

We do not know what sort of things preachers said to the pagans to win them over. Missionaries like St Avraamij of Smolensk might have explained the Christian faith to them in a pagan context, in a manner they could readily understand. Considering the magianised environment the preachers were working in, their sermons might have touched upon the similarity between Christianity and the faith of the Magi. Superficially, apostolic Christianity was not too different from Magianism, and these similarities could be turned to the Church's advantage, in the hands of an astute and well-schooled orator. Yet this methodology was perilous for the Church's apostolicity unless converts were repeatedly told that a number of major changes were still required, if the old believers wished to join the Church.

According to apostolic teachings, the time for fear and foreboding, the time for looking over one's shoulder every hour of the day, or fretting over how much food you had, or what tomorrow would bring was all over. Evil had been defeated 1,000 years ago by the Resurrection of the Redeemer. From that time, God no longer required that cows, mead, buns, silk, food or lives be sacrificed to the idols, just a simple trip to Mass, in which was conducted the "one eternal and only befitting sacrifice", the crucifixion of God made flesh, the King of all Kings, their Messiah, linked as one single moment throughout all coming millennia. Following the Epiclesis, the congregation would be standing in the visible presence of their Saviour, the bread with which they could "sanctify their unworthy bodies". Pagan converts then presented before "God's table", food, gifts or money, which were redistributed to fund community based projects for the common good. Via this new form of veneration of the Creator, the Church taught that man would enjoy eternal life.

Well, that must have suited the pagans down to the ground, in theory any way. The demon lords, the vampires, dookhi, drakony, velikani and every other unholy entity which had made their life hell all these years, would now be obliterated by the radiance of Christ. What a relief! But then then Russes were told to tear the idols down (even those of the white celestial gods), since the Church asserted that these effigies were the handiwork of devils, whose unholy essences lurked behind the image, duping devotees, and seeking to receive lavish gifts and human worship.

Many peasants probably sensed strange conflicts at work. Why weren't the white Volkhvy suitable priests any more? What was the difference between a magical object and a blessed relic? Why did they have to abandon the time honoured worship of the essentially good creator gods, who had proven themselves time and again? Why couldn't they have them too? By their agency, people had escaped certain death before, cows were made well again, and so on. Why couldn't they continue drinking their beer and mead libations to the gods and become immortal another way; just to be sure? Their answer to all these questions was easy, just sit on the fence; be a pagan-Christian, a *Dvoeveriye*, and have it both ways! But, this was the one thing the apostles said they should never do.

Dvoeveriye – the twin-believers

In Rus', as elsewhere, Christians (Jews and Muslims also) frequently resorted to magical means, when their prayers didn't seem to work. Known as *Dvoeveriye* (twin believers), they constituted the bulk of the Rus' country populace (in a few places right up until the 19th Century). Even during Igor's Polovtsy wars of the 12th century, half of his army were still practicing pagans. Bishops, priests and Christians delegated as community elders were always on the look out for signs of astronomy, public rhetoric, philosophy,¹¹⁵ sorcery, the creation and use of magical objects, heresy, pagan gatherings, the worship of local land and water spirits, the conjuring of dead ancestors, bonfires, necromancy, unhallowed marriages and concubinage. Such were the hallmarks of paganism.

In the eighth century Germans had to desist from "*pagan rites, divination, fortune-telling, soothsaying, charms, incantations and all Gentile vileness*".¹¹⁶ The situation was much the same in York around the year 1,000. All good Christians were implored to proffer information to their bishop concerning (Scandinavian) diviners, residual idolatry, magic, or gatherings at groves, wells and holy stones.¹¹⁷ Menfolk were not, under any circumstances, to wear beards and moustaches.¹¹⁷

The Church realised that paganism was not going to evaporate overnight; they had a real battle on their hands. They spoke of their concerns about these acts, and were forced to turn a blind eye to some of the more well engrained beliefs. The best they could hope for was that people would gradually supplant those aspects of Christianity that proved appealing to the heathen mind, hoping that other facets of it would also rub off on them. As long as people kept their paganism at home, the outward vestiges of these beliefs would die out over centuries.

MANY MEDIEVAL
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MAGIC AND WITCHCRAFT
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Public mustering of support for pagan assemblies in the earlier years was something countered by proposing Christian feasts of a similar nature, or instituting the feast of a saint on whose day the pagans might celebrate something locally. After 996 AD criminal proceedings ensued, *if* the local heads of authority were sufficiently pious. Since paganism still flourished in many ways during the earliest years of the Russian Church, people tried and convicted of these crimes probably received the lowest penalty for the first offense, getting steadily more harsh with each subsequent offense. The severity and impact of their agitation was another thing weighed up by the bishop and churchmen; if they were too harsh they risked getting moderates off side, and if they were too soft, then the people might have lapsed further back into the old ways.

Black witchcraft, the perennial corpse impalings, and similar corpse degradations merited austere penances. The exposure or sacrifice of newborns and infants was always investigated with vigour and met with the full force of secular law if encountered after 996 AD. Before that there was an atmosphere of tolerance for deeds of this sort; once considered normal, or commonplace, and certainly not beyond contempt. In reality the term *dvoveveriye*, which Russians used to denote demi-paganism, is best equated with the concept of Christian heresy.

As it was, folk employed a wide range of Christian folk amulets to protect them from the maleficia of *kolduny* (sorcerers) and *ved'my* (witches): they wore crosses, burned incense, carried garlic, and so on.¹¹⁸ Since Volkhvy slew cattle ritually, Christian peasants of the post-conversion era drew the sign of the cross near cattle pens and barns to keep the heathen priests at bay.¹¹⁹

Rival communions of immortality

REPLACING THE OLD
COMMUNION OF
IMMORTALITY WITH A
NEW ONE WAS A VERY
TRAUMATIC EVENT FOR
HEATHEN CONVERTS

To the people of Rus', just like people today, the question of their spiritual immortality was one of the greatest single factors in their lives, and the advent of the known world's Christianisation painted either joyful, or extremely disturbing pictures in their minds. The Church's introduction of the Eucharistic "feast" as the replacement for *Soma* and *Haoma* and the communal banquet, was not well greeted by many pagans, especially in Russia, Germany, England, Frisia, Finland and the Baltic, where a considerable number of them took their conversions very hard. *Many pagans still continued receiving both varieties of communion at the same time*, long after their peoples had converted to Christianity; something which was endlessly denounced by the clergy.

In the period spanning the 10th-11th Century AD (ie; some 200 years after their conversion) Adam of Bremen recorded the following about Frankish parishioners in the Holy Roman Empire;

He (the Bishop) complained, also, that even to his own times many were so steeped in the delusions of pagans that they dishonoured the sixth ferial day by eating meat; that they desecrated by debauchery and fornication the vigils and feasts of the saints and the venerable season of Lent; that they thought nothing of perjury; that they held the shedding of blood in esteem. Similarly, adultery, incest, and other kinds of uncleanness contrary to nature were condemned by scarcely any one of them. Many of them had two or three, even innumerable, wives at the same time.....Although the metropolitan often denounced in church these and other popular transgressions in rhetorical sermons, the people regarded his paternal reproofs with disdain, nor could they be turned or moved to have any reverence for the priests or for the churches of God".¹²⁰

There you have it in a nut shell; in many localities Mediaeval parishioners were little more than pagans, and paying little or no heed to the anti-heathen sermons squarely directed at them by their archbishop.

MANY RECEIVED BOTH
FORMS OF COMMUNION

The blending of honey and milk with the Eucharistic wine was known in Europe and greatly condemned by the Church authorities as far back as the 6th Century AD in France.¹²¹ Perhaps such milk and honey libations were once practiced by the Gaulish Druids, but to gain a clearer picture of this one would have to go back and examine the writings of the 4th Century Christian missionaries who went to Gaul, though I am unaware how many such treatises exist.

Having examined Christianity as it once was, during the Apostolic age, and during the troubled Middle Ages, we will now advance onto the conversion of Europe's pagans in general, and in particular the missions launched to convert the heathens of Russia. In it the profound reasons why pagans so readily converted to the new faith, on a superficial level. I also expound why they didn't think it incongruous to practice pagan rites, all the while regarding themselves as Christians. Christ's extraordinary appeal was, it would seem, attributable to him resembling a pagan Messiah long foretold by the sibylline oracles and the wise Magus-prophets of olden Iran.

In this chapter you have seen historical information from Church sources which enable us to understand the Church's stance on issues arising from the old ways, and the manner of the transition from paganism to Christianity. While the following two chapters are predominantly written from the Catholic Church's perspective, we can still read between the lines to see not only what the Church sought to confront and destroy, but how such designs mutated into the Pan-European witch blazes ... the shameful Burning Times which swept away very many good, virtuous pagans along with the bad.

So much for what is conventionally known about medieval Christianity. As we look back over the history of the Apostolic Church it is easy to forget one very crucial point. It, like the Gospels, is almost 2,000 years old, a *living relic of a time quite remote to modern thinking*, an era which scholars can only ever access by archaeology and scant historical writings, the *written relics* of an extinct past. It sprouted during an era when the pagan gnostic philosophers, the Egyptian priesthood, druids and Magi were alive and well, still manning their temples and holy sites. These faiths are of course no longer with us, but the Church is. And, with the exception of Judaism, this makes Christianity a fairly unique historical institution, in a western context.

The foundations of the new religion in the 1st-3rd centuries AD were set into the bedrock of an even more ancient world, a world within which it grew, matured and flourished. As time progressed, Apostolic Christianity carved its own niche. Christian theologians of the 3rd and 4th Centuries AD brushed shoulders with the best of the royal advisers, the heathen philosopher-scientists, attempting to gain some formal recognition for the deep philosophical undercurrents present within the Christian faith. Progressively they remolded the views of their erudite and studious listeners.

Many things concerning the dawning of the Church in that first three-hundred year period, were a complete mystery to even the earliest Christian generations. They were a matter of faith. The Church historian Eusebius, notable for his priceless records of the primitive faith, does shed some extra-canonical light upon the happenings. But even he started to run out of formal accounts of the 'lives of the faithful' during the traumatic persecutions of Nero and successive Roman leaders. Most interestingly, each of the four Holy Sees had preserved their own little pieces of Church history in the form of local traditions (as distinct from the body of Church tradition), but none more so than Rome, which had always boasted that it had maintained the first customs of the Church with utmost fidelity. The effects of Judaism on the Church are obvious. Things such as the use of the *Old Testament* in the *Bible*, and resorting to bread and wine as the substances for the eucharistic celebration. However there are other facets of *official Church tradition, and portions of the New Testament, which without question could only have come from Zoroastrianism, the religion of the Magi*. An exploration of why this is so, leads one along pathways of enquiry, not nearly as speculative as one might guess. Perusing this untidy mass of evidence with a sleuth's magnifying glass in hand, allows the observant and astute to zero in on crucial points of similarity between Christianity and the faith of the ancient magicians ... the fingerprints of a lost past.

Having briefly visited the Middle Ages we shall now enter a time machine, and take a journey back a further thousand years, to the Church's very beginnings.

Chapter

The eastern situation – What first encounter with the ‘pagans’

In spiritual terms the mission of the Apostles began at Pentecost, when the Father sent down from heaven, the power of His Holy Spirit upon them, in the form of fire. From that moment the fiery divine presence came to dwell inside their bodies, making them conceptually similar to fire temples or tabernacles.

‘And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. Now when this was noised abroad the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language.’¹²²

And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born? Parthians (Graeco-Persians), and Medes (ie; Magians), and Elamites (Persians), and the dwellers in Mesopotamia (Chaldeans), and in Judaea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus and Asia. Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God’.¹²²

For the most part, the religious messages spoken that day were intelligible to the native inhabitants of distant Turkey, Iran and Iraq, and locales far inside Asia, not to mention Egypt, Rome and Libya. God was reaching out to the East spiritually, and before too long, physically.

Christian missionaries fanned out into the Balkans, the Middle East, Persia and Anatolia which at that time were peopled by Roman, Greek, Jewish and Zoroastrian inhabitants. As Jesus’ disciples walked about meeting the locals and preaching their message to the Jews, they could not have failed to notice a lot of pagan ears pricking up, scratching their heads in disbelief at what they were hearing. Many of the things the gospel-preaching apostles were saying about this Jewish Messiah were close to, if not identical to, the beliefs that every sun-worshipping

THE FIRST CHRISTIAN
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NEWS OF CHRIST’S
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Magian learned from childhood. To them the Gospel proclaimed the arrival of *Sraosha*, the World Messiah, to whom they and all preceding generations prayed each day, offering *dron* buns and incensed sandalwood billets.

Far beyond the Roman-Persian borderlands, in Bactria, Bardaisan spoke of the region's Hindu Brahmins and Christians.¹²³ That was in the 2nd Century AD. Based on earlier traditions, certain apostles had evidently captivated a sensational number of listeners in the East, St Thomas in Persian Parthia and the Punjab (India), St Jude at the court of King Abgar in Mesopotamia. It was in this part of Asia Minor that Magi and Chaldean wizards flourished. News of Jesus' many miracles had reached Abgar's ears in a very brief time. Hoping to be healed of an incurable disease, Abgar sent correspondence to Jesus, asking if he would be good enough to attend his court to effect the sort of miraculous cures being reported in Jerusalem: His letter starts;

'Abgar Uchama the Toparch (of Edessa) to Jesus who has appeared as a gracious saviour in the region of Jerusalem' and ends with 'I may add that I understand the Jews are treating you with contempt and desire to injure you: my city is very small, but highly esteemed, adequate for both of us'.¹²⁴

Jesus apparently sent a reply to Abgar's correspondence, which Eusebius supplied. It stated that he would send one of his disciples to Abgar after he had ascended into heaven.¹²⁴ After the crucifixion, the Apostle Thaddeus was duly dispatched to the Far East, to Abgar. Thaddeus told Abgar that he was sent to heal him because he faithfully believed in Christ.¹²⁴ To which Abgar responded;

'I believed in Him so strongly that I wanted to take an army and destroy the Jews who crucified Him, if I had not been prevented by the imperial power of Rome from doing so'.¹²⁴

Moments later Thaddeus placed his hand on Abgar, who was instantly healed of the infirmity. Following this Thaddeus greatly expanded his Christian ministry in Mesopotamia, gaining innumerable converts. He also conducted missionary forays into Egypt.

We hear of Christ's similar level of popularity in Phrygia; a spontaneous eruption of Christianity.¹²⁵ Nowhere else in the world is the rapid explosion of the Christian faith more visible in the archeological record than in that part of the East.¹²⁵ In fact Christianity seems to have become widespread throughout certain parts of the Middle East and much of Asia Minor before 200 AD. On his way to Rome at around that time, a Syrian bishop from the Far-East, named Abercius, stated; *'I also saw the plain of Syria and all the cities, Nisbis on the other side of the Euphrates. I met Christians everywhere'.¹²⁶*

During the northern ministries St's Paul and Andrew (the Apostle of the North) seem to have pulled a rabbit out of the hat, so to speak, converting quite a few pagans. One can almost imagine Christ's disciples to the Gentiles running into a band of 6 foot tall white Scythians buying provisions at a market somewhere in Trebizond, Northern Anatolia, covered from shoulder to wrist in griffon tattoos, lynxes and other body art. With long brown and flaxen hair flowing down over their menacing, heavily-muscled frames, they looked every bit like today's heavy metal musicians or Hell's Angels, and one might think Paul felt an uneasy reluctance to speak with them, especially if some had a human scalp or two hanging from their belts, as they once did.

It seems Paul took his life in his hands fraternising with barbarians of this calibre, but as you will shortly witness, there are special reasons why he had a head start on St's Peter, James and John, who confined themselves to the relative comfort of Jerusalem. Nor was he in nearly as much danger as the latter.

