Innocent, 'Bishop, Servant of the Servants of God', deplores the power and prevalence of the witch organisation, and deputes Kramer and Sprenger to 'inquire' into these dangerous matters throughout Northern Germany, particularly in the provinces and dioceses of Mainz, Cologne, Treves, Salzburg and Bremen, 'granting both and either of them an exceptional authorisation, and by Letters Apostolic, requiring the Bishop of Strassburg, Albrecht von Bayern (reigned 1478-1506), not only to take all steps to publish and proclaim the Bull, but further to afford Kramer and Sprenger every assistance; even calling in, if necessary, the help of the secular arm.' (5)

Kramer had already written Malleus Maleficarum, and this had had a considerable circulation, in manuscript, among interested persons. However, when the now Papally-authorised Kramer and Sprenger decided to publish the work, as the complete manual of heresy-hunting and heretic-exterminating, a difficulty presented itself: though not a difficulty that Kramer (6) or Sprenger found insuperable.

The book appeared in printed form in 1486, a year in which the University of Cologne was still responsible for the censoring of all theological works. When, in the usual and the required way, Malleus Maleficarum was submitted to the University censors for a 'purely formal' imprimatur, only four of the censoring body could be found to give the book their reluctant and guarded approbation, whilst the rest - the majority - of the Board of Censors refused to comment. 'Nothing daunted,' says Dr Gardner, 'this precious pair of rascals proceeded to forge a document which purported to shew the approbation of the whole Faculty.'

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[5] Montague Summers, op cit.

[6] He is sometimes known by the Latinised form of his German name, Institor (not 'Institoris', as is sometimes given). Both Institor and Kramer mean 'stallholder, petty shopkeeper, huckster'.

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In the following year, to 'teach them a lesson', the Censors of Cologne were deprived of their function, and the task of censoring theological works transferred to the Bishop. The forgery was not discovered until 1758; though not then made public. Not before 1898 did the then archivist of Cologne, Josef Hansen, reveal the simple but effective means by which Kramer and Sprenger had deceived the world.

Copies of Malleus intended for circulation in Cologne had the forged Approbation omitted; others included the forgery - and though the fraud must soon have been known in Cologne, the Censors deemed it wiser to say nothing. The fraud was eminently successful, since both Catholic and Protestant witch-hunters came to accept Malleus as the final authority.

And, indeed, so it is.

Montague Summers, though writing of Malleus with approval - 'There can be no doubt that Father James Sprenger was a mystic of the highest order, a man of most saintly life' (7) -is right when he says: 'Certain is it that the Malleus Maleficarum is the most solid, the most important work in the whole history of witchcraft.' It may be doubted that many people will agree with Mr Summers when he adds that 'One turns to it again and again with edification and interest' - it must churn the bowels of all but the psychopath — but one will agree that 'From the point of view of psychology, from the point of view of jurisprudence, from the point of view of history, it is supreme. ...

'What is most surprising,' Summers continues, 'is the modernity of the book. There is hardly a problem, a complex, a difficulty, which they [Kramer and Sprenger] have not foreseen, and discussed and resolved.

'Here are cases which occur in the law-courts today, set out with the greatest clarity, argued with unflinching logic, and judged with scrupulous impartiality.

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[7] A remark as hard to account for as Winston Churchill's already-quoted reference to Stalin - made after a full account of the 'cynical betrayal' of the Poles in German-occupied Warsaw - as 'that great and good man'.

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'It is a work which must irresistibly capture the attention of all men who think, all who see, or are endeavouring to see, the ultimate reality beyond the accidents of matter, time and space.

'The Malleus Maleficarum is one of the world's few books written sub specie aeternitatis.'

Josef Goebbels, who also had the advantage of a religious education, could not have praised more warmly this most evil of all the world's books.

It is true that Malleus Maleficarum 'has everything' - there is not the smallest nut, screw or bolt in the complicated mechanism of Terror that these two priestly Untermenschen have overlooked, and whose dimensions and functions they have not meticulously described. Perhaps, though he did not intend it as such, Summers's tribute to the 'impartiality' of Malleus Maleficarum may be justified. In its inhuman way, Malleus Maleficarum is impartial. Only the Orthodox are right; all others are wrong.

It is impartial in that its terrifying code makes no distinction among shades of Non-conforming. All Non-conforming is wrong; all Non-conforming is criminal; all Non-conformers must be stamped out. Armed with this 'authority', the Orthodox - all Roman Catholics up to about 1530; after that 'Independent Catholics', Lutherans, Calvinists, etc., as well as 'genuine' Roman Catholics - went to work to stamp out Non-conformity. It is the opinion of this writer that very great success attended

their efforts.

As Dr H.C. Lea said: 'Malleus Maleficarum fastened on European jurisprudence for nearly three centuries the duty of combating the organised society of the Witches.' Summers adds: 'The Malleus lay on the bench of every judge, on the desk of every magistrate. It was the ultimate, irrefutable, un-arguable authority ....'

Indeed, if for the word 'witchcraft', one substitute the words 'sabotage', 'anti-social behaviour' or even 'Communism' or 'Fascism' in the text of Malleus, one will agree with Summers's comment on the modernity of the book. Here, for the guidance of Nonconformity-extirpators, is the priestly injunction to practise every fraud, every dirty trick, every miserable deception, upon the accused, in order, to convict them. As for 'evidence', even the hearsay evidence of a convicted 'witch' should be sufficient, 'for God would not permit a false accusation to lie'.

Here is the true Diabolism. To read through the seemingly endless, so gravely written, list of 'Questions', is to find oneself in the panic claustrophobia of nightmare.

Question XIII. Of the Points to be Observed by the Judge before the Formal Examination in the Place of Detention and Torture ...

Question XIV. Of the Method of Sentencing the Accused to be Questioned: and How she must be questioned on the First Day: and whether she may be Promised (8) her life ...

Question XV, Of the Continuing of the Torture, and of the Devices and Signs by which the Judge can recognise a Witch; and how he ought to Protect himself from their Spells. Also how they are to be Shaved in those Parts where they use to Conceal the Devil's Marks and Tokens, together with the due Setting Forth of Various Means of Overcoming their Obstinacy in Keeping Silence and Refusal to Confess ...

Estimates of the number of accused who suffered the extreme penalty for having been so unlucky as to have attracted a neighbour's spite or an Inquisitor's notice varies between 200,000 and 400,000 - the rate of accusations and killings jumped considerably when the lawyers, seeing the lucrative nature of the business, clambered on to the financial bandwagon: at Toulouse, 400 people were put to death in a single day; in the district around Lake Como, a single year's toll of victims was more than one thousand.

No one, at the beginning of this Terror, dared oppose it. In sending Kramer* and Sprenger forth, armed with plenary powers to hunt out and destroy 'heretics' and 'Devil-worshippers', Pope Innocent VIII used a quite unambiguous threat.

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[8] It is explained, for the guidance of Inquisitors, that this 'solemn' promise need not - nay must not - be kept!

[9] Kramer is no uncommon name in Germany. Yet the reader must already have been struck by the sinister coincidence between the name of one of history's two Arch-Inquisitors and that of 'The Beast of Belsen'. There is an heredity of the soul more dominant than that of the body.

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We decree and enjoin that the aforesaid Inquisitors be empowered to proceed to the just correction, imprisonment and punishment of any persons, of whatever rank and high estate, correcting, mulcting, imprisoning, punishing as their crimes merit, those whom they have found guilty. THEY are authorised to call on the help of the secular arm, and anyone, of whatever rank, pre-eminence or dignity who opposes them is threatened with excommunication, and yet more terrible penalties and punishments, without right of appeal.