"After the Ascension of our Saviour, the Jews had followed up their crime against Him by devising plot after plot against His disciples. First they stoned Stephen to death; then James the son of Zebedee and brother of John was beheaded; and finally James, the first after our Saviour's ascension to be raised to the bishop's throne there (at Jerusalem), lost his life in the way described, while the remaining apostles, in constant danger from murderous plots, were driven out of Judaea".¹²⁷

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Fig 9. Cross worn by Scythian converts. This one found in Russia

Anyway, the apostles absorbed vast multitudes of these 'pagans' in that first hundred years, and the Magi were none too happy about it. Witness Chosroes attack on Constantinople in Part I. Nonetheless the Zoroastrian faith was left relatively intact inside Persia, though savaged by these defections to the apostles. So alluring was this Christian Messiah to the Magians that in one of the few historical accounts from Persia of that time, a whole city was described as being Christian down to the last man, woman and child, "*even the magistrate*", a place that was destroyed by Roman troops campaigning against the Persians.¹²⁸ For all intents and purposes the pagans of this area of Asia Minor and its environs had *vanished from sight*, and faded from memory; they weren't pagans any more, but Christians. Gentiles, it would seem, had readily 'converted' or 'transformed' into Christians. As you will soon see there were specific reasons for this phenomenon.

THE PERSIAN KINGS
ACTED TO HALT THE
MASS-CONVERSION

At the command of the Persian Emperor Shapur I, many of these converts were cut off from the rest of Christianity, as fragmented as it was, and suffered terribly at the hands of Persian religious authorities following the reformation of the Zoroastrian faith. These forgotten Christians lived further afield in remotest Iran and Central Asia, and would not encounter any serious Christian missionary work for many centuries. The Phrygian Christian city of Orcistus attempted to provoke Roman military intervention in the area because it was being down-trodden by a nearby urban centre around the year 324 AD,¹²⁹ which is guessed to have been Zoroastrian. Whereas for the same period barely three Middle-Eastern settlements had turned Christian.¹³⁰ The Christian populace of Rome (though still vague in nature) was positively well documented when compared with the eastern Christians who were little more than rumoured to exist. And as the repression continued St Augustine spoke of Persian Christians filing out of the region at some speed, resettling as far away as Rome.¹³¹ How tinged with Magianism their doctrines were was not preserved though.

Certainly eastern Christian traditions entered the Balkans shortly after the mid-3rd Century AD. What writings we do have from the pagan gnostic philosophers at that time say precious little about the activities and devotions of Christians in their respective regions.¹³² As late as the mid-200's Roman Salona, later called Split (Croatia), had hardly any. But when the faith did arrive, it was with preachers from Asia Minor rather than Rome or Greece.¹³² The situation was much the same in North Africa.

THE COLLAPSE OF THE
PERSIAN CHURCH

After the persecution of the Aryan Persian Church, the faith fell into disarray. No longer were there books, preachers or meeting places.¹³³ The faithful handed on to the next generation what they had once learned. There the core teachings of the faith began falling apart, and in all likelihood became steeped in Magianism and Buddhism.¹³³ An early 6th Century AD missionary named Symeon the Mountaineer wandered across the Euphrates.¹³³ There he found a chapel in a state of utter ruination, and long-haired mountain-dwellers who had a crude knowledge of the Gospel inherited from their forefathers, but little else.¹³³ These were Christians bereft of any form of pastoral guidance, with the direct result being a form of Christianity little better than superstition.¹³³ Symeon stayed among them a long while, teaching them much of what he knew. That Christians once lived in these regions in remote ages is proven by the existence of Greek-style monuments belonging to the Christians.¹³³ And there were a lot of them. These monuments were crafted by the descendants of Greeks who colonised the area after Alexander the Great's time, and continued to do so.

CHRISTIAN MISSIONARIES
BEGAN TO MAKE THEIR
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AREA

A little further East, in Parthia, other equally persecution-weary Christians mixed in with the Buddhists, so consequently there was a typical eastern intermingling of religious ideologies and practices.¹³⁴ One can only guess what 'heresies' emerged from the wing of a Parthian Buddhist temple,¹³⁴ where it was reported that forlorn Christian believers gathered, far indeed from the spiritual tuition of Rome, Jerusalem, Antioch and Alexandria.¹³⁴

Perhaps the early Church knew these converted Magians and pagans lived way out there somewhere to the East and the North, perhaps they didn't. In any case they were in no position to lend them any help whatsoever. As it was the other early Christians were fighting for their own lives against the Roman state. These Persian and Central Asian believers had to wait some time before they heard from the Western brethren again. There was still a few hundred years of repression to undergo and the attempted ideological and philosophical transformation of Rome, Egypt, the Balkans and Greece to accomplish. When Christendom eventually did run into the main body of these heathens and converted pagans, it was because of an Islamic holy war taking place in Persia and Central Asia.

The meteoric birth and rise of Islam in the 7th Century AD, began to set the world ablaze with the message of the prophet Mohammed, bringing about the unification of hopelessly fragmented warring Arabian tribes, and dethroning their pagan idols at Mecca (such as *Al Sura*). Under the pennants of the Holy Prophet, Muslim armies embarked upon outlandish military conquests over vast areas, ever aimed at converting infidels whensoever encountered. Their armies implanted Islamic culture and religion all over North Africa, Persia and Central Asia, and Baghdad became very powerful in the meantime, the recipient of countless slaves, wealth and ancient knowledge beyond measure. But it was their Jihad against the cities of Khorezm, Samarkand, Bokhara and the Zoroastrian heartlands in the deserts of near Asia, that is of utmost importance to us in understanding what took place. Just as the Zoroastrians had expelled the *Zandiks*, (Zurvanite devil/daeva-worshippers) a few hundred years previously, they too found themselves evicted from Iran and its environs, rather than convert to Islam. The Magians had only four options; flee to India, the North, the East, and most importantly for us, the West. Otherwise they could stay just where they were and become Muslim. Alternatively they remained loyal to 'the Good religion of Ahura Mazda' and, in the words of their scriptures, were '*slaughtered just like flies*'.

Magians were not the only group affected by the conquests. Apart from these streams of fleeing Zoroastrians, another notable religious group joined in the exodus, heading out into the steppe in their own direction, presumably in wagons. These were the Magian Christians, the ancestors of Magian converts to Christianity (cut off from the remainder of Christendom for up to half a millennium). In all it amounted to an immense diaspora. According to the historically unsubstantiated claims of a bishop expelled from Edessa after its fall, there were other Christians beyond Byzantium who in prior ages had fought back against the Zoroastrian state, and successfully captured Ecbatana (ie; Ctesiphon), the chief city of the Medes (the tribe from which the Magi were drawn).¹³⁵ Presumably quasi-Magian Christianity was the predominant ideology there, and considering the safety afforded by the fortifications of the old Medean capital, their brand of Christianity became very formal, with its own priesthood. They too were dislodged by the Muslims and headed eastward, mostly into Anatolia. Folk recollections of this conflict were probably contained in the myth of the Magian warrior-king Prester John, details of which appeared during the Middle Ages, in formal correspondence to the crown heads of Europe sent by Prester John himself, and in the writings of Otto of Freisingen.¹³⁶

Prester John and the Christian Magi

In Part I you heard about various European Magi, and pagans who observed Buddhist, Indo-European and gnostic traditions. The more ancient breed of Magi had been in Russia since the Bronze Age, others the Iron Age. Then there were the Mithraic Magi and their warrior fraternity, who embedded themselves in Rome, and across the breadth of that herculian empire. You also read about the Orthodox Zoroastrian fire priests of Persia who were swamped by unwanted religious trends. Under the Zoroastrian patriarch Karter, the kings gathered forces and pushed rival religions out of Iran - tackling Buddhists, Magian sectarians, devil-worshippers, Muslims, pagan gnostics and the Chaldean wizards. One final group the Zoroastrians had to overcome was the Magian-Christians and Manichaeans, who, just prior to the advent of Islam, had swollen to such numbers that they threatened the very existence of Orthodox Zoroastrianism in Iran.

One of the most far-reaching, solemn, deeply-loved and recounted myths of the Middle Ages concerned the Kingdom of Prester John (Preste-Cuan), a tale equally well known to Slavs, Germans, and Jews alike. Modern scholars are convinced there are elements of truth behind the so-called myth, mainly because it has been told and retold by so many different races.¹³⁷

I will now sieve through details found in the correspondence of Prester John, because there is every indication that it contains a profound folkloric recollection of a dispersion of Magian-Christians into the frozen north, then a southward movement to more temperate climes such as Russia, the Ukraine and the Balkans.

Reference to Prester John's migration was not just a village whisper in medieval Germany and Slavonia, but contained in letters formally dispatched by Prester-John to the pope, the eastern and western Roman emperors and many of the crown heads of Europe in the early years of the 12th Century AD.¹³⁸ In this correspondence we discover

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THE BIRTH OF
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THE KHALIFS GAVE THE
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THE REAPPEARANCE OF
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PRESTER JOHN,
DESCENDANT OF THE
THREE WISE KINGS

that Prester John was both priest and khan, a warrior-priest who was a blood descendant of the Three Wise Kings (Gaspar, Melchior and Belthazzar who visited the newly-born Jesus Christ in the manger), supreme ruler of the Magian people, and all the lands once held by them.¹³⁹

Prester John claimed to be the highest of all kings on earth, as well as the true head of the Christian Church, rather than the pope or any of the eastern patriarchs. Much of the world's wealth was his (or so he claimed), and 72 regions and their mostly non-Christian kings were his vassals.¹⁴⁰ He pompously promised to bequeath all of Italy, Germany, the lands of the Franks, as well as Britain to his son once he had conquered Europe. To achieve this he threatened to unleash the tribe of Gog, and the other so-called 'monster-nations' which he would personally lead into Europe, to bring punishment on the masses.¹⁴¹ Independent confirmation of such spectacular boasts and trumpery was required.

After the fall of Edessa during the Middle eastern Crusades, an eastern bishop came to Rome. He recounted to the pope, that *at some undetermined year prior to that*, the Christian king Prester John had sufficient forces to challenge the last Zoroastrian princes of the Medes, Assyrians and Persians. After a 3-day battle, which for both sides was seen as a fight to the death, the Zoroastrians and Magi were defeated. Following this the victorious Magian-Christian converts took Ecbatana.¹⁴² This last great battle between the Magian-Christian converts and the Zoroastrians was probably only the culmination of half a millennium of religious persecution and internecine warfare deep inside Iran and Central Asia, which saw many Christian sympathisers martyred.

As the story goes, buoyed by his triumph, Prester John wanted to militarily assist 'the Church' in Jerusalem, but due to a swelling of Muslim forces in Iraq, and finding no suitable place to ford the Tigris, he was forced to shift north into the land of frozen rivers.¹⁴³ This is presumably a reference to him entering Russia during the 9th and 10th Centuries AD. Jerusalem was in trouble, so Prester-John wanted to help the Christians recover the city, plus undertake pilgrimage to Christ's birth place, just as the Three Wise Kings once did. At first glance one is tempted to associate Jerusalem's woes to the Islamic annexation, and the medieval Crusades that followed, culminating in the recapture of the city by European Christian knights in 1099 AD. Whatever the case, the timing of his battle with the Persians and Medeans, followed by an attempt to reach Jerusalem, renders the story inaccurate. The Arab Muslims progressively seized control of Persia much earlier, between 637 and 640 AD. Besides, to the best of my knowledge, no Magian troops were active inside Mesopotamia in the late 11th Century. Therefore part or all of this story is inaccurate.

First appearances can be deceiving. By moving the chronological slide-rule of history backward some five hundred years, one strikes pay dirt all of a sudden. As it turns out, Prester-John's crusade wasn't against the Muslims at all, but against one of the last pagan Zoroastrian kings, Chosroes II, who seized Jerusalem in the year 614 AD.¹⁴⁴

In 590 AD Zoroastrian Sassania was rocked by a catastrophic civil war between King Chosroes II and a rogue Arascid general called Bahram Chobin. Chosroes' crumbling military position was maintained only with the backing of Sassania's traditional arch-enemy, Maurice, a Byzantine emperor of the late 6th Century AD. A previously unthinkable scenario unfolded, which saw a mammoth Byzantine Christian force traverse sovereign Zoroastrian Sassanian territory to engage Chosroes' internal foe. After his defeat, supporters of Bahram Chobin, some of whom were Jews, supposedly retreated to the northern reaches of Sassania, and established their own principedom.¹⁴⁴

Some 12 years later, Emperor Maurice was put to death in a military uprising. Chosroes then turned on the Greeks. Shamelessly cashing in on the Byzantine political disarray created by Maurice's assassination, Chosroes

went on a remarkable land-grabbing spree, that saw him capture much of Egypt and the Middle East, including Jerusalem. It ended up being a political miscalculation so grave, that it eventually led to the fall of the Zoroastrian

PRESTER JOHN, THE
HIGH KING

AN EASTERN BISHOP
TOLD THE CATHOLIC
POPE ABOUT PRESTER
JOHN AND HIS WAR
AGAINST THE MAGI

CONVERTED MAGIANS
HAD TAKEN CONTROL OF
THE MEDEAN CAPITAL AT
ECBATANA

PRESTER-JOHN WANTED
TO MAKE A PILGRIMAGE
TO JERUSALEM



Fig 10. The Sassanian
Persian King Chosroes II.

state. Far to the south, in North Africa, General Heraclius began the Byzantine counter-attack.¹⁴⁴

Interpolating other features of the Prester-John myth raises some interesting possibilities in relation to the matter. Put simply Bahram Chobin may have been the original Prester-John, albeit a Christian magus. He found a staunch enemy in the Orthodox Zoroastrian monarch Chosroes II, but being, in effect, a Christian heretic, he also had to contend with the Byzantine Christian army. Chosroes II had been militarily worsted by the Magian-Christians, and was utterly incapable of defeating them. The only way he could restore Zoroastrian power, was by letting Byzantine legions march across his country to annihilate the heretics.

Bahram Chobin's fortunes changed as political factions reorganised in Constantinople following the emperor's demise. It may be that Bahram Chobin sympathisers hoped to gain full control of Sassania (the Persian Orthodox Zoroastrian state), by assaulting Chosroes from the rear, as Heraclius, the new champion of Byzantium, was pushing Sassanian troops from Egypt and the Middle East, from 622 AD onwards. By helping the Byzantines recapture Jerusalem, Prester John had an opportunity to ingratiate himself with the new Byzantine regime.

Despite being a 'heretic', an enemy of one's enemy, makes one a friend. Perhaps Prester-John felt the Byzantines would rather share their borders with a Magian-Christian country, than a Zoroastrian state. If that was his game plan, later history proves it tragically myopic. The Apostolic Christian authorities of Rome and Constantinople detested the Magian-Christians even more than the Magi, largely because they were more numerous, and far more influential if they began interacting with Apostolic Christians. Up to a thousand years of Judaeo-Christian dogmatism could have gone down the drain in a very short time.

Magian Christians probably had free reign throughout much of Sassania until 640 AD, when Islamic forces invaded the country. A little earlier, in 639 AD, the Arab Muslims poured into Mesopotamia. Evidently, in that same year, Prester-John couldn't cross the Tigris. Some seven years after the death of Mohammed the region was very dangerous, consumed by intense Arab inter-tribal swordplay.

In summation, the Magian-Christians deduced that it would shortly be unsafe to live in Iran, as they were surrounded by Zoroastrians, Christians and Muslims, none of whom were favourably disposed toward them. So they emigrated from Iran in 639 AD, moving northward to establish permanent settlements at frigid latitudes. In the seclusion of their northern retreat they evidently planned to invade Europe, and introduce what they held to be the true form of the faith.