*Hanged by the neck: Here are seven witches up for topping; four despatched, three still to be served. 'A' is hangman, 'B' the bellringer, 'C' two constables, and 'D' the witchfinder taking his reward in cash.*

It may well be that the Pope, in authorising plenary powers to the two Inquisitors, was submitting to no light pressure, nevertheless, it was Christ's Vicar who signed the document, and those named in it would see that its conditions would be observed to the last letter of a new Law. Thus were handed over to Kramer and Sprenger not only the estates and lives of all Christendom (Jews were not 'heretics', and were generally exempt from the Terror), but those social and legal rules by which the society of the late fifteenth century had been slowly organised.

One is reminded of the careful stock-keeping, in specially-printed ledgers, of the 'yield' from those

who were murdered in the German prison-camps. The shoes, down-at-heel, the shabby clothing, the false teeth, the trusses, the artificial eyes and limbs, the eye-glasses, the tattered suitcases and hold-alls, and, last but not least, as they say, the hair, the bones and the minimal fat.

To the quartermasters' staffs who picked over the rags and bones; who sorted the pitiful (but still valuable) loot; who recorded, in the neat German script or on the always-well-serviced German typewriters, the meticulously accurate totals, and presented them for 'signature' to the departmental head; this most squalid of all graveyard prowlings must have seemed like 'just another job'.

A job which earned its holder pay; promotions to higher rank, greater 'responsibility'; a pension ... What supported the death-dealing regime of the Nazis was not merely the negative pressure of the threat - 'Join us, or else ...!' - but the positive pressure of financial advantage to those who put their decency aside and opted for a share of the loot

Sprenger and the earlier Kramer understood very well the pressures to which all human being are vulnerable; and the first constructive step that any tyranny may take is in the creation of vested interests among the uncommitted - those Laodiceans who are prepared to serve any master, or none, provided always that it be worth their while.

Kramer and Sprenger saw to it that it was worth their while. All 'miracles of German recovery', no matter in which century one unhappily encounter 'the miracle', are characterised by that strict record-keeping, that 'honest' attention to the details of accountancy, that generally 'business-like' attitude towards all the malversations of life and perversions of death which have so impressed the American capitalist and scientist, and have so endeared the 'hard-working', 'efficient' Germans to their modern conquerors. Sprenger and Kramer were just as 'businesslike'. There was no funny business in the accountancy of Terror; crime and punishment moved to a fixed and 'official' scale of charges.

A Tariff of Torture (10) from 'saintly, civilised' Cologne has survived from the days when the Inquisitors set up the mechanism of physical and spiritual mass-murder. There are forty-nine items in the tariff, all the charges of which were authorised by the Archbishop of Cologne. As Edgar Peel and Pat Southern observe, in their The Trials of the Lancashire Witches, cutting out the tongue and burning the mouth with a red-hot iron was, in the opinion of the Archbishop, when 'costing' the torturers' work, equal in value to five times that given for the flogging of a prisoner.

Admirers of the current 'German miracle' will, no doubt be interested in the orderly manner in which the Archbishop-authorised charges for torture are set forth:

For terrorising and shewing the instruments of torture: 1 thaler
For arranging and crushing the thumbs for the first degree of torture: 1/4 thaler
For the second degree of torture, including the setting of the limbs afterwards: 2 1/4 thalers

'Those in charge of tortures and executions,' write the authors of The Trials of the Lancashire Witches, 'were instructed to "submit afterwards their accounts, with all their vouchers, to the Treasury of the Archbishop." And, in an instruction which should delight the heart of any good trade unionist, it is made clear that "only the executioner, and no stranger, shall be employed for whatever executions

have to be done." All these costs formed part of the heavy expenses of a trial, and had to be paid for eventually by the family of the accused.'

It was, doubtless, the envy aroused by 'seeing all this good money go to waste' which attracted lay lawyers to the cannibal feast, and which, in the next century, led to the transfer of the actual witch-hunting and witch-prosecution to the 'pious' civil authorities, which, for all practical purposes, meant the lawyers. If the 'restoration of Law and Order' had been undertaken by the Dominicans, the noble adventure was happily taken up and continued by sadistic, officious and money-mad laymen lawyers.

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[10] The document is reprinted in Rossell Hope Robbins's Encyclopedia of Witchcraft and Demonology, and quoted in The Trials of the Lancashire Witches; Newton Abbot, 1969.

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I once underwent a 'suitability test' for a well-paid and fairly important position with an international firm, which trusted its management to produce millions of pounds' worth of highly saleable electrical apparatus, but not to select additions to its staff. We were on the 'short list', and by invitation assembled in a large room, where we were given printed forms, all of which bore the name of an 'educational test' supplier in Chicago. The tests were not difficult: simple arithmetic, spelling, visual and written puzzles - a test not half as advanced as that taken by any pre-1939 British soldier when gaining his corporal's stripes.

I remember one question of all the printed dozens - which is why I recall the 'test' in this book: 'Which would you rather be: a farmer or an insurance agent?'

Now the catch was this. One was not permitted, by the rules of this exercise in mumbo-jumbo, to answer 'Neither!', nor was one permitted to leave the question unanswered. One had to make a choice. So, as I would - driven by necessity - rather spend my servitude on a farm than in an insurance office or (my trousers neatened with bicycle clips) on suburban housewives' doorsteps, I answered, 'Farmer'.

There must have been fifty people in that room - not all rivals of mine, by any means; the firm was large, and it gathered all its 'short list' applicants-for-jobs together, and examined them in the same place on the same night.

And each of us had had to express a preference for the life of a farmer ... or of an insurance agent. We had no choice. Up to fifty of us must have expressed the desire to be farmers; up to fifty must have expressed the desire to be insurance agents. The computer, which would 'analyse' our replies, would - never having been told of the Hobson quality of our choice -register in its damfool innards the 'fact' that some of us wished to be fanners; some insurance agents.

Perhaps, in some insane 'readjustment of the labour valency', some evil UnterSprenger will knock at my door, hand me a railway-warrant and a pitchfork (or a pair of bicycle clips) and tell me to report for the work for which, long ago, I expressed a preference. Well, I did, didn't I ...?

What, in the opinion of so many - of far too many - people, has justified, not the cruelty of the witch-hunters, but their claim that they had something 'evil' to extirpate, is the so-called 'unanimity of the evidence'. Save for unimportant differences - names of towns, composition of the covens, choice of ritual masking (goat, stag, bull, etc.) in which the Black Man appeared, to feast and sexually possess the female worshippers with his artificial penis - the evidence is substantially identical, whether it come from Kilkenny in 1324, Lorraine in 1496, Essex in 1566, Aberdeen in 1597, the Basses-Pyrenees in 1609, Lille in 1661 or Salem, Massachusetts, in 1692.

What one should remember is that the evidence taken under threat of torture or torture itself could not have varied greatly from country to country or age to age. The accused did not tell what 'abominations' they had committed at the covens - they were not invited to tell. All that they were invited to do was to confirm what the judges told them that they had done; and what the judges knew had happened was all to be found in Malleus Maleficarum and the books of commentary that it had generated - Lawyer Henri Boguet's Discours des Sorciers ran into twelve editions in the first twenty years of its existence. As Summers said, Malleus was on the bench of every judge, the desk of every magistrate: the ultimate authority.

Now all that witches did - or were supposed to do - was described in outline in the Bull of 1484; in minute details in Malleus. The Questions were all drawn up: all that an inquisitor, religious or lay, had to do was to question the accused on the lines laid down in Malleus. Later commentaries; of Bodin, De l'Ancre, Boguet and the rest; loaded the scales even more heavily against the witches, for these 'guides' to witch-hunting, contained besides the original Questions of Kramer, actual cases, giving the name of the accused, of the witnesses, the evidence and the — almost always - confession (which never failed to agree completely with the points of the charge).

It was the old Farmer or Insurance Agent? choice, five hundred years ago and in far more sinister circumstances.

Since there was a vested interest in finding and condemning witches, does this mean that the three-hundred-year Witch-Hunt was a vast fraud, and that, despite the torture-extracted 'confessions', there was no such activity - anti-social or otherwise - as organised Witchcraft?