John's reputation and standing was beginning to grow to unbelievable proportions in medieval eastern and western Europe, so much so that the pope of the day, Alexander III (reigned 1159-1181 AD), attempted to organise a meeting via courier between Prester John and himself.¹⁴² But it came to nought owing to the unforeseen disappearance of the emissary. Greatly intrigued by this figure, and eager to discover the veracity of a Christian Empire in the Far East, Roman Catholic missionaries were sent eastwards to make contact with him, during the reign of Pope Innocent, in the 12th Century. But no trace whatsoever was found of it. In fact, only the odd Nestorian Christian had even heard of Prester John.¹⁴³

Numerous details found in the Prester John's medieval communiques help us to take it beyond the sphere of mythology, and possibly identify Prester John's realm and nationality during the medieval period. The preeminent medieval Jewish scholar Maimonides stated that many Jews lived in the Far-East in the lands of the Persians and Medeans, where could also be found the kingdom of a chieftain called Preste-Cuan. He went on to stress that this was not a fictitious kingdom, but by the testimonies of merchant traders he had met, all too real.¹⁴⁵

1. Firstly after the debacle on the Tigris, Prester John took his people northward from the region of Iraq into areas so cold the rivers froze over. This is probably a reference to Russia or Silver Bulgaria, around 639 AD.¹⁴³

2. Secondly Prester John had subjugated a Jewish kingdom in the east. This can be none other than the Khazarian Jewish Empire.¹⁴⁶ Khazaria converted to Judaism only in the 8th Century AD, and rapidly developed a military power base enabling it to resist the advances of Muslims into their territories. The collapse of the Khazarian Empire took place over a 65 year period, beginning with the devastating 965 AD attack by the pagan Russes, a retaliatory strike prompted by their overlordship of Slavic tribesmen. This catastrophe saw much of Khazaria's

HE WAS THE LEADER OF
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CHOSROES OVERCAME
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POPE ALEXANDER III
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CERTAIN FEATURES IN
THE CORRESPONDENCE
TAKE THE
INFORMATION FROM
THE REALM OF MYTH TO
A MORE THAN
PLAUSIBLE HISTORICAL
ACCOUNT

PRESTER JOHN
DESTROYED A JEWISH
EMPIRE

THE EMPIRE IN QUESTION
WAS KHAZARIA

Jewish citizenry taken into the bondage of Russian suzerainty, leaving their emasculated nation to flounder. Though stripped bare of its former prestige, the Russes still permitted the Jewish Khagans to rule over Khazaria, with the status of a slave nation under the iron rod of the heathen Slavs.¹⁴⁷

PRESTER-JOHN MAY
HAVE BEEN KHAGAN
SVYATOSLAV

Muslim encroachment into the Caspian area in 1030 AD succeeded in obliterating Khazaria, which was only a mere shadow of itself at that time. This points to the fact that Preste-Cuan (the proper transcription of Prester John) was most likely Khagan Svyatoslav (the Russian royal who led the attack on Khazaria), a ruler who was both priest and Khan (Khagan), or one of the pagan-Christian Silver Bulgar Magian rulers that took control of some parts of the Old Jewish Khazarian state. Since John's portion of the Khazarian state lay next to another part ruled by the conquering Muslims, it seems that Maimonides' version of the Preste-Cuan story was written after much of Khazaria had fallen to the Arabs after 1030 AD. On the other hand, it might also be a reference to the Khazarian state being portioned out among the Slavs and Muslim Silver Bulgars, with whom the Russes shared a non-aggression treaty.

PRESTER-JOHN
COMMANDED THE SO-
CALLED MONSTER
NATIONS

3. A further point which adds to this 'Prester John'- 'Priest Khan' connection is that one ethnic group subject to him were (again according to the letters) cannibals, who he led into battle against his enemies.¹⁴⁸ This particular race, I believe, can be equated with the Finnish Mordva tribe, who resided due west of the Urals, in upper Russia. This is based on Professor Gimbutas' identification of the Mordva as the Androphagi cannibals mentioned by Herodotus, since their name was apparently derived from the Iranian *Mard Khvar* which translates as 'the man-eaters'.

HIS KINGDOM WAS
GEOGRAPHICALLY VAST
AND WEALTHY

4. Moreover the kingdom he laid claim to was said to be the wealthiest and most luxurious ever known, and exceptionally vast in extent, stretching from Central Asia, even as far away as India and the Chinese border. Within it lay many kingdoms and every conceivable variety of earthly riches.¹⁴⁹

Unusual beasts inhabited his lands. Fauna included Indian, Asiatic and polar species, as well as mythical creatures like griffons (Russian: *griffin*), cyclopes (Russian: *мавпа-тсиклопы*), satyrs (Russian: *чугаистер*), centaurs (as shown on the walls and columns of pagan Slavic temples), giants (Russian: *великаны*), horned men (Vikings?) and phoenixes (Russian: *жар птиц*). Many of these beasts were said to live in pagan Rus', but obviously Olden Rus' did not stretch to the Chinese border. Therefore Prester John might have been a very highly placed magus-king who had later come to Russia, but whose dominion extended much further east.

HE RULED THE ALANS

5. Prester John also had a spring, from which the water of life and healing welled up. In Magian tradition such a spring was originally located further to the east, at Lake Kekast.¹⁵⁰ The spring of the 'water of life' occurs as a theme in Russian mythology also.¹⁵¹

6. Prester John ruled over the Alans (who formerly resided in Chechnya and Southern Russia), as well as a female warrior band known as the Amazons (who reputedly lived in Russia), and the Aryan Brahmins (who were also subordinate to him in authority).¹⁵² Collectively these ethnic groups were reviled as members of the monster nations, the so-called legions of Gog and Magog. As I showed in Part I, Aryan priests akin to Hindu Brahmin were operating in pagan and indeed medieval Rus', and what is more they had relinquished much of their authority to 'Prester John'.¹⁵³

AFTER LIVING IN FROZEN
REGIONS PRESTER-JOHN
RETURNED TO THE OLD
COUNTRIES

7. Prester John supposedly retreated back into his former domain owing to the grievous nature of the northern climate. This was a southward migration, but by Otto of Freisingen's account he withdrew to his old homelands beyond Armenia and Persia.¹⁵⁴ This might mean Central Asia or even India (where many Magian exiles came). By my reckoning this anecdote is partly incorrect, with many refugees also entering Bulgaria and Russia.

HIS MAGICAL MIRROR

8. Prester John had a magical mirror through which he could see everything happening in his vassal states.¹⁵⁵ The Russian Magi possessed books on divination and presumably clairvoyance by means of mirrors.¹⁵⁶

9. Prester John had a great love of gems, and attached special significance to each one, assigning to them special powers, mystical properties. Some of these gemstones aided the powers of sight if you looked into them.¹⁵⁷ This is probably a reference to crystal balls or, as you may have read in earlier, lenses. The Russian pagan priests also used gemstones for such purposes, and what is more the Russian words for gemstones have an Arabic and Iranian linguistic ancestry. In a mountain range within Prester John's domains, young lads were sent through tiny gaps which led into subterranean waterways where they collected assorted gems for days at a time.¹⁵⁷ The comprehensive assortment of gems mentioned in Prester John's letter sent to Emperor Comnenus indicate that they might have been gathered in India or the Urals. Finnish legends from the Urals indeed hint that local wizards were engaged in the harvesting of underground gemstones, many of which they embedded into their idols and towers, and perhaps even engraved.

PRESTER-JOHN ADORED
GEMSTONES

HE SENT YOUNG BOYS
BELOW THE EARTH TO
HARVEST GEMS

Prester John could not have been a single individual and is more likely to have been a religious figure who occupied the post of both Priest and Khagan; a Christian warrior-magus priest, who by some accounts was a Nestorian, though I have doubts about this. I say this because one man would not have been around to fight the Assyrians, Medeans and Zoroastrians, to destroy Khazaria, to partake in the Crusades, and to fight the Mongols. It is simply an impossibility. Moreover the Nestorians knew practically nothing of Prester-John, and are unlikely to have used magical mirrors. Such devices point towards Magianism instead of Nestorianism.

Somewhat later in the Middle Ages Prester John acquired a reputation as some kind of a Christian super-hero. Just as the Magi were workers of great marvels, so too was Prester John, the Christianised magus-king of like wonders. During a second series of western campaigns the numerically superior Mongols were routed from the battlefield by Prester John¹⁵⁸ and the St Thomas Christians, who according to the *Tatar Relation* were in all likelihood inhabitants of the Nestorian Christian settlements in India. Their force allegedly consisted of several thousand mounted archers riding line abreast to face Ghengis Khan's forces. Bewildered Mongol survivors supposedly recounted that each of Prester John's cavalymen carried a metallic device at the front of their steed containing incendiary fluids. They fired this flaming substance against the enemy operating bellows mounted either side of the saddle with their legs. Thereafter Prester John's men pursued the routing Mongols, peppering them with deadly volleys of arrows. This manner of warfare apparently terrified the Mongols and caused so many casualties that they retired from the battle field in a state of shock. The Mongols, you see, weren't used to losing on such a scale.

PRESTER-JOHN WAS A
MEDIÆVAL SUPER-HERO

Not content with significantly humiliating Ghengis' western commanders, Prester John sent threatening communiques to the Mongol Khan (who he regarded as more of a robber than a soldier), threatening an invasion of the Mongol homeland if he didn't start behaving himself any time soon.¹⁵⁹ Whether we can believe the account of the battle between Prester John and the Mongols is another thing. The technology to produce such devices was certainly available in Byzantium, and the Chinese knew how to make flame-throwers as early as the 10th Century AD.¹⁶⁰ The only thing I find hard to accept is that many thousands of horses remained calm and in good battle order as spurts of fire issued from in front of them. Perhaps some details were lost in the re-telling of the tale, perhaps this novel feature was only just a story.

HIS TROOPS USED
INGENIOUS
TECHNOLOGIES

With the disintegration of what was once a vast and quite civilised race, large numbers of refugees spilt in every direction, eventually losing all contact with each other. As the Magians and Magian Christians moved further west, they started bumping into the dreaded devil-worshippers and Zurvanite wizards they had banished from their religion centuries previously, who in turn were pressed further and further into the region of the Southern Urals, the Siberian fringe, Anatolia, Rus' and the Balkans. In prior times the nomadic Zurvanites and black families had, in all probability met up with the alchemists, philosophers and the equally banned sect of mathematicians (a brotherhood devoted to studying the sciences of Ptolemy and other ancient philosophers and natural scientists), many of which were exiled from the Roman world, and who had been living in the seclusion of these silvan realms.

In places like Baghdad and Edessa, the Christians from the Holy See of Nestorian Antioch allied themselves with the Arab Muslims. Following their ill-fated tussle with the mightier Sees of Rome and Constantinople over Nestor's theological views on Christ, they now acquired powerful defence from outside the Christian sphere. In return for their sworn allegiance to the Muslim authorities, the Caliph gave them the right to renew preaching the Christian

message among the non-Islamic Persians, whom the Arabs had no great love for. What happened next was truly amazing and must surely count as one of the most productive phases of missionary activity ever undertaken by the Church. Amid the ruins and desolation of Iranian society, where the proud and good faith of Zoroaster was once close to the hearts of the people, the first Nestorian missionaries began to arrive in the East¹⁶¹ bearing news of a virgin-born saviour who had come to save them from their troubles. Centuries before, the susceptibility of the Zoroastrians to (Christian) conversion had caused Karter to obliterate the Church of Persia and make apostasy a capital offense. The utter hopelessness of their plight, and the killing off of the Zoroastrian magus priests once again set the stage for large scale acceptance of the Christian message. But there were other preachers out there in the deserts too. The Manichaeans, a cult espousing an admixture of Magian, Christian, gnostic and Buddhist doctrines, spread a very different version of the faith, which claimed, as did the Magians, that Yaweh the God of Israel, was the Demi-urge, the wrathful Lord of Chaos. The job of the Nestorians, who followed a more judaised form of Apostolic Christianity, largely entailed visiting as many families as they could, all the while trying to guard their parishes from the Manichaean Elect. In time they found their missions so successful they had managed to convert their way as far as Mongolia and Cambaluc, now called Beijing.

The Saviour foretold - Jewish Messiah or Magian Sraosha?

THERE ARE MANY
SIMILARITIES BETWEEN
JESUS CHRIST AND
SRAOSHA (THE PAGAN
SAVIOUR)

BOTH WERE LORD OF THE
RESURRECTION

MAGIANS MIGHT HAVE
DISPENSED WITH HOLY
FIRES UPON SRAOSHA'S
ARRIVAL

Above all, Magianism (whether Zoroastrianism or Zurvanism) was a religion of prophets, and ultimately one which would be drastically altered by the eventual arrival of their supreme saviour. With him would come *'the renovation'* of their faith and the universe, and *Hush*, the new *Haoma* (a special ritual drink), which was also called *'the Immortaliser'*. The Eucharistic sacrifice, universal to all the early Christian Churches, could well had been regarded by these pagans as this sacred meal of immortality. Considering the uncanny similarities between Jesus Christ and the expected Magian Messiah *Sraosha* (which will be addressed in a few moments), there is evidence that Christianity so severely depleted the numbers of Zoroastrians in Asia-Minor during those first centuries after the birth of Christ, that Zoroastrianism, one of the largest world religions at the time, disappeared in regions of Sassania for several hundred years. Their ubiquitous and iconic fire shrines are thought to have virtually vanished in those areas, signified, amongst other things, by the absence of altar imagery from the back of all Iranian royal coinage minted in those localities during that time (which was the normal custom).¹⁶²

In that early phase of conversion Magian converts seem to have dispensed with holy fires after adopting Christianity, a normally unthinkable proposition. The rationale may be contained in their own scriptures, which state *'be ever without fail in flame; be all ashine within this house; be on thy growth within this house; for a long time be thou thus to the furtherance of the heroic renovation, to the completion of all progress, yea, even till the good heroic millennial time when the renovation (of the divine Saviour Sraosha) shall have become complete'*.¹⁶³

No doubt the ultra-susceptibility of Zoroastrians to conversion to Christianity aided the astonishing success of the Nestorian missions. Looking back to an earlier time, the Apostle St Thomas converted his way across Persia, reaching Madras in India, where his tomb still stands to this day. Sixteenth century Jesuits got a real shock when they saw it. The Near-East converted long before Europe.

We will now examine why so many Magians hurriedly rushed for baptism into the religion of Jesus Christ, and in particular the supposed heresies that were likely to arise from this union. In essence they became Christians on the strength of ancient Magian prophecies about a coming virgin-born redeemer, who would renew the face of the earth, destroy the devil, and bring murdered creation into everlasting life ... cattle, horses, people, dogs and the kingdom of plants.

In earliest times Christians converged on small private dwellings (*doma ecclesia*) to hold their Church services.¹⁶⁴ Later, once Christianity gained the endorsement and support of the Roman State, larger congregational buildings could finally materialise. In the 4th Century AD, Emperor Constantine divested large sums of money for the establishment of enormous basilicas across the Christian world. At long last the faith of Jesus Christ had fitting temples.¹⁶⁴

During renovations at Rome's St Peter's Basilica this century, an amazing piece of artwork was discovered depicting a shining solar divinity driving along in a chariot, encaptioned *Helios Christus*¹⁶⁵ (ie, the Sun Christ, or the anointed Sun of God). Clearly the mere fact that it had been built over meant it may have been a very early mosaic portrait of Jesus Christ, a view in later times abandoned in favour of the simple cross. Alternatively, it was a piece of Mithraic artwork which existed in the pagan cemetery upon which the Basilica was built by Constantine in 322 AD.¹⁶⁶ The latter view seems all the more probable, since the mosaic is believed to date to the 200's AD, existing there up to a hundred years before the Basilica was erected. Nevertheless, as Christianity attempted to establish itself in Mithraic Rome, there may well have been an unsanctioned perception in some circles that Christ was in some ways similar to *Sol Invictus*, the saviour God, the Invincible Sun first imported into Rome by the Mithraic Magi.

In ancient Russia *Helios Christus* may have been called *Khors*¹⁶⁷ (whose statue was raised in Old Kiev before the conversion), who was also known as *Khres* (perhaps a corruption of the Greek *Christos*, meaning Christ, but most likely *Keresā*, the *Avestan* word for Jesus). *Khors/Khres* was traditionally represented as a Christ-like figure sometimes racing a golden solar chariot, sometimes carrying a lamb. This is fairly good evidence for the existence of a cult centred on Jesus, the Sun of God, *Sraosha*. Such a Jesus is to be seen on the 10th Century German Quedlinberg reliquary, which came to the attention of Professor Flint.¹⁶⁸ In many ways it depicts the traditional Slavic imagery of *Khors* (*Khres*) the solar chariot-racer encircled by the twelve zodiacs, however it had by that stage become Christ the Good Sun surrounded by the twelve apostles of the good zodiac. The existence of such a motif in Germany, Scythia, and Rome is attributable to Aryan messianic lore, which originated among the Iranian Magi, and filtered across the Caucasus with Magian Christian exiles. In heathen times, it is feasible that a certain proportion of the Ostrogothic nation was nominally Christian. But the extent of their Christianisation, or their orthodoxy with respect to Judaeo-Catholicism hang under a very grey cloud indeed. In Byzantium, Bishop Gregory expressed the gravest possible concerns about re-admitting to the Church whatever Roman prisoners had been emancipated from Gothic captivity.¹⁶⁹ Doubtless to say he must have been rather disturbed about the matter, so much so that he felt that the issue needed to be addressed adroitly and resolutely.



What we do know is that a fair number of Goths considered themselves Christians. However the ritual slaughter of livestock to idols appears to have been a feature of this cult, based on the bishop's commentary in the surviving letter from the mid-3rd Century AD.¹⁷⁰ Something was unorthodox about their faith.

Wolfram believes the bishop's worrisome remarks were not so much directed towards the Goths, who, on the strength of surviving accounts, are not guessed to have been preoccupied with idolatry at that time.¹⁷⁰ He professes that Gregory's nervousness was due to the existence of Christian apostates and heretics among the masses of Roman captives held by the Goths (followers of Mithraism), rather than the Goths themselves. Further, these other Christians hoped to be rejoined with the Church militant, something the bishop was not keen to countenance lightly. They might have been a dangerous source of 'spiritual contamination' likely to 'poison' whatever parish they joined.

Professor Wolfram's analysis of the data is respectable, but a further explanation is possible. The heretics were Romans and Goths, and the 'dangerous heresy' found there was that of the Christian Magi, the ministers of the obscure Persian Church. Historically the Goths had kindred tribesmen throughout Cappadocia and Cilicia (in Turkey), known seedbeds of dualist Christian heresy owing to their close proximity to the Iranian nations. It necessarily follows that some of the Goths observed ancestral Christian heresies of some antiquity.¹⁷¹

Earlier I discussed at length the presence of Magi and Christian Magi throughout Russia and Eastern Europe, and in particular their connections with the Goths, Scandinavians and Bulgars. Just one example is the formerly-great town of Summerkent, once situated on a reed island in the southern reaches of the Volga, not far from the lands of the Khazars and Silver Bulgars.¹⁷² Its folk were ancestrally connected with the Ostrogothic tribesmen who had penetrated into Europe (Spain, Italy and France) during Roman times, and who continued to live at



Fig 11.1. Apollo
 Fig 11.2. Apollo
 Fig 11.3. Jesus, the Good Shepherd
 Fig 11.4. Apollo
 Fig 11.5. Helios Christos



Summerkent until the island fell to the Mongols after an eight-year siege. The inhabitants were supposedly Christians, and are guessed to have had blood kin among both the Crimean Goths and the Old Saxons (living in Germany and Poland). The Catholic author of *the Tartar Relation* saw fit to clear up any misconceptions about their ethnicity. He specifically referred to these so-called Goths as Saksins. If true, this would place a sizeable colony of Saxons at the lower reaches of the Volga. Following the Islamicisation of Iran and the subsequent Magian diaspora, one should fully expect a Magian or Magian Christian presence in this area. Feeding northward from the Caspian, the Volga may have been a prized escape route for the refugees. In the sixth century the Volga was termed Ra or Rai river.¹⁷³ I believe it was so named because it was a river route to Rai, an esteemed Persian city on the Caspian. Far from being simply a prosperous city, Rai was the supposed birthplace of the Magian prophet Zoroaster.

An extant 700 AD German rendition of Christ is clearly heathen in form.¹⁷⁴ The artisan has him looking every bit like a vanquishing Aryan warrior, menacingly brandishing his axe, sword and spear against his father's enemies.



Fig 12. Jesus the mighty warrior, grinding a serpent under foot. He comes complete with typical Saxon military equipment, and an erect phallus!

This is probably very similar to the Magian view of *Sraosha*, the tall and quick, fiend-smiting Saviour, the great conqueror, whose axe cleaves asunder the skulls of the Daevas (a class of divinities known to the Hindus and certain European pagans), when he engages them in battle. *Sraosha's* battle-lust against the forces of evil would come to the fore in the apocalyptic conflict which would ensnare the great serpent and the demon Ahriman forever.

An unlikely comparison it may be, that is until one further examines the likely christological framework behind the Vatican mosaic, or German and Russian mythological imagery, by drawing upon the many parallels that existed between Jesus Christ and *Sraosha* (who was iconographically portrayed as a rooster in olden Iran), the coming redeemer expected by the white Magi. The Zoroastrian *Spend* (nask) contained information on the portended arrivals of the saviours, including;

'The coming and arrival of Saoshans, son of Zarathust, at the end of the third millennium'
and *'the renovation of the universe and the future existence ... arise in his time'*.¹⁷⁵

For Zoroastrians, this world Messiah was the incarnate word of God, a lordly, mighty-speared, fiend-smiting God; tall and powerful ...a *'protector and lover of the poor'*, who, *'never sleeping'* watched over the world and turned back the fiends, forcing them to run back into the gloom, and abandon their assaults on the goodness of Ahura Mazda's creations.¹⁷⁶ Such a Jesus is perceptible in the Russian word *chertogon*, which means 'the baby Jesus', but literally translates as 'the devil chaser'.¹⁷⁷ Ahura Mazda

said that through *Sraosha*,

'I shall have you prepared again perfect and immortal, and in the end give you back to the world, and you will be wholly immortal, undecaying, and undisturbed; or that it be always necessary to provide you protection from the destroyer'.¹⁷⁸

'The first (Sraosha), the next, the middle, and the highest; with the first sacrifice, with the next, with the middle, and with the highest. We sacrifice unto all the moments of the holy and strong Sraosha, who is the incarnate Word'.¹⁷⁸

Zoroastrians believed that *Sraosha*, the Deliverer, would grant righteousness to those who believed in him, once he came. Through him, his followers became forever righteous in God's eyes. Similarly, denying *Sraosha* was an abomination worthy of eternal condemnation. Compare this with the Church's teachings concerning faith in Christ, without which one is doomed to eternal death.

Both Christian and Zoroastrian scripture state that their Saviour (who in both cases was seen as the Lord of the Resurrection), would make a glorious second coming, a spiritual coming, *not in this world*.¹⁷⁹ Accordingly, the early Church was *never* an advocate of millenarianism, a belief that Christ's kingdom would be re-established on this earth of ours.¹⁸⁰

SRAOSHA, THE WORLD
MESSIAH, LOVER OF THE
POOR

AGAINST EVIL SRAOSHA
WAS A MIGHTY WARRIOR

People throughout every generation have seen in the *Book of Revelations* a sure sign of the impending end of the world, the 'eschatological reality' professed by the apostles since the very beginning, but which was not to take place in this world, but the hereafter. This was the official view of the early Church. One of the earliest and most shunned of heresies was that of Cerinthus, which stipulated the millennial reign of Christ was to be on earth, a purely physical rather than metaphysical resurrection. St John the Apostle (who stood by Mary at the foot of the cross as Christ hung there) was recorded as having spontaneously flung himself out into the street after discovering that Cerinthus was in the same bathhouse as he, greatly fearful that the roof might collapse on him if he stayed there any length of time!¹⁸¹ Such were the first beginnings of millenarianism, which the Catholic and Orthodox Churches oppose to this very day. Sure there were millenarian problems associated with the *Book of Revelation*, but as you will see later, it proved to be one of the most vital weapons in the "Catholic" spiritual arsenal, preventing the masses of early converts from sliding into a demi-pagan form of the faith, largely similar to Mithraism. Certainly it prevented the ideological extermination of Apostolic Christianity, and its Jewish flavour, during the Middle Ages.

In the good religion of Ahura Mazda, *Sraosha's* ultimate return coincided with the final battle against the Evil One and his infernal hosts, destined to take place on a plain outside the walls of heaven.

'On the conflict of the creations of the world with the antagonism of the evil spirit (Angra Mainyu) it is said in revelation, that the evil spirit, even as he rushed in and looked upon the pure bravery of the angels and his own violence, wished to rush back. ... And his (Ahura Mazda's) guardian spirits (fravashis) of warriors and the righteous, on war horses and spear in hand, were around the sky; such-like as the hair on the head is the similitude of those who hold the watch of the rampart. And no passage was found by the evil spirit, who rushed back; and he beheld the annihilation of the demons and his own impotence, as Ahura Mazda did his own final triumph, producing the renovation of the universe for ever and everlasting'.¹⁸²

SRAOSHA WAS TO LEAD
A GREAT ARMY OF
SAINTS IN AN
APOCALYPTIC
HEAVENLY BATTLE
AGAINST THE DEVIL

At that final reckoning God's sunny charioteer *Sraosha* led the hosts, dignified and impressive, valiant and unperturbed by the evil before him.

SRAOSHA RODE IN A
CHARIOT

'We worship Sraosha the blessed, whom four racers draw in harness, white and shining, beautiful and powerful, quick to learn, and fleet, obeying before speech, heeding orders from the mind, with their hoofs of horn gold-covered, fleetier than our horses, swifter than the winds, more rapid than the rain; yea, fleetier than the clouds, or well-winged birds, or the well-shot arrow as it flies, which overtake these swift ones all, as they fly after them pursuing, but which are never overtaken when they flee, which plunge away from both the weapons and draw Sraosha with them, the good Sraosha and the blessed; which from both the weapons bear the good Obedience the blessed (Sraosha), plunging forward in their zeal, when he takes his course from India on the East, and when he lights down in the West'.¹⁸³

BOTH CHRIST AND
SRAOSHA WERE HIGHLY
SKILLED IN BATTLE
AGAINST THE DEMONS

In the *Primary Chronicle* Vladimir raised a metallic effigy of a charioteer, drawn by four horses, outside his newly-constructed church in Kiev. It was specially shipped into the Ukraine from the Crimean city of Khorsun (the City of Khors) and so may well have portrayed Khors (Old Russia's Jesus-like solar charioteer).

Note the obvious similarities between the chariot-racing *Helios Christus*, from the mosaic under the Vatican Basilica, *Khors* and the saviour *Sraosha*, the mighty solar battle-lord, who transits the celestial vault in his golden sun chariot.

'We worship Sraosha, Obedience the blessed and the stately, him who smites with the blow of victory, who furthers the settlements, the holy ritual chief (of Haoma), as the energetic, and the swift, the strong, the daring (and redoubted) hero, who comes back from all his battles a conqueror, who amid the Bountiful Immortals (fravashi saints) sits as companion at their meeting'.¹⁸⁴

THE REDEEMER LOVED
THE POOR

*'The Holy Sraosha, the best protector of the poor, is fiend-smiting; he is the best smiter of the Drug (devils).'*¹⁸⁵

*'Sraosha the mighty, both armed with shielding armour, and a warrior strong of hand, skull-cleaver of the Daevas, conquering the endowments of the conqueror, the holy conqueror of the conqueror, and his victorious powers, and the Ascendency which it bestows, and we worship the Ascendency of Sraosha.'*¹⁸⁶

JESUS, THE YOUNG
WARRIOR

At Clonfert in Ireland there was a medieval church dedicated to 'The Lord Mighty in Battle',¹⁸⁷ complete with a pile of carved (probably decapitated) heads, a motif which can also be found at Cashel and the Church of Dysert O'Dea.¹⁸⁷ These were clearly the work of pagan craftsmen, but what was the intended meaning of the Church's name and ornamentation? Were these the heads of Daevas butchered by *Sraosha*, the 'skull-cleaver of the Daevas', a different kind of Jesus, a non-Catholic Jesus?

Similar christological symbology was present on the English mainland, possibly due to Saxon Germanic influences, which supplanted Roman culture. The following small excerpt was derived from an 8th Century AD Old English runic inscription from Northumbria, known as *The Dream of Rood*.¹⁸⁸ In it one finds a Jesus demonstrably at variance with what we are normally accustomed to, he a high king, he a great fighter, he of lustrous form;

JESUS PORTRAYED AS AN
ARYAN GERMANIC
WARRIOR

*'Then the young Warrior, God, the All-Wielder... mounted the Cross to redeem mankind ... I held the High King, the Lord of heaven ... with black nails driven ... Black darkness covered with clouds God's body, That radiant splendour.'*¹⁸⁸

JESUS IS ACCOMPANIED
BY BANDS OF MOUNTED
KNIGHTS

How similar this must have been to the Christ Jesus of the Magian Christians. Under this Germanic-Christian tradition we also see Christ's personal retinue, and they are not shepherds, but, as in Magian lore, wise, holy, fresh-faced young warriors who get about on war-horses.¹⁸⁹

In the 9th Century AD Germanic Christian text, the *Heliand* (a term arising from the Greek *helios*, 'the sun'), the Latin word *dominus* (meaning 'a Lord' or 'the Lord') was abandoned in the Bible translation process in favour of *truhtin*, the Old High German word for 'a war lord'.¹⁹⁰ The same thing transpired in England, though there the word was *dryhten*.¹⁹⁰ This might simply have been an attempt to make Jesus better understood by potential converts of that day, or indeed retain them, in a society still exposed to pagan influences. But if this was the intention, it must have been, in Rome's eyes, very misguided. Through this change in terminology, Jesus became much more than 'the Lord', he was a war lord, an Aryan warlord

THE GERMANS AND
ANGLO-SAXONS SPOKE OF
JESUS AS TRUHTIN OR
DRYHTEN, A WARLORD

JESUS - SUN-KING

But the new words had even graver implications for those of the apostolic mold, for *dryhten* and *truhtin* portrayed monumentally pagan concepts. A related term is found in Norse epic, in the ancient *Ynglinga Saga*, first recorded from oral traditions several centuries after the adoption of *truhtin* and *dryhten* for Germanic and English Bible translations. In it, the mortal-God Odin, and his fellow wizards, the pagan temple priests of the Aesir, were termed '*diar*, or *drotner*', and were worshiped by their followers. Strictly speaking *drotner* is most closely related to *drottin* (singular) and *drottnar* (plural), meaning 'a king', or 'a chief'.¹⁹¹ And the word *diar*, which appears in conjunction with *drotner* in *Ynglinga Saga*, has an etymology which is probably traceable to the older Indo-European word *daeva*, meaning 'a God'.

SUNDAY, THE DAY OF
THE LORD

For Scandinavians 'Sunday', the Christian Sabbath, was termed *drottinsdagr*.¹⁹¹ In this word *dagr* ('day'), was added onto the word for 'a king', or 'a Lord'. Therefore Sunday was 'the day of the Lord', as opposed to Saturday, the old Jewish Sabbath. But by some amazing coincidence, if we take *drottinsdagr*, and transpose the original Iranian meaning of *daga* ('fiery', and indirectly meaning 'the sun'), with that of the Norse word *dagr* ('day'), which arose from the Iranian, we get a literal translation of 'Sun-king'. If the more ancient Iranian connotations for *dagr* were still apparent in pagan and medieval Scandinavia, as they were in Slavia, Sunday could well have been construed as the day of the Sun-king.

SUNDAY, THE DAY OF
THE SUN-KING

The implications of this are staggering. The very use of these words suggests that in their day, Jesus was a sort of Sun-king, referred to by terms normally applicable to the Anglo-Saxon and Germanic warrior aristocracy, pagan

Lords, sacral kings with magical powers, of the type described in *Ynglinga Saga*. Like Jesus, and *Sraosha*, the earthly Teutonic kings had their own personal retinue of warriors, *drott* ('the king's retinue'). Clearly the Germanic and Anglo-Saxon churches were at variance with Roman Catholic practice, promoting textual changes whose true significance was camouflaged by an innocent change of words. Though we can be in no way certain that their choice of words was accidental or foolhardy. The Germanic nations were beginning to slip from Rome's grasp, and wherever they went they taught their tradition to others. As an example, the Irish *Book of Kells* was originally to be executed in Roman uncials, however Germanic runic characters were chosen instead, quite deliberately.

A short segment from the definitive Saxon literary masterpiece, the *Heliand*, uncompromisingly identifies their main doctrine, one not favoured by reigning Church authorities in Rome. It includes the dying words of a well-born Saxon, descended from the very magus kings who once followed the star. The gist of the authentic 9th Century saga is clear - the Journey of the Magi was but the culmination of an ancient vision for the arrival of God's son.¹⁹² A mighty wise man of this ancient pre-Christian tradition had, it would seem, accurately foretold the coming of Jesus Christ.¹⁹² Like Murphy, I believe this to be a concealed reference to Zoroaster's stanzas on *Sraosha*. In fact a certain surviving alternative Gospel expressly states that the Magi arrived in Jerusalem *in connection with Zoroaster's prophecies* about the awaited Redeemer.¹⁹³

One notes with interest the *Heliand's* preservation of songs concerning the trek of the Magi, which assume a pride of place almost exceeding that of the nativity scene. The motive for this excessive emphasis on the journey is philosophical and political. They were not belittling the sublime moment of the Redeemer's birth, simply stressing that their path to Christ was an extension of the Old Ways, at a time when the old teachings were under siege from official quarters.