There was a fraud - a gigantic fraud - but there was also organised Witchcraft. The fraud was in persecuting Witchcraft as though it had been organised to undermine the existing social structure, and as though the Old Religion of the worship of Nature through the 'sacrament' of the act of physical reproduction were the same as its dark offshoot, Diabolism.

It is clear that those who organised this attack on 'Heresy' were aware of the differences between the 'white' witchcraft of the Old Religion and the 'black' witchcraft of the true sorcerers and diabolists. There were, of course, sound political reasons for the attack on the Witches, just as there were sound political reasons for some later Germans' no-holds barred persecution of Jews, Gypsies, Jehovah's Witnesses, Seventh Day Adventists, Quakers and other non-conformers. In both cases, that of the Roman Church and that of Hitler, it was a show-of-strength, in the one certain way of getting the message home: by a display of Frightfulness.

Why the Church's well-planned and ruthlessly executed effort failed - or only partially succeeded - where Hitler's persecution frightened the rest of the world into giving him his own way for seven years, was because the Church could not gain the undivided attention of a shocked world. There were distractions - distractions on which the Church planners had not reckoned, and against which they could not guard.

In 1492, Columbus broke the trade-secret of the trans-Atlantic route, by crossing to Haiti (thinking that he had landed in India); five years later, Vasco da Gama rounded the Cape of Good Hope; a year or two more, and Magellan had opened up the western route to the Far East by rounding Cape Horn. Printing had been put on a commercial basis, and men were reading - not always what the Church ordered them to read.

Worst of all, though non-Christian royalty had abandoned all but a token respect for the Old Religion, they had given their allegiance to the more 'practical' Diabolism - or, rather, to that sorcery associated with Diabolism which offered chemical triumphs: the control of the political situation through the poisoning of enemies, and an adjustment of shaky national balance-sheets by the alchemical manufacture of gold. (Henry VIII, having spent his father's private fortune of £4,000,000 -worth some £1,000,000,000 in today's rocky currency - preferred to balance his books by debasing the coinage; the Emperor Rudolph II, by encouraging alchemists.)

Then there was the Reformation, and though both Reformers and Romanists stepped up the persecution of witches, they were not united in the attacks - the attack was not made for a common purpose: to 'restore Law and Order, to extirpate Heresy, and to Defend Christianity against the Barbarian at the Gate'.

The first printed Bull (1506) promised eternal damnation to those who bought their alum - for the 'white tawing' of leather and other purposes - from the Turks; the reason for the threat of hell-fire being that two Italian families, allied by blood and marriage to the Pope, had the control of alum in Europe. Even the most dedicated Roman Catholic who needed alum at prices cheaper than those of the Italian monopolists, defied the threat of hell-fire, bought himself an Indulgence, and got his supplies from the Infidel.

A persecution which had begun in a narrow, still-mediaeval world had been carried through to a world of suddenly and immensely expanding horizons, of a sudden access of wealth, of a sudden access of secular learning, of the beginnings of organised religious and political freedom, and of more than the beginnings of the mechanisation of industry - the stocking-frame for the mechanical knitting of stockings, caps, etc., was introduced in the first Elizabeth's reign. And, most significant of all, scientific methods of soil-care, tilling, reaping and cultivation generally upset the ages-old traditions of the countryside.

There is a connection between Louis XIV's refusal to sign the death warrants, in 1667, of some condemned Norman witches and the decay of the feudal system in France; it was Louis who, by causing his nobility to gather around him in his court, dissolved the last remaining links which bound the Lord to his tenants. And, in the following century, a Norwich solicitor, Jethro Tull, by inventing the mechanical dibber, was to create such unemployment on the land that the proletariat necessary to

launch the Industrial Revolution as factory-hands would be ready and waiting.

The fact is that, even as Kramer and Sprenger launched their all-out attack on witchcraft, the social conditions which had produced and protected the Old Religion for so long were changing. The religion of the countryside would have died of malnutrition; there was no need to torture it out of existence.