The infancy gospels were an uncomfortable source of Magian Christian proselytising. Small wonder they suffered extensive expurgation, so much so that an entire class of Church literature was under threat of extinction, in its original form.¹⁹⁴ They cast important light on the non-Jewish religious and philosophical origins of Christianity in many parts. With the texts gone it was hoped the theological dispute would disappear, the problem 'fixed'.

Consider the pagan Russian, Scandinavian and Anglo-Saxon crucifix broaches, and shield ornament¹⁹⁵ (fig 13.8, 13.7, 13.4), which bear a crude resemblance to effigies found in Magian Luristan, Bronze Age Iran (fig 13.5, 13.6). The Luristan objects (one of which was a chariot ornament) are believed to depict *Sraosha, the pagan Messiah*.¹⁹⁶ Coupled with a wealth of other information displayed herein, the similarity between the Magian objects and the Anglo-Saxon, Scandinavian and Russian emblems seems indicative of *Sraosha*-worship in all four places.

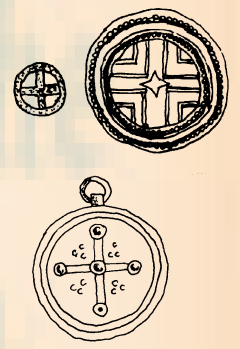


Fig 13. 1. A Baltic "Celtic cross" dating to the Bronze Age.

Fig 13. 2. A "Celtic cross" solar disk from Ireland, also dating to the Bronze Age. It was hammered into a piece of gold.

Fig 13.3. Pendant, Lithuania, 9th C. AD.

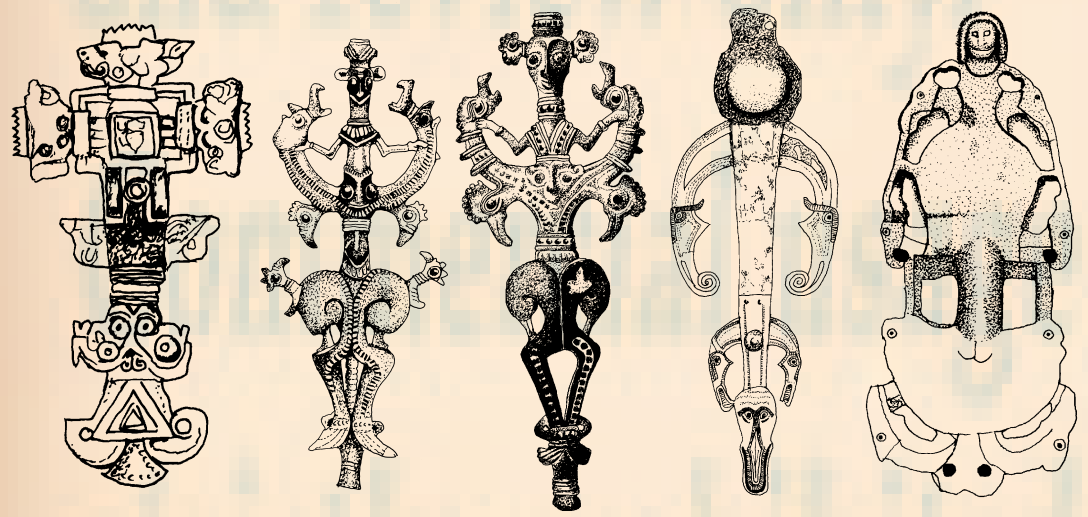


Fig 13.4. Medieval Anglo-Saxon brooch.

Fig 13.5. Bronze effigy of *Sraosha* 1,000-800 BC; Iran.

Fig 13.6. Another Luristan bronze chariot standard, possibly depicting *Sraosha*.

Fig 13.7. Swedish brooch conforming to the styles depicted.

Fig 13.8. Silver brooch; Kiev, 6-7th Century AD.

Fig 13. 4

Fig 13.5

Fig 13.6

Fig 13.7

Fig 13.8

THEIR VERSION OF
CHRISTIANITY FEATURED
HELIOLATROUS CUSTOMS

Their faith probably exhibited aspects Christian heliolatry.¹⁹⁷ At the 337 AD episcopal Council of Laodicia, Canon 29 was passed to reinforce Sunday as the Christian Sabbath, and not the Saturday, as in the case of Judaism. It states '*Christians shall not Judaize and be idle on Saturday ... but the Lord's day they shall especially honor, and as being Christians, shall, if possible, do no work on that day. If however they are found Judaizing (the Sabbath) they shall be excommunicated from Christ*'. (Hefele, '*A History of the Councils of the Church*'). To some extent eastern traditions helped carve this law. As I explained in Part I, the Chaldees assigned one of the planetary bodies to each day of the week, as its guardian, and object of veneration. This being the case Saturn (the 'Great Maelific', causer of grief, from which we get the term Satan) was allocated Saturday (ie; Saturdaysday), whereas the Sunday was governed by Helios (ie; Sunday). For this reason a Saturday Sabbath was regarded as a black Sabbath in many quarters; effectively an act of demonolatry and apostasy.

THE NEW SABBATH WAS
NOW SUNDAY RATHER
THAN SATURDAY

THE SUN CHRIST

In a number of European locations, Christians equated Jesus with the sun. For example even late last century, in England, Scotland and Ireland, there was a custom whereby peasants went out into the fields the morning of Easter Sunday (the day on which Christ ascended from his three days of ministering to the souls in the underworld), to see the sun dance.¹⁹⁸ This tradition concerns the expected miracle of seeing the sun dance for joy in the sky. In pagan times such miracles might have been accompanied by the circular perambulatory sun-dancing of the peasantry. Even more greatly blessed was the person who witnessed the image of the lamb carrying a flag in the halo of the sun.¹⁹⁸ This miraculous vision signified that Christ, the sacrificial lamb of God (who came to take away the sins of the world) had risen from death. This view of Christ embodied in the radiant sun most surely belonged to the old faith. One Old Icelandic term may indicate that Jesus was perceived as a significant component within a dualistic framework, for Jesus is described as the White Christ, the *Hvita-Krister*.¹⁹⁹

THE WHITE CHRIST

In old Saxon lore, Jesus' incarnation was portrayed as an arrival in the "middle realm" (Middilgard), that is on earth, betwixt heaven and hell.²⁰⁰ It's a point of similarity with the pagan kings, many of whom touched down in the material world from their residence in heaven.

FRANKS PRAYED FACING
THE EAST

A 12th Century Muslim's written recollection of Franks (French and Germans) living in Jerusalem is suggestive of medieval Christian sun-worship in Europe, with Iranian traditions. These traditions might have entered Europe with the likes of the Scythians and Sarmatians, or other Iranian tribes like the Massagetae, Germanians and Daans. Considering the substantial evidence for Magianism in pre-Christian Europe, the Franks plausibly included descendants of an especially pious Magian clan called the *Fryanaks*. You see, as Usamah began his time of prayer in a small mosque, facing toward Mecca, he was set upon by a Frank who had only newly arrived in the Holy Land.²⁰¹ This Frank, trembling and disturbed by seeing the manner of Muslim prayer, physically moved Usamah's face eastward, not once, but several times, instructing him that this was the only proper direction to face during prayer.²⁰¹ One of the knights Templar accompanying the Frank asked the Muslim to forgive him, stating,

"This is a stranger who has only recently arrived from the land of the Franks and he has never before seen anyone praying except eastward";²⁰¹ that is; in the direction of sunrise.

THEIR GRAVES WERE
ALIGNED TOWARD THE
EAST, FACING INTO THE
RISING SUN

Medieval graves across a number of nations were oriented towards the east, with the corpse usually facing the direction of sunrise. These date to both the pagan and Christian era, and will be explained in some detail a little later.

SCOFFERS LAMBASTED
THEIR BELIEF THAT THE
SAVIOUR WOULD RETURN
IN SHINING GLORY

Iranian scripture talks of the Mazda-worshippers being mocked concerning the supposed arrival of their *Sraosha*; unbelievers taunted them, saying that he would never come to help them. Ahura Mazda said, '*I have produced the effecter of the renovation, the causer of righteousness, Saoshans, of whom mankind say that he does not come; and yet he will come, for the righteous, with that glory which becomes all-brilliance*'.²⁰²

Christians suffered similar ridicule over the second coming of Christ: '*First of all, you must understand that in the last days some people will appear whose lives are controlled by their own lusts. They will make fun of you and will say, 'He promised to come, didn't he? Where is he?'*'²⁰³

Like *Sraosha*, Jesus would also be hailed as the vanquishing conqueror of heaven, riding at the head of a mounted column of angels and saints, all radiant and invincible, the King of all Kings. Both *Sraosha* and Jesus Christ

would return not as ordinary men, but in their fullest conceivable glory, appearing in the heavens like lightning, swiftly racing from East to West. This would bring about the most triumphant moment in the cosmos, the monumental and irrevocable destruction of the Evil Principle, which from its inception had destroyed the goodness of the Creator's works. It would be a spiritual war of epic proportions. In the Christian *Revelations*, we hear:

'And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse: and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God.

And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, King of Kings, and Lord of Lords.

And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; That they may eat the flesh of kings and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great.

And I saw the beast, and the (antichristian?) kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshiped his image.

These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. The remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.'

'And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon that old serpent which is the Devil and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season'.²⁰⁴

ACCORDING TO THE
BOOK OF REVELATION ,
WHICH CONTAINS
JUDAISING ELEMENTS,
THE KINGS AND THE
GREAT BEAST WERE
SUPPOSED TO HAVE
BEEN ON THE SAME SIDE

Medieval European Christians jubilantly sang carols about the Three Wise Kings at Christmas and the Epiphany. The following Russian festive folk song belongs very much to this tradition, illustrating the role of the magus kings in bringing the worship of Jesus Christ to prominence among the heathen, at least according to their tradition anyway:

'The Virgin Mary gave birth to Jesus Christ, and placed him in a manger. A star shone brightly, showing three kings the way: Three kings arrived, they brought gifts to God, they fell on their knees, they exalted Jesus'. An alternative translation for the last stanza reads 'they made Jesus great'.²⁰⁵

THE MAGI HELPED
CHRIST BECOME EVEN
MORE POPULAR

Sraosha was also a demon-fighter and witch-hunter, who wrestled and punished dark heterodox spirits and their earthly minions. For this reason Magian Christians are likely to have held their own trials against dark, maelific (not white) witches and heretics. Of *Sraosha* it was said *'And one is the producer of bodies (the bodies that the resurrected shall have), the renovator Saoshans, who is the putter down, with complete subjugation from the world, of the glorification of fiends and demons, and of the contention with angels in apostasy and heterodoxy of various kinds and unatoned for'.²⁰⁶*

SRAOSHA WAS A
DEMON-FIGHTER AND
WITCH-HUNTER OF THE
FIRST MAGNITUDE

According to the Church, Christ (like *Sraosha*) had always existed, living in heaven with the Father. The concept was utterly alien to Judaism. His coming into the world would only be an incarnation of the divine presence. (NT) *Mark 12: 35-37* served to illustrate that Christ existed long before King David. Arius' view that Christ was a created being caused an uproar in the Christian world, and was almost universally condemned. Christ had existed since the beginning, and ever shall be. His coming into the world was not the moment of his creation, but much rather his advent before the eyes of humanity.

JESUS AND SRAOSHA
WERE BOTH
TRANSFIGURED

The transfiguration of Christ with light (as related in (NT) *Matthew 17* and other readings) resembles, in some respects, the expected transfiguration of *Sayoshant*, the World Messiah.

*'And (Jesus) was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. And behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him. While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.'*²⁰⁷

On the Mount of Olives, awaiting the time of his betrayal, and crucifixion, Christ prayed in anguish, causing sweat beads to form on his brow. When help was brought to him by an angel from heaven, these sweat beads fell to the earth as bloody droplets.²⁰⁸ This can be compared with *Dinkard IX:XXXII:9-10* in which we find that after thirty centuries, the time of Gayomard's (a name for the first man to live in heaven with God, his son) affliction had arrived, in the form of a demonic host which caused sweat to form on him. Owing to the prayers of Ahura Mazda in heaven these demons were cast down from him into the gloom.

SOME PARTS OF THE
CHRISTIAN GOSPEL WERE
UTTERLY ALIEN TO
JUDAISM

In the *New Testament* sequel to the *Book of Genesis* Jesus' relationship to the divine being is expounded. The narrative features clear allusions to the unhealable dualistic antagonism between the two polar opposites. *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not"*. Nowhere in the Jewish creation sequence of *Genesis* does it mention Yaweh having a first born son, and probably for this reason it was a teaching few Jews could stomach. It was an assault on their understanding of monotheism. In fact it was this very suggestion that led to the High priest pronouncing the death sentence against Christ so alien was this teaching to Jewry.

RABBIS REFUSED TO
ACCEPT THAT THE
CREATOR HAD A SON

"Again the high priest asked him, and said unto him, Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed? And Jesus said, I am: and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven. Then the high priest rent his clothes, and saith. What need we any further witnesses? Ye have heard the blasphemy; what think ye? And they all condemned him to be guilty of death. And some began to spit on him, and to cover his face".²⁰⁹

MAGIANS AND
CHRISTIANS REVERED A
HOLY VIRGIN, MOTHER OF
THE MESSIAH

Pre-eminent in the hearts of Zoroastrians and Christians alike was a glorious Virgin.²¹⁰ In both religions she was to be blessed like no other woman in the history of the world, having gained exceedingly powerful graces for carrying in her womb the instrument by which God would snatch back his creations from the clutches of the fiend, and the angel of death. This is her story, as told by the Magi.

THE MAGI BELIEVED IN
AN IMMACULATE
CONCEPTION

"That maiden whose title is All-overpower is thus all-overpowering, because through giving birth she brings forth him who overpowers all, both the affliction owing to demons, and also that owing to mankind. Then she sits in the water, when she is 15 years old, and it introduces into the girl him "whose name is the Triumphant Benefiter, and his title is the Body-maker; such a benefiter as benefits the whole embodied existence, and such a body-maker, alike possessing and possessing life, as petitions about the disturbance of the embodied existences and mankind. Not before that has she associated with men; nor yet afterwards, when she becomes pregnant, has she done so before the time when she gives birth". When that man (Sraosha, the saviour) becomes thirty years old (note the age at which this Messiah's transfiguration occurs), the sun stands still in the zenith of the sky for the duration of thirty days and nights, and it arrives again at that place where it was appointed by allotment".²¹¹

THE VIRGIN HAD
MIRACULOUS POWERS

Concerning the marvelousness of Sayoshant as to splendour and glory of person, it says that when the coming of the last rotation of those rotations of the seasons of Aushedar-mah occurs the man Sayoshant is born whose food is spiritual and body sunny (that is his body is as radiant as the sun).²¹²

"Sayoshant is born in Khvanims (the Central Patriarchate of the Magi), who makes the evil spirit impotent, and causes the resurrection and future existence".²¹³

"The first (Sraosha), the next, the middle, and the highest; with the first sacrifice, with the next, with the middle, and with the highest. We sacrifice unto all the moments of the holy and strong Sraosha, who is the incarnate Word".²¹⁴

In Christian terms St Mary was the most revered of Christian saints, alternatively known as the *Theotokos* (God-bearer) or amongst the Nestorians, *Anthropokos* (Man-bearer). To the Russians she was their beloved *Bogoroditsa*. As a virgin her sealed womb was impregnated by the Holy Spirit, allowing God to come into the world in the form of the Son; God made into flesh. St Mary therefore was seen as having an indispensable place of honor in the scheme of salvation, for from her body proceeded the Lord of Lords, King of Kings, the Resurrector. On account of this St Mary was never worshiped, but instead greatly venerated in every Church from the East of Christendom to the West. The story of the 'Dormition' (the death of Mary and the in-gathering of apostles in Asia Minor), has been handed down since the very earliest years of the Church. Since Christ was bound to honor his own mother, just like at Cana, Mary became a most powerful voice before the divine throne.

Consider also the following Kievan Russian sermon on Our Lady. Eastern sun symbolism is clearly apparent;

'Who will proclaim the power of our Lady? ... Through her our salvation flourished, through her we were raised from our first fall. She broke the curse of our first mother, she poured forth blessing for us. From her did the Sun of Righteousness shine forth for us, dispersing the darkness of ignorance and enlightening us with the light of the knowledge of God. From her and for her sake was the true Light revealed to us, for she is the mother of life, she is the source of immortality'.²¹⁰

Detractors of Christianity thought it vital to condemn the virgin birth, for it was a pivotal sign of the Aryan messiahship. Jews saw Mary as a hussey with an illegitimate child. These contrary stories made her an unexpected stumbling block for potential Jewish and Gentile converts, a topic freely exploited by antichristian rabbis and unbelieving Magian conservatives alike. Mary is spoken of in the *Toldoth Jeschu* only in the most defamatory terms (eg: 'whore'). This is what Jews are taught on this topic in the Talmudic Tract *Kallah*, 1b:

"Once when the Elders were seated at the Gate, two young men passed by, one of whom had his covered, the other with his head bare. Rabbi Eliezer remarked that the one in his bare head was illegitimate, a mamzer. Rabbi Jehoschua said that he was conceived during menstruation, ben niddah. Rabbi Akibah, however, said that he was both. Whereupon the others asked Rabbi Akibah why he dared to contradict his colleagues. He answered that he could prove what he said. He went therefore to the boy's mother (Mary) whom he saw sitting in the market place selling vegetables and said to her: "My daughter, if you will answer truthfully what I am going to ask you, I promise that you will be saved in the next life." She demanded that he would swear to keep his promise, and Rabbi Akibah did so - but with his lips only, for in his heart he invalidated his oath. Then he said: "Tell me, what kind of son is this of yours"? To which she replied: "The day I was married I was having menstruation, and because of this my husband left me. But an evil spirit came and slept with me and from this intercourse my son was born to me." Thus it was proved that this young man was not only illegitimate but also conceived during the menstruation of his mother. And when his questioners heard this they declared: "Great indeed was Rabbi Akibah when he corrected his Elders"! And they exclaimed: "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel who revealed his secret to Rabbi Akibah the son of Joseph"!²¹⁵

To help stem the flow of Magians to Christianity Magian polemicists wrote passages aimed not so much at attacking the virginal nature of St Mary, but lampooning why the Creator chose a Jewess to carry the Messiah, which they found extremely odd and unexpected; *'And there are some even who say that the Messiah is the sacred being himself.*



Fig 14. Shrine dedicated to the Virgin Mary

THE VIRGIN MARY WAS VENERATED FOR BRINGING THE MEANS OF RESURRECTION INTO THE WORLD

WITHOUT A PURE VESSEL THE INCARNATION COULD NOT HAVE TAKEN PLACE

RABBINICAL AUTHORITIES PROFESSED JESUS' BIRTH WAS ANYTHING BUT DIVINE

THE PAGAN MAGI WERE NOT HAPPY ABOUT THE CHRISTIAN TEACHINGS EITHER

Now this is very strange, when the mighty sacred being, the maintainer and cherisher of the two existences (ie; the material and the spiritual), became of human nature, and went into the womb of a woman who was a Jew. ... into a polluted and straightened place'.²¹⁶

THE HOLY SPIRIT

Whereas the Church has, from its earliest beginnings, had the greatest imaginable veneration of the Holy virgin.

TRADITIONAL JEWISH
EPITHETS FOR YAWEH
ARE NOT FOUND IN THE
NEW TESTAMENT

Jews, Christians and Magi believed that the Holy Spirit issued from God the creator. For Zoroastrians *Spenta Mainyu* (the Holy Spirit) was the spirit of truth and prophecy, the giver and preserver of life, goodness and creation, also called 'Holy Wind'. Equally astonishing, the words *Jehovah* and *even Adonai* are conspicuous by their absence in the *New Testament*, replaced by the Aramaic word 'Father', *Abba*.²¹⁷ Certainly Jesus never uses *adonai*, or any other readily identifiable Jewish epithet for that matter. Perhaps the word *Jehovah* was omitted to make Christianity more ecumenical, more palatable to Zoroastrians and Zurvanites. But by the same token *Jehovah* and *Abba* may not have been one and the same deity.

THIS IS A VERY
IMPORTANT POINT

Some people presently advocate that Jews did not know how to write Hebrew characters around the time of Christ, and use this to explain the absence of word *Yaweh* from the *New Testament*. Their stance is at best ill-informed, misguided, or deliberately and absolutely false. One only has to look at the many *Qumran* scrolls to see Hebrew in use during the time frame of the divine manifestation. In those texts we discover a working mixture of Aramaic, Hebrew, Greek, Nabatean amid the Essene commune. In *Qumran scroll 1QS* the eternal penalty of excommunication is appointed for those who dare utter or pronounce the tetragrammaton as it is written in the text (YHVH), during a reading or worship, for any reason whatsoever.²¹⁸ This prohibition did not cause Essene scribes to refrain from committing the divine name to writing, only that it might not be freely spoken except by the High Priest. By and large the Essene community recorded the tetragrammaton in their scriptures, although in a couple of cases, the Aramaic term *El* is substituted, but transliterated in archaic Hebrew characters.²¹⁹ The fact that the Hebrew names '*Jehovah*', '*El*', *adonai* or '*Yaweh*' do not appear in the Greek *New Testament* is very significant. The 'oversight' was no doubt a deliberate omission on the part of the 'holy-spirit-inspired authors of scripture', paving the way for the use of Indo-European terms when describing or addressing the Heavenly Father.

SOME GROUPS OF EARLY
CHRISTIANS DID USE THE
TETRAGRAMMATON

The *Talmud* provides unmistakable clues that an unknown number of Christians used the Tetragrammaton, or other Jewish substitute words, in their versions of the *New Testament*.²²⁰ These, I believe, were Nazarene, Judaeo-Christian versions of the *New Testament* (ie; books emerging from the mission to Jews of the Circumcision, rather than the apostolic mission to the Gentiles).

RABBIS HELD THAT THE
GOSPELS WERE PACKED
WITH FALSEHOOD AND
IMPIETIES

The Talmud calls the books of the Christian Minim - heretical books - Siphre Debeth Abidan - "Books of the House of Perdition". The Talmud in particular speaks of the books of the Gospels. Thus in Schabbath (116a) Toseph: "Rabbi Meir calls heretical books Aaven Gilaion (literally 'volumes of iniquity') because they call them Gospels."²²⁰

And Rabbi Jochanan calls these books Aavon Gilaion, 'evil books'. The Schulchan Arukh, Crakow edition, gives this name as Aven Niktabh al Haggilaion - iniquity written in a book.²²⁰

Buxtorf says: "In the Arukh there is a note Scheker Niktabh al Gilaion, which means, a lie written in a book."²²⁰

All the Talmudists agree Christian writings should be destroyed. They differ only as to what should be done with the names of God contained in them. In Schabbath (116a) it says:

THE TALMUD ADVISES
JEWS TO BURN THE
CHRISTIAN BOOKS

"The Glossaries of our own books and the books of the heretics are not to be saved from the flames, if they should catch fire on the Sabbath day. Rabbi Jose, however, says: 'On festival days the divine names should be torn out of the books of the Christians and hidden away; what remains must be given to the flames.' But Rabbi Tarphon says: 'In order that I may be remembered by my children, if those books should ever fall into my hands I would burn them together with the divine names contained therein. For if one is chased by an assassin, or by a serpent, it would be better to take refuge in a pagan temple than in one of theirs; because the Christians knowingly resist the truth, whereas the pagans do so unknowingly."²²⁰

In Magian doctrine roosters were close friends of the sun, serving to ward off evil, as well as signal its impending arrival (especially if it crowed after nightfall). The Greeks possibly held similar a view since *alektor* ('a cock') is derived from *aleko* ('to ward off').²²¹ In the *New Testament*, Jesus foretells Peters denial of him. This act of

apostasy occurred as a rooster crowed during the night, perhaps illustrating that the cock was alarmed at the demon of apostasy's near proximity to the apostle.

In both Judaism and Zoroastrianism, the supreme God, the one-God, lord of the cosmos, was seen as having the appearance of fire - such were the visions of both Moses (prince of Egypt) and Zoroaster. In connection with this there were a handful of apocryphal sayings associated with Christ, recorded by early Christian writers for posterity. One saying noted by the eminent Alexandrian Christian scholar Origen, and by Didymus also, is particularly noteworthy; *'He who is near Me is near the fire; he who is far from Me is far from the Kingdom'*.²²² This is clearly an allusion to Christ's followers having to be near the holy fire of God. This might be meant in a purely spiritual sense, but, if this saying (which is supposedly from Christ's own mouth) is correct, and a reference to actual fire, it might also mean that Christ saw in flame a manifestation of the Father, just as Moses did. All early Christian churches were illuminated not by fire altars, but by lamps of holy oil. The flame itself represented the real presence of Christ inside the parish building. The use of lamps is a point of difference between Christian and Magian temples, for the Magian *vahram* fires were holy blazes with a millennial pedigree. Yet apparently, in some regions fire may have had an analogous meaning and usage in Christian communities.

At least one Irish monastery provides evidence suggesting that Magian-style fire temples were being maintained by Christians. In Sligo Bay, on the island of Innismurray, are situated a series of dilapidated ancient Church buildings.²²³ Nestled amongst the ruins of this monastic settlement was the 'Church of Fire',²²³ the house or shelter of an eternal flame which continued burning there until it was desecrated by a Scotsman.²²³ According to myth, every home hearth in the region obtained their hearth fire from it (another Magian custom), and as a result the effects of the desecration were devastating.²²³ With the holy fire killed for eternity, unable to be re-lit, the offender was burned to death, and the altar stone hacked up and used locally for building materials.²²³ Fire chapels of this kind were none too 'Catholic', and if the Scot hadn't desecrated the flame, I guess someone loyal to the medieval Roman reformists would have eventually done so.

According to Gerald of Wales a perpetual fire existed at St Brigid's enclosure in Co Kildare, Ireland.²²⁴ St Brigid's enclosure (which consisted of pastures and a fire altar surrounded by a hedge) was strictly for the use of nuns and womenfolk. *'Only women are allowed to blow the fire, and then not with the breath of their mouths, but only with bellows or winnowing forks'*.²²⁵ Stock were free to eat the miraculously inexhaustible grasses inside the enclosure, but goats pastured there remained forever barren owing to Brigid's curse on their kind.²²⁵ All men avoided the saint's holy site lest they suffer calamity.

'An archer... crossed over the hedge and blew upon Brigid's fire. He jumped back immediately, and went mad'.²²⁶

The trespasser boasted of this misdeed to all and sundry, with unhinged demeanour. From the onset of his madness he made it his ambition to blow on every hearth he encountered (a demonic and capital offense in Magian lore), but met an unhappy end.²²⁶ In a further incident, another man unsuccessfully tried to vault the perimeter hedge, but suffered permanent deformity to the limb which violated the boundary.²²⁶ On St Brigid's night, the eve that she spiritually visited people's houses in Ireland, villagers placed gifts for her outside the home, including swastika-style crosses, butter, bread loafs and cakes.²²⁷ How difficult it must have been to differentiate between the sight of St Brigid's enclosure and the ubiquitous heathen enclosures of Slavia. Folk beliefs surrounding her seem rather pagan too.

Yngvar's Saga contains a number of instances where they, as Christians, were performing what outwardly appear to be pagan rites. Consecrated fire with miraculous power is repeatedly mentioned throughout, but it was Christian fire.²²⁸ The flame was generated using a flint and steel blessed by a Norse bishop named Rodgeir (Roger?).²²⁸ The bishop in question also threw consecrated die a total of three times in order to gather what course of action God wished them to take.²²⁸ Judging by the number of ecclesiastical condemnations of dice sortilege reformist popes were none too happy about these divining customs. Having said that the old testament is rife with prophetic divining and dream interpretation.

*'HE WHO IS NEAR ME IS
NEAR THE FIRE; HE WHO IS
FAR FROM ME IS FAR FROM
THE KINGDOM'.*

THE CHURCH OF FIRE

ST BRIGID'S FIRE ALTAR

TABOO TO MALES

CONSECRATED
CHRISTIAN FIRE

A NORSE BISHOP
DIVINES WITH DICE

And then there were the candles and lamps, an indispensable trapping within any of the early church buildings. Not only were they present on the altar during the mass, but the faithful lit candles in remembrance of their dearly departed, and to seek to have their petitions heard in heaven. The Magi also used candles in their ceremonies.

BYZANTINE CLERICS
CONDEMNED FIRE-
WORSHIP AS STUPID, AND
UNCHRISTIAN

Despite this, Magian-style fire-worship was not part of apostolic Catholic tradition, at least not in centres of power like Constantinople. Gregory of Tours recalled that around 572 AD, the Magian King Chosroes I sent an embassy (most likely of Zoroastrian fire-priests) to the Byzantine emperor, seeking assurances they would honour their peace treaty, and not intervene in Chosroes' war with the Persarmenians (Caucasians of mixed Persian and Armenian stock, probably Christian in their devotions).²²⁹ As it happens, Armenian envoys arrived just prior to the Persian delegates, and were present as the Persians were ushered into the emperor's presence.²²⁹ The Byzantines agreed to keep their word, but the Persian emissaries would not accept the truth of this unless they worshiped fire after the manner of Chosroes.²²⁹ A bishop present amid the congregation of politikers interjected saying, '*What is there divine about fire, that it should be worshiped?*'²²⁹ adding further that it was simply the product of combusting wood. '*The envoys were furious when they heard the bishop continue in this strain. They abused him roundly and hit him with their sticks (priestly wizard staffs).*'²²⁹ At the mere sight of their bloodied bishop the Christians fell upon the Zoroastrians, killing them outright.²²⁹

The saints

CHRISTIAN SAINTS

The first Christians gathered the remains of their slain brothers and sisters and thereafter held Church services over the resting place of their earthly remains. They became 'beacons of light' for those left in the world, separated by death and yet one in faith and truth; sharers of a common inheritance, fellow warriors against evil in its many forms.

HOLY SOULS

Although the relics of the saints and martyrs had been venerated since the earliest period of Christianity's tribulations, it was not until the year 325 AD, during the first ever synod of bishop's (Nicaea I), that they made a formal declaration on saints. It stated the 'Communion of Saints' was a fundamental and indispensable truth of the Church. Whenever a person died in a state of special grace, they were said to be lifted up towards heaven and there resided for ever more. The martyrs, we are assured, were in the very presence of God having purchased eternal life for themselves by their deaths and many other sacrifices in the service of goodness. Many of them, especially the most holy of saints, kept a watchful eye over what was taking place here on earth, particularly amongst friends and loved ones. Christian custom and worship emphasized the annual commemoration of the deaths of the saints, martyrs and all the faithful, reassuring believers of the continuing existence of these blessed souls. When people prayed to them for intercession they were asking them to jointly petition the Lord for aid, believing that God was especially likely to listen to one of such envious piety. In this way certain saints were credited with having entreated God to impart many incredible miracles.

In the eyes of the early Church, all holy souls would be raised to a perfect state as mentioned in the *New Testament*, made immortal by the transformation of their corrupted and blemished mortal bodies into a new heavenly body, like the blossoming of a flower. Even more important were those souls which, 'through the grace of God', had shown themselves to be ultra-sanctified through the performance of miracles and the sheer goodness of their works. These souls were *heroically transformed*, more glorious than they had been glorious in this life. These were saints, spiritual warriors *on the side of goodness* who could be respectfully *venerated* by the faithful to enlist their aid. Christian saints can be favorably compared with Magian saints of the sort mentioned in *Farvardin Yast* and *Dadistan i Dinik*, and elaborately described in Part I.

MANY MAGIAN SAINTS
WERE WARRIORS

These Magian holy warriors, '*the glorious, eternally famous, good-doers*', and angels resided in heaven after death and continually '*battle and contend with the Fiend*' and his subordinate legions who brought woe into the lives of the faithful. Islam also has remaining vestiges of the cult of the saints, something which, try as they may, they have never been able to wipe out.