It was the regulated invariability of the questions put to the accused witches which produced the apparent invariability of the evidence. But, over and above the torture-extracted, despairing admissions of 'guilt' (Kramer and his followers recommend the now popular torture of 'deprivation of sleep'), there seem to be what the Inquisitors claimed: free, frank, voluntary, spontaneous and almost, one would say, enthusiastic declarations of loyalty to the Old Faith.

It is not merely among the old, the diseased, the poverty-stricken, that one finds the voluntary confession; as though, suicide feared or despised, the confessant looked to a certain means of ending a life grown intolerable. On the contrary, we have the voluntary confessions of the young - sometimes of the very young. Girls of tender age, attractive, comfortably-off, with a lifetime of bourgeois comfort promised them. Some -many, if we may accept the testimony of their persecutors -went to death 'joyously', impressing judges and torturers with the victims' brave-proud bearing, as they went to death 'in sure and certain hope of the Resurrection to eternal life'.

The all-out campaign of the Nazis against 'dissidents' lasted for little more than four years; that mounted against the Old Religion covered a century, even at its peak. Why did the witches, if they had an organisation powerful enough to tempt the Church (and later the non-ecclesiastical authorities) into attacking it, and numerous enough to supply victims for nearly four hundred years after the Bull of 1484, not rise against their persecutors? According to the Church, the Witch Organisation penetrated into every social stratum; included members from the highest, as well as the lowest, social ranks. Why did they not resist?

The same question was asked of the persecuted Jews in the Nazi Terror - and not answered. It is true that the Jews rose in Warsaw - and were exterminated; but (say those who were not in the prison-camps), would it not have been better to die resisting the Nazis than to rot to death, tortured or not, in Dachau, Maidanek, Belsen and all the other foci of evil?

To answer that question, one would have to put it to those who had - by our hypothesis - a choice. Perhaps the answer is to be found in the fact that, for all the totality of 'the Final Solution', men and women and children did survive the infamous torture-chambers and the hardly less horrible life-in-death of the prison-camps. For such survivors, their hope-against-hope was justified in the event. They did survive. As they had hoped, against all the evidence, against all reason, to survive.

And - this must clearly be borne in mind - though a French lawyer of the sixteenth century, Nicolas Remy, could boast of having burnt nine hundred witches in sixteen years, all the psychological disciplines of terror were devised long before the Nazis came to power. The slander-campaign, the house-calls, the organised ostracism, the night-arrest, the disappearance into prison, the secret trial, the accusations of friendly neighbours - even of members of the accused's family: all these were well

understood in the fifteenth century; nor were the general warning punishments so familiar to us from Nazi practice lacking to terrorise a population into submission, and to persuade them of the uselessness of protest.

The ancestors of the men who erased the Czechoslovakian village of Lidice, the French village of Oradour, and God knows how many villages in the lands of the 'sub-human' Russians and Poles, had fully mastered, by the sixteenth century, these specialised techniques in Frightfulness; they had certainly learnt the arts of Erasure.

Two villages near Treves were completely erased; in another two, only a handful of people were permitted to survive. The techniques of Oradour, where the victims of the Herrenvolk's sadism were burnt alive in church and barn, may be recognised in sixteenth-century Rhineland, where a favourite method of mass-murder of witches was by burning them in a hut of straw; another World War II technique may be recognised at Niesse, in Silesia, where a specially-built oven consumed forty-two living men and women.

Then again, were the judges sane? It is no proof of insanity -merely of evil - when the French lawyer, Henri Boguet, lays down that:

I maintain that not only a child witch who has reached the age of puberty, but even one who has not, should be sentenced to death. Yet I would not in such case employ the usual penalty for witches, but some gentler means, such as hanging.

Boguet, who dedicated his manual of witch-hunting to the Vicar-general of Besangon, recommended that a child witch be made to watch the killing of its witch-mother.