CHRISTIAN AND PAGAN
SAINTS WERE OFTEN
CONFUSED

There is evidence that, for much of the Church's history, there has been a degree of confusion concerning the saints. This is because like the Christians, the Magi also had saints, and called them *fravashis*, or pre-existing souls. In brief they were awesome spiritual combatants whose angelic souls were made in heaven and later planted on earth through childbirth, to assist the human race. They interceded on behalf of the living, and during the last days,

would wield their spears against the legions of that penultimate fiend Ahriman, as his rebellious army of God-killing miscreants stormed heaven. In fact, throughout various regions of Europe, words used to describe the Christian saints *have an Iranian rather than Greek or Latin etymology.*²²⁰

Without more good men and women such as these (the white *fravashis*), the battlements of the heavenly city would be undermanned and laid waste by the expected swarm of unrelenting black *fravashis*, demons of exceptional malice, single-minded in their desire to raze heaven. So the Magi exhorted humanity to aspire to natural holiness and sanctity, hoping to swell the ranks patrolling the vulnerable walls of the heavenly city.

The Church has always perceived itself as having a role in speaking out against things going on in society running contrary to the magisterium. Then (as now) abortion, the breakdown of families, promiscuity and contraception were topics of dissension, as was the need for people to support their kings and queens. The Church's fixation with the question of saints, angelology and demonology during the Middle Ages (which seems peculiar to that period) means there were other views current out on the streets, at variance with the opinions of the Church's reformist apparatus. The issue could only be properly tackled once the Church had formally made public their official stance on these beings. So who were they?

In the 9th Century AD, the Emperor Charlemagne, who took his role as convertor of Western Europe's pagans very seriously, made it an offense for his subjects to summon up angels lacking biblical names. Firstly this is an admission that pre-Christian Europeans were summoning angels, but what kinds? Considering the varieties of paganism then present in Eastern Europe, and many parts of Germany and Saxony no doubt, these angels may have been pagan gnostic Archons, or Magian angelic genii (*yazatas*) and pagan saints (*fravashis*). The fact that these 'bad angels' were described as early as the 7th Century AD as mounted on white horses and armed with spears means they closely resembled the *fravashi* saints of the Magi, as described in the *Book of Bundahishn* and the *New Testament*. Take the riders shown on a panel from Russia's 12th Century AD Mikhailev cathedral (fig 15),²²¹ they are not St George, but (pagan) serpent-killing holy warriors crowned by halos. An 8th Century AD Saxon legend allows us to guess that (in Russia and Germanic countries) this imagery was originally pagan, but it had made a rather nifty

THE PERSIAN WORD FOR A SAINT BECOMES THE CHRISTIAN TERM FOR A SAINT THROUGHOUT EASTERN EUROPE

SAINTS, ANGELS AND DEMONS WERE ITEMS OF THEOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE DURING THE MIDDLE AGES

CHARLEMAGNE BANNED THE VENERATION OF CERTAIN SAINTS AND ANGELS



Fig 15

religious transition, reappearing as Christian saints. These spiritual cavalrymen now served the Church.

A sizeable band of heathen Saxons tried to set ablaze a Christian church, but were thwarted in their attempts by a pair of horsemen on white steeds who came to its defence. The pagan Saxon raiders became afraid of the riders, believing them to be bursting with supernatural power, and being unable to start the fire, no matter how hard they tried, were forced to decamp from the scene.²²² It is highly probable the Saxons so feared these horsemen because they were viewed as white *fravashis*, heathen saints intervening against their attempts to destroy the parish. In this case it was the loose and free intermingling of Christian and Magian lore at a village level that allowed for situations where a pagan white *fravashi* earnestly fought to defend a Catholic Church that did not formally endorse the ways of the Magi, or the Christianised Magians who were themselves believers in Christ, the Good Sun. In that same century *the practice of making sacrifices to the saints was formally banned by the Church*²²³ in Western Europe, most likely showing that many pagans had difficulty distinguishing between the divine heathen saints (*fravashis*) and Christian saints. Even more than that, it shows either the emergence of new practices among Christian communities at that time, which the Church was compelled to comment on, or that the Church had finally drawn a line against observances

SACRIFICING TO THE SAINTS WAS PROHIBITED

SIXTH CENTURY GAULISH
SAINTS WERE ALLEGED TO
BE IN LEAGUE WITH THE
ANTICHRIST

which had been there from ages past.

We hear tell of the pagan-Christian saints even in the 6th Century AD; demonised by the new order.²³⁴ From Bourges hailed a man supposedly possessed and driven mad by a swarm of flies. The alleged demoniac visited many regions of Gaul before 590 AD, until finally coming to Arles where his holy mission gained impetus. *There he dressed himself up in animal skins (as the Magi once did) and spent his time in prayer as if he were a religious ... the Devil gave him the power of prophesying the future.*²³⁴ Moving onto Javols with his sister (named Mary) in tow, he so accurately prophesied, and performed so many astounding healing miracles, that everybody, including not a few priests were mesmerised and flocked to him. His devotees amounted to some 3,000 in number.²³⁴ Having witnessed his amazing feats the masses lavished him with expensive gifts and precious coins, whereafter he beckoned them to worship him.²³⁴ They did so willingly. Next he set off with his worshippers to attack the Catholic bishop of Le Puy. Sensing imminent danger the bishop devised a ruse whereby one of his retinue would feign homage toward the 'Bogus Christ of Bourges', then assassinate him at the most opportune moment.²³⁴ This he accomplished 'So fell and died this Christ, more worthy to be called an Antichrist'.²³⁴ Despite the scattering of his followers, and the torture of Mary, many long after 'continued to profess that he was Christ and that Mary had a share in his divinity'.²³⁴ But things did not die down. During the same period the Catholic cleric Gregory confesses that;

GREGORY SAW MANY OF
THESE LIVING SAINTS IN
GAUL

*'Quite a number of men now came forward in various parts of Gaul and by their trickery gathered round themselves foolish women who in their frenzy put it about that they were saints. These men acquired great influence over the common people. I saw quite a few of them myself.'*²³⁵

Quasi-pagan imagery²³⁶ loomed heavily in the minds of medieval Frankish churchmen and monarchs who financed the building of the great cathedrals. The enormous stained glass window of Paris' St Chappelle cathedral (commissioned by Charles VIII in the late 1400's) has Christ at the centre of a rose, surrounded by a variety of other Christian images forming each of the petals. Numerous petals portrayed warriors and kings mounted on white horses. Might these be derived from Magian imagery of Christ and his many warrior saints seated for battle atop their white mounts? Moreover, if we are to analyse medieval Church architecture and its propensity for renditions of Christ in connection with the rose, one could conclude that in those days Christ and the rose were inseparable. This calls to mind a pagan belief that each God had its own flower. Even the trefoil (which the Magi held especially holy), in the form of three leaved clovers, or *fleur-de-lys*, commonly constituted one of the most basic elements of Church architecture during the Middle Ages. As you will soon see, exotic embellishments adorn a number of medieval churches, things undeniably Mesopotamian and Persian in nature, not to mention gargoyles and signs of the zodiac.

Medieval hagiographies often contained stereotyped accounts of miracles which, we might presume, displayed not only the power of the Christian God, but conveyed a simple message to the listener, 'for the benefit of God', and hence fortified the reformist Church. Some of these hagiographies carry features which span the gap between Magianism and Christianity.²³⁷

Similarities between Magian and Christian sacraments and observances

Crossing the veil of death - the Resurrection

TEACHINGS ON THE
RESURRECTION

Death is the ultimate barrier that all creation must cross, a one-way exit from the world of the living. Zoroastrian teachings profess that souls spend three days in the underworld immediately after the body's passing. The same may be true for Christians. For three days Christ went down into hell to preach to souls that had awaited him in great expectation, to reveal himself to those who died before his arrival gained their emancipation from death.

One aspect of Orthodox Magian thought was utterly unacceptable to Christian authorities, namely that even evil doers will be saved as a result of the Resurrection, but only after suffering for their crimes in hell, and atoning their misdeeds in burning liquid metal (the so-called ‘supreme ablution in the melted metal’).²³⁸ Christianity teaches that those found guilty of wickedness shall suffer eternal damnation, others saved after spending a while in perdition.

This initial phase of post-mortem existence can be seen as a form of purgatory, where our ghosts ponder over how we conducted ourself in the earthly existence. The concept of a purgatorial ordeal in the afterlife belongs not only to the Magi, but to Catholicism, and unofficially to some parts of Orthodox Christianity, which derive the teaching of the purification of the soul by molten metal from both inherited tradition and the Bible itself. For the holy, the burning away of venial (less serious) sins would be a pleasant experience, only insofar as the evaporation of each lesser misdeed made one that bit closer to reunification with God. Likewise Russian Christians earnestly believed they would walk a river of molten metal after passing from this world. Purgatory was a sort of car wash for the soul.

This is what the Magi had to say on purgatory. ‘About mankind being bodily prepared also for the future existence by fire and melted ore; in the worldly existence the acquitted and incriminated, as regards the law, have become thereby manifest, and, in the future existence, the torment of the wicked and the gratification of the righteous’.²³⁹

The souls of those whose good and bad thoughts, words and deeds weighed equal in the scales of the Archangel Rashnu remained stuck in the ether, the void separating earthly existence, heaven and hell. There are obvious parallels between the Magian precinct of *Hamistakan* (the realm of the ever-stationary) and the Roman Catholic concept of Limbo. In Christian tradition Limbo was an intermediate form of spiritual existence in the next life, the destination of those who were good at heart, yet who were not Christians. Limbo is, likewise, a professed dogma of the Roman Church.

Further East, in Christian Byzantium and post-conversion Kievan Rus’, faithful souls made their way toward God by crossing over into various stations in the heavens. Sequentially they bargained their way through check points of demonic wardens who weighed the soul at each location.²⁴⁰ This corresponds to a Zoroastrian view that one had to ascend a series of star stations during a soul’s journey across the Kinvat star bridge, to merge with the white light of the cosmos.

According to the Magi, the Assembly of Sadvastaran was the premier cosmological event, with *Sraosha* presiding. For it was here that *Sraosha* the world messiah was supposed to gather all creation, complete and resurrected before him. He was the impartor of righteousness, ‘the two legs of creation’,²⁴¹ the means by which all creation was to be renewed and cleansed from the pollution and destruction of the anti-God.

Magians learned about *Sraosha*’s resurrection, being instructed that ‘the preparation and production of the resurrection are an achievement connected with miracle, a sublimity and, afterwards, also a wondrous appearance unto the creatures who are uninformed’.²⁴²

In both Christian and Magian tradition it was at just such an assembly that all people were sorted into two flocks and weighed. In both cases the faithful would share a meal with their saviour.

‘When the son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.

*Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels’.*²⁴³

At this final assembly in the next world, at *Sraosha*’s second coming, the Saviour would be seated in the presence of a myriad virgins. The same can be said of Jesus in *Revelations*.

The weighing of souls, and their partitioning into groups, are integral features of Judgement Day in Islamic thought also, ideas already well known throughout Arabia, probably since Achaemenid times. The rationale for the

PURGATORY IN MOLTEN METAL

THE SOUL IS PURIFIED LIKE ORE

ALL SOULS WOULD BE WEIGHED

THE ASSEMBLY CONVENED ON JUDGEMENT DAY

NON-BELIEVERS WILL BE SHOCKED BEYOND BELIEF WHEN THEY SEE HIM

VIRGINS SURROUND THE MESSIAH

partitioning of souls in the Islamic scheme is found in the *Imrans*, where it states;

JUDGEMENT DAY
ACCORDING TO ISLAM

"God was not to leave the faithful in their present plight, but only to separate the evil from the good. Nor was God to reveal to you what is hidden".²⁴⁴ "Those whose scales are heavy shall triumph, but those whose scales are light shall forfeit their souls and abide in Hell forever".²⁴⁵ "you shall be divided into three multitudes: those on the right (blessed shall be those on the right), those on the left (damned shall be those on the left); and those to the fore (foremost shall be those). Such are they that shall be brought near to their Lord in the gardens of delight; a whole multitude from the men of old, but only a few from the latter generations."²⁶⁴

A HOLY MEAL IS EATEN
ON JUDGEMENT DAY

Integral with the notion of *Sraosha* was a holy meal, *Hush*, the white *Haoma* of immortality, through which he causes the resurrection. For this reason the product of *Sraosha's* ritual was known as *'the Immortaliser'*. Having partaken of it, *'the Immortaliser'* brought those who had crossed over into the kingdom of death, into eternal life. What is spoken of in their scriptures is manna, by another word, a holy substance through which created existence was redeemed. In a somewhat similar manner Jesus dispensed a holy meal to his disciples at the Last Supper, the manna which was his body, the wine that was his blood, and by consuming it one earned the right to enter the kingdom of heaven. But Jesus warned:

'Verily, Verily, I say unto you ... I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh; which I will give for the life of the world. ... Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life: and I will raise him up at the last day.'²⁴⁷

JESUS BECOMES THE
SACRED MEAL DURING
THE RITUAL
CONSECRATION OF BREAD
AND WINE

Here one's resurrection appears conditional upon receiving the flesh and blood of Christ in the form of bread and wine, mystically transformed into the Lord. Noteworthy also is Christ's comment that he gave this bread not just for people, but for *'the life of the world'*. *Sraosha's* resurrection was one that redeemed not only the souls of the faithful, but the created world, methodically killed off by Ahriman and his many demons. Through him, God would reclaim a murdered earth.²⁴⁸ The *Qur'an* likewise details the resurrection of created existence, not just mankind; *"Know that God restores the earth to life after its death"*.²⁴⁹

At the risk of sounding like a botanist or naturalist Christ tells his followers not to worry about their earthly needs. He proceeds to explain how the Father lovingly cares for birds and plants also, and that god's children are somewhat higher in the overall scheme of things ...

THE HEAVENLY FATHER
CARES FOR NATURE

"Consider the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have storehouse nor barn; and God feedeth them: How much more are ye better than the fowls? ... Consider the lilies how they grow; they toil not, they spin not; and yet I say unto you, that (King) Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these (plants)".

SPECIAL SACRAMENTAL
LOAVES ARE BLESSED
DURING THREE DAYS OF
FUNERAL CEREMONIALS

Back in this world the recently departed soul was lent assistance through the performance of certain rituals. The celebration of the Eucharist at a given Christian funeral mass might have a parallel in the *Satuih*, the Zoroastrian three-day ceremony, whereby one unleavened dron loaf was consecrated for each day that the soul spends in the land of the dead. The performance of this consecration would ensure the Saviour's protection against vindictive demons during that time of worst ordeal, the horrific three-day punishment.

Baptism and sacred ablutions

Similarities between pagan and Christian penitential ablutions have long been commented upon by Protestants, though in truth their usages did differ in some respects. The earliest Christians performed baptisms using river and holy water, though these were not necessarily similar to Magian exorcisms, whose use of pagan holy water was very elaborate indeed.

The Roman Catholic custom of pouring consecrated water across the baby's forehead is ever so remotely paralleled in the Zoroastrian head baptism at birth. In both cases it was believed to be the best form of baptism.

Church teaching stressed that baptism was an essential rite, allowing one to proceed into the highest heaven after death. At the moment of baptism the baptisee entered into union or fellowship with God, their first step in life's journey towards heaven. All that was left was to remain in that union. Adults undergoing conversion (catechumens) and children who had reached the age of reason verbally confirmed their faith at this time. Each person joining the Church received a spiritual parent or friend, to aid them materially and spiritually wherever possible in times of misfortune. This special person usually took part in the ceremony, holding the neophyte's baptismal candle. *All persons present verbally reaffirmed their baptismal vows to renounce Satan at every available opportunity.*

In Eastern Christendom people were sacramentally joined to the Church at birth through the reception of three rites in one. Baptism (the washing away of sins by means of a triple, full-immersion in water), was followed by the consecration and sealing of the soul with the oil of Chrism (blessed by a bishop), otherwise known as confirmation. This was the 'sacramental fire', the anointing of the Holy Spirit. All the senses and main body parts were crossed with the oil. Lastly, the newborn child, or neophyte was dressed in a white garment of purity and received the Eucharistic bread for the first time.

During the Middle Ages a Roman baptismal celebration differed from the Eastern rites since baptism, communion and confirmation were held separately as three distinct sacraments. Baptism was by full immersion or, more commonly, by pouring blessed water upon the forehead.

Despite conceptual similarities between Christian and Magian ablution rituals, there were significant points of difference. For example, no Christian priest would recommend mixing bull's urine with holy water, or command women to drink neat bull's urine at the time of menstruation.