But Boguet is certainly exhibiting signs of insanity when he gravely testifies to the effect on the victims of spells laid by witches:

Witches cause him whom they have bewitched to void, sometimes from the mouth and sometimes from the bottom parts, needles, hairs, stones and papers. I myself have seen an infinite number of such articles, among them balls, locks of hair and pig's bristles ... one of his sons voided by the penis five or six paper notes and some peas. The notes were covered in strange characters and the peas were wrapped in hair.

Most witches, brought at last before the judges - ecclesiastical or lay - could look for as much impartial justice as, say, the surviving plotters of 20th July attempt on Hitler's life could have expected from the bestial judge, Fritsch. From the very beginning of the attack on the Old Religion, the accused must have realised that an accusation meant a condemnation, no more, no less. There were no acquittals. To be suspected even was a crime ....

The hundreds of thousands of accused were taken singly; and in their arrest they served to terrify those not yet taken, If we think that the twentieth century has 'revealed' the subtle mechanisms by which Terror imposes itself on mankind, it is only because we have not studied the operations of those who mounted the all-out, no-holds-barred attack on the Old Re-legion at the end of the fifteenth

century.

In abandoning the true Old Religion for the dubious practices of Diabolism, the royal and aristocratic Old Believers, whose influence had protected the upper, middle and lower class Believers - especially those members of the Roman clergy who still clung to the ancient Faith - now stood aside and lifted no finger no protect the Faithful from the assault of the witch-hunters. The Old Religion had ceased to be fashionable; it seemed now to be a peasants' faith - even a peasants' superstition. Toxicology and alchemy, and, in the seventeenth century, true Diabolism, mixed with blasphemous perversion of the Christian Faith. Unprotected by their once powerful protectors, the men and women of the still uncorrupted Old Religion found themselves deprived of everything but their pride.

It is this fact which explains their apparent lack of resistance; their willingness to proclaim their Faith in lyrical terms, and to go joyously to the death of martyrs. It is true that they even managed to wring from their persecutors the reluctant testimony to the Old Believers' constancy in their faith.

In two centuries and a half, most organisations may be wiped out, and the Witch-Cult, deprived of its organisation, was bound, at last, to die. All the upper class had abandoned the Old Religion; those of the middle classes who remained true were killed or frightened off. In the middle of the seventeenth century, a Madame Bourguignon, of Lille, managed a home for girls of the lowest class, 'poor, base-born, from bad homes; and, for the most part, so ignorant of the facts of their eternal salvation that they lived as ignorant of it as beasts'. In 1661, Madame Bourgugnon found that thirty-two of these girls were 'worshippers of the Devil', and went regularly to the Sabbat Already, we see, the Old Religion is now the faith only of those 'of the lowest class'.

By the end of the seventeenth century, in all the more advanced countries of Western Europe - and even in the American colonies - fashion will give the coup de grace to a dying faith. It will survive, of course, in the most out-of-the-way places, reviving with a curiously impressive strength at times of national calamity, when orthodox helps to faith and hope seem ineffective. And some of the beliefs from the Old Religion will survive as mere superstitions, as mere unthinking mental reflexes. When the gallant British tars of 1805 'tapped the Admiral' they were obeying an ancient impulse earlier perhaps than the first stirrings of a conscious religious sense.

To bring back the corpse of Nelson to England for burial, the ship's surgeon had the dead Admiral placed in a cask filled with rum. When the cask arrived in England, the admiral was found to be 'high and dry'. The sailors had 'tapped the Admiral'; drunk the rum.

This story is often quoted to shew the depths to which an addiction to strong liquors would bring the early nineteenth century matloe; but the story has quite a different significance. The sailors, in 'tapping the Admiral', were not broaching a rum-cask, but partaking of the mana, the virtue, of a dead Hero. In other circumstances, the hero-worshipping sailors would have eaten the body - preferably alive.

From remote Ireland, from tucked-away Essex villages, from Mexico, and other parts not in the mainstream of fashionable life, the tales still come which indicate the persistence of beliefs neither 'modern' nor readily assimilable into the corpus of orthodox opinion.

Pennethorne Hughes (11) quotes an interesting example of 'outdated thinking' from the Egyptian Gazette of November 11, 1944.