Striving to highlight differences between Christian and pagan sacramental washings, the Church condemned otherwise heathen water rituals as they encountered them around the countryside.

'... all who shall adore a stone, spring or other creature of God, incur the charge of idolatry, it has come to our ears, we grieve to say, from the report of many credible witnesses ... that many of our subjects are in large numbers visiting a certain well and stone ... where with genuflections and offerings they, without the authority of the Church, wrongfully worship the said stone and well, whereby committing idolatry ... they take away with them the mud of the same and treat and keep it as a relic to the grave peril of their souls'.²⁵⁰

Such was the dressing down meted out to parishioners by the Bishop of Hereford in the year 1404 AD. These situations are difficult to assess, for the crux of the issue is one's intentions and interior disposition. Is worship or veneration being offered to the place or object of cult significance? These two motivations can easily be confused by onlookers. There are sufficient examples where both Jews and pagans congregated at holy springs. Jesus no less, was baptised in the water of the river Jordan. By applying Christian fundamentalist thought to the matter, one could claim that John the Baptist's baptismal practice of using river water was pagan, considering that pagans also washed in river water to gain spiritual purity. As it stands there was a holy pool outside Jerusalem's sheep gate called *Bethzatha*. It was not situated among the Jewish ritual baths found inside the city, probably reserved from the use of pagans and incurable outcasts. Those who bathed there could be healed by the water, and it was here that Christ performed stupendous healings. Subsequent archaeological examination of the site, covered by several porched areas in antiquity, reveals it to be a healing temple dedicated to Asclepius, a deified Egyptian priest presiding, as he did in life, over medical cures. Whether in Europe or Asia, pagans were also healed by holy springs and pools. As if frequenting an Egyptian temple isn't intriguing enough, Jesus cured a congenitally blind man by mixing his spit with dirt and rubbing it into the patient's eyes. The very same cure was once performed by the pharaohs. Does that make the Christian or Jewish waters of healing pagan in nature?

In Solomon's temple there was a bronze water tank mounted on a dozen bulls. Then there were ten bronze carts (with chariot-style wheels), incense burners, bowls, panels bearing images of lions, bulls, sphinxine winged creatures and spirals. Similar temple descriptions are contained in the ancient Hindu texts, the *Agni Purana*. The day Solomon's temple was consecrated to the God of Israel some 120,000 sheep were sacrificed, not to mention more

MAGIANS AND
CHRISTIANS WERE
BAPTISED

THE LINE BETWEEN
PAGAN AND CHRISTIAN
CEREMONIAL
ABLUTIONS WAS FAIRLY
BLURRED

JESUS PERFORMED SOME
MIRACLES IN A
HEATHEN TEMPLE

SOLOMON'S TEMPLE
CONTAINED THREE-
DIMENSIONAL RELIGIOUS
ART

than 20,000 head of cattle. These sort of figures would do justice to any of the sacrificial passages mentioned in the Magian texts, the ground awash with blood. All the while the smoke of the fat and grain offerings billowed from the fires. But does this make the Jewish temple pagan? Succinctly, the Jews were little different from the surrounding Egyptians, Magians, Babylonians and Northern pagans in certain modes of religious expression, or when it came to the overall appearance of their temple interiors. Archaeologically, the sorts of artifacts described in the first *Book of Kings* ((OT) *1 Kings*) can be found in a number of locations, spread from the Near East, through to Bronze Age Northern Europe. Some of these effigies clearly fall into the category of graven or at least cast images, and yet, when viewed in the light of Mosaic law they were not seen as the product of idolatry in their day. If one had unleashed Reformation-period Protestant fundamentalist Christians or medieval iconoclasts inside Solomon's temple they would have torn it apart, in probably the same way they destroyed images of St Mary, Jesus and many other saints. The point is this; there is a very real difference between worshipping a carved object, and adorning a place of worship with sacred images, or venerating and celebrating the sanctity residing behind such images.

SOME PROTESTANTS WERE
ICONOCLASTS

Even so there is every reason to accept that pagan water-worship had lived on into the Christian era. Even on the eve of the 21st Century, 'Aryan' holy wells, springs, tanks and rivers are still a part of quotidian life on the Indian Sub-continent. Liberation from physical and mental infirmities can be achieved by visiting these holy wells, observing the ancient lore attached to the place, and tossing a coin or two in.²⁵⁰ People expect to be healed.^{250a}

ARYAN HOLY WELLS

Due to the arid nature of Iran and India, it is perfectly understandable that they had a greater than usual respect for water and the life it is capable of nurturing in the parched earth. But water-worship in Britain and Ireland is a wholly different proposition. The lands there are well and truly inundated with rainwater year round, to saturation point. The reverence for water once displayed by the ancient Celts and Britons can only be attributable to its spiritual properties, and certainly not because of an acute shortage of running water. Archaeologically it can be proven that the pagan Celts made frequent offerings at these wells; weapons, armour, money, torques, arm-rings.²⁵¹ Wells were able to impart prophetic knowledge, remedies for ailments and injuries, and bestow gifts of fertility.²⁵² Ill stock could be healed with holy water too; one only had to call on the proper saint.²⁵⁴ At Abergele though, a horse had to be slain if one wanted to ensure the utmost efficacy of the water's healing powers.²⁵³ Here a pagan rite is additionally performed, a sacrifice conceptually similar to the Hindu *Asvamedha*.

WATER IS TREATED WITH
UTMOST REVERENCE IN
ARID INDIA AND IRAN

DRINKING WELL WATER
FROM THE SKULL OF ST
TEILO

Relics were sometimes vital to unlocking the powers of the holy wells. One Irish relic illustrates this. The most famous relic of St Teilo, a 6th Century AD bishop at Llandaff, was his skull.²⁵⁴ It was able to cure a wide range of malaises if water from St Teilo's well was imbibed from his skull.²⁵⁴ The full rite would only ever be efficacious if it was officiated by a member of the Melchior family, who since time immemorial had acted as custodians for the relic.²⁵⁴ If they did not dip his skull into the water, bring it up and give it to the sufferer, no results could be expected.²⁵⁴ The Melchior family bloodline has long since passed away, so too the well which is no longer frequented, and the skull which was sold for less than \$100.²⁵⁴ I cannot resist adding that the name Melchior was the same as that used by one of the Three Wise magus Kings. Traditionally the cult of skull libations in pagan Britain and Ireland was interrelated with the business of '*Kings, heroes and ancestors*'.²⁵⁴ By the mere act of quaffing holy well-water from the relic-like bones, one took into their body the powers of those whose head they drank from.²⁵⁵ Strictly speaking though, Wales seems to have been more deeply immersed in the practice than their neighbours to the North and West.²⁵⁵

VENIAL AND MORTAL
SINS

Confession

Like the Christians of the apostolic era, Zoroastrians also perceived two very different varieties of sin, both of which had enormous implications for the soul of a trespasser in the afterlife, and one of which could only ever be expiated by the renunciation of the sin during the Zoroastrian *patet* confession ceremony. In *Shayast la Shayast VIII*, these were termed *Hamenal* (sins that do not lead to death) and *Margargan* (sins that lead to death). And what should we find in (NT) *1 John 5: 16-17* but none other than official Biblical reference to the existence of death sins. As in the pagan world, the Church considered that death sins catalysed our separation from the spiritual God. They could only ever occur under circumstances when the sinner had chosen to undertake the act knowing full well that

in doing so, he or she had willingly chosen to side with evil over good. This kind of sin was all the more culpable because it injured the Holy Spirit of God, fracturing unity with the Creator through rebellion against him, and would one day cause the person to plummet into a foreboding hell unless they tipped the weighing scales of the judgement to the side of good by openly confessing and more importantly rejecting the nature of that sin. And therein lies the importance of the crucial utterance that was to conclude a formal confession in both the pagan and Christian world; the promise that the person would not sin again. Only then could the person right the balance of the scale which leans closer to the side of damnation. Upon passing from this world to the next, one's soul could anticipate a full and complete reward. For the Magi expected;

'heaven and the various grades of position and reward of the righteous, according to their worthiness through the practice of good works; the most downward and worst of places, hell; and the place of punishment of the wicked, according to their sin'.²⁵⁶

While 1 John 5:16 recommended that people pray to God on behalf of a brother who had committed a sin that didn't lead to death, he sternly advised people against praying to God on behalf of one who had perpetrated a death sin. This can be compared with *Shayast la Shayast VIII* which states that offering prayers to God on behalf of mortal sinners was the equivalent of devil-worship!

During their condemnation of black witches, Inquisitors demanded a formal confession of guilt. If there was no confession, there was no forgiveness, because the obstinacy and the stain and the fraction and the alienation of the transgression against God remained, thus leaving them in an already judged condition. The alienation occurred not because of God choosing to abandon man, but man's willful inclination to abandon God. *The penalty was especially grave when the violator was a teacher of the law.* In Zoroastrianism and Church rites of confession, the bonds of mortal sin (a Roman Catholic/Zoroastrian term) were wiped away after confession, *but only once the person had placed him/herself at the disposal of a priest to perform penance or even a quest.* Could it be a coincidence that in (NT) 1 John 1: 8, God's forgiveness of human sin was also linked with oral confession, a confession the Church requires be made before one of the apostles (or their earthly successors), who alone were empowered to loosen the sin?

NO CONFESSION OF
GUILT = NO
REDEMPTION

The Church has always taught that the 'Seven Deadly Sins' of Wrath, Greed, Lust, Avarice, Gluttony, Pride, and Envy were the root of all evil, and punishable in the afterlife. By no small coincidence this view is close to that of the white Magi, who saw each of these major sins not only as a shortcoming, but as archdemons;

SEVEN DEADLY SINS

'The reply of Ahura Mazda to them was thus: 'You rush out, astute in evil, to the extremity of that horrible gloom; so you are all from the demon, your race is really from Evil Thought, that is, your race is from there where Evil Thought, as well as Lust the destroyer, and also Greed the well accumulating resides, and where, moreover, Indra, the Slayer is the spirit of the religion of apostasy and further deceives the worldly existence of mankind, as to proper living and immortal progress, and first confines their thoughts''.²⁵⁷

"You are mankind, neither for Greed, nor for Envy, do you throw away the warm entrails, nor do thou throw them away warm on account of custom, now you slay for slaughtering (to provide food), so that thus it may be beneficial for you and your servant''.²⁵⁸

Magians regarded gluttony as a very great sin, and as spokesmen for a simple agricultural society this is to be expected. They taught that a person was only entitled to as much food as they had earned by the sweat of their brow in the fields. Overeating was therefore a form of theft from those who had legitimately earned the right to eat the food which they grew. Those who were fat in this world would be skinny in the next, and conversely those who refrained from gluttony, and the malnourished, became robust and strong in the next world.

Indulgences

INDULGENCES WERE A
FORM OF SPIRITUAL
PAROLE FOR THE
AFTERLIFE

Indulgences, that is, spiritual reprieves, resulted from the performance of good works and prayers. These helped right the scales of justice in one's favour on Judgement Day, by diminishing the spiritual contamination of past sins.

Whether Christian or Magian in origin, indulgences diminished the horrors of the fiery purgation. In the Roman Catholic 'Treasury of Saints' we find formal indulgences (reprieves) attached to given acts once they were performed in this world, which were supposed to lessen the amount of time spent in the purgatorial blaze by a given amount. While this could conceivably include the giving of money as alms to the poor, Christianity has never endorsed handing money over to a priest in payment for the expiation of a given sin.

SIMONY

Sin payments have never officially belonged to the Church, and yet it was this 'grave heresy' which raised its head during the Middle Ages. In the Christian world the act became known as simony, so-named after Simon Magus the Samaritan.²⁵⁹ The dramatic emergence of medieval European simony seems linked to an influx of white Magian-Christians immigrating from the East (and maybe even from the north), practicing the Zoroastrian custom of paying a magus penitential monies to alleviate suffering in the next world. These the archangel of Justice Rashnu added to the good weighing pan, thereby lessening the weight of sins on the other side of the balance of divine justice. Here a weight of money cancelled a weight of sin.

SINS WERE CLASSIFIED
ACCORDING TO THEIR
SEVERITY. SINNERS
COULD EXPIATE
SUFFERING IN THE
AFTERLIFE BY PAYING
MONEY TO THEIR
CONFESSOR

The Magi had their own price list of forgiveness. *Vendidad* prescribed that each wrongdoing be relegated to a certain class of sin, according to its severity. Atonement for each was achieved by a certain number of strokes of the scourge and whip. These blows could be mitigated by paying silver dirhems (Persian and Arabic) in lieu. The classes were as follows, and the price legalistically allotted to each indicative of the seriousness of the acts in that particular sin class. *Farman* sin - 3 dirhems; *Sroshokaranam* sin - 1.5 dirhems; *Agerept* sin - 132 dirhems; *Aivirist* sin - 132 dirhems; *Aredus* sin - 120 dirhems; *Khor* sin - 240 dirhems; *Bazai* sin - 360 dirhems; *Yat* sin - 720 dirhems; *Tanaphur* sin - 1,200 dirhems.

MORTIFICATION OF THE
FLESH

This may account for why pagan Slavs and other Europeans loved silver coinage during the Middle Ages, particularly dirhems. Silver coins were good to gain exoneration, but some might have felt dirhems were the best, simply because it was the precise denomination mentioned in later Iranian scripture. Dirhems found throughout Europe are frequently of a type struck before the advent of Islam, during Zoroastrian times. Consequently they were probably associated with exculpation in the old faith.

THE HERETICAL
BROTHERHOOD OF
FLAGELLANTS

Penitential scourgings were yet another vestige of the old spiritual obligations, to make a profound revival during the medieval Christian era. The flagellant movement, first appeared on the Italian mainland during the earliest years of the 11th Century AD, and during the 13th Century AD spread roughly simultaneously throughout the Holy Roman Empire and the Lowlands, in the form of the so-called 'Brotherhood of Flagellants'.²⁶⁰ The travelling pilgrim penitents (who wore a standard uniform of a long white skirt, perhaps even an apron tied around the waist) gathered in circular fashion around a central figure called the 'Master of the Pilgrimage', who undertook the scourging of sinners.²⁶⁰ Following the beating administered by their master, the penitents proceeded to mercilessly flog themselves with their own scourges.²⁶⁰ The secondary self-scourging was probably a form of penance which followed the primary whipping performed by the master, and which might have been imposed upon each of the atonees by this figurehead. This behaviour is reminiscent of the two forms of whipping prescribed by the Magian *Vendidad* for each given crime. Interestingly, the mere presence of a Christian priest (or a woman) inside one of these circle gatherings was believed to wipe out the spiritual merits obtained by whatever scourgings had occurred up until the time of the priest's arrival.²⁶⁰ The required quantity of floggings had to begin again from scratch, even despite the large number strokes already received until that point, or the severity of the torn, bruised and shredded state of their backs.²⁶⁰ Whenever these bands came to a new place, they drew large crowds of onlookers who hailed them as heroes, and gave them funds and alms in support of their cause.²⁶⁰ In short they were deeply loved by the people, at all levels of society. If the flagellant ringleaders were Magians or Magian-Christians, then these accounts are indicative that white Magi had immense influence over the populaces of numerous medieval countries, and that the reformist papacy (and its version of the apostolic faith) was far from being the high

and mighty apparatus of the Middle Ages (as is commonly portrayed). It was simply treading water in its battle against the Old Faith, trying desperately to keep its head above water. This may explain why the flagellants, and the miracle workers and prophets reputed to be integral members of the group, were banned by the papacy in 1349 AD as heretical. The most senior figures in the brotherhood were executed by immolation at the stake at Breslau,²⁶¹ thus hastening the sect's demise across a number of nations.

PAPAL REFORMISTS
ORDERED THAT
FLAGELLANT LEADERS
BE BURNED TO DEATH

As you will later read, outbreaks of simony in medieval Europe, were invariably indicative of a thriving Magian or Magian-Christian presence. Despite being dedicated to the concept of simony, the treatise *On Simoniacs* fails to condemn a 'small gift' of 50,000 gold solidii offered up in honour of the deceased Pope Leo IX.²⁶² The means by which the money was given was important, as also whether it was handed to an ordained clergyman in payment for the performance of a religious service, or the buying of holy office. In this instance it is stated that the 50,000 is surrendered to the departed Leo in the hope that the former pope