Beat Patient To Death

Hussein Ayad, a Cairo 'jinn doctor', admitted at the Assizes that he had beaten his patient to death. 'I refused to treat him,' he said, 'but his family insisted, in fact, threatened me. When I saw the sick man I discovered that he was obsessed by a jinn.' The Judge asked if the prisoner had beaten his victim. 'I had to scare the jinn out of the man,' he replied. 'And in doing so you killed your patient,' commented the Bench, condemning Ayad to five years' hard labour.

In the universal revolt against organised Christianity, Roman or otherwise, will the Old Religion make a 'come-back'?

Yesterday, as I walked along the main road at Brighton, I saw a poster advertising a 'Satanic Festival'. For the past twenty-five years, the newspapers have regularly carried articles 'revealing' the growth of the Witch-Cult in Europe and America; notably in France and Britain; California and Brazil.

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[11] Witchcraft, op. cit.

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So long as modern man remains completely divorced from the production of his food - and even the farm-worker, with his mechanised farms, is being rapidly divorced from knowing what is happening to the land that he is cultivating - so long will his mind and spirit be incapable of seeing the Godhead in the growth-cycle of Nature.

It is a different matter with Diabolism; one does not need to know more about bread than that it comes sliced in waxed paper to be a fully experienced Diabolist. From the quieter evil of the Income Tax vampires to the more active evil of those who invent and use napalm and such 'weapons', there is so much evil around us that it is hard to know why Diabolism is not more flourishing than it is.

As for the Old Religion, it is gone, and, until after the anarchy into which the social system is inevitably and obviously slipping, will not be revived. But there is one aspect of the Old Religion which seems to be reasserting itself, and which, not being dependent upon a wondering sense of affinity with animals and plants, with Sun and Moon, may well return to displace newer modes of approaching the Ultimate.

As I write, I have before me a book, printed in Ireland, which bears the title, Legio Marioe - the Legion of Mary.

Officially approved, the book describes an organisation of Roman Catholics whose purpose must be

given in the writer's own (officially approved) words:

The Legion of Mary is an Association of Catholics, who, with the sanction of the Church and under the powerful leadership of Mary Immaculate, Mediatrix of All Graces (who is fair as the moon, bright as the sun and - to Satan and his legionaries - terrible as an army set in battle array), have formed themselves into a Legion for service in the warfare which is perpetually waged by the Church against the world and its evil powers. The Legionaries hope to render themselves worthy of their great heavenly Queen by their loyalty, their virtues and their courage. The Legion of Mary is therefore organised on the model of an army, principally on that of the army of ancient Rome, the nomenclature of which is adopted also — but the army and the arms of Mary are not of this world.

Here is a very curious religious manifestation indeed; though one that we have certainly met before. On page 69 is a drawing of the Vexillum Legionis, 'The Standard of the Legion', a note explaining that 'the Vexillum Legionis is an adaptation of the Standard of the Roman Legion'. After a description of the emblems and symbols incorporated into the design of the Vexillum, the explanatory passages ends with these significant words: 'The whole design conveys the idea that the world is to be conquered by the Holy Ghost acting through Mary and her children.'

Here, then, is once again the Great Mother, 'conquering the world' through the operation of the Divine Spirit. We have met Her in many aspects - as Adraste, as Astarte, as Baalat, as Tanit, as Venus, as Ishtar, as Brigid, as Cybele, as Isis (the memory of a shrine of whom is preserved in the name of the Essex village of St Osyth). With her 'Legion', organised 'on the model of the Roman Army', this theophany of the Great Mother of the Gods recalls rather the aspect of the stern and ruthless Cybele than of the gentle Kwan-Yin. Cybele was not only stern, she was the Great Mother in her unfruitful aspect; served by castrated, insane priests. She was Woman the Denying, rather than Woman the All-Giving.

Perhaps, in an age where one great fear amongst many great fears is that we shall procreate ourselves out of existence, the Cybele-aspect is that most suitable for the Great Mother of these desperate times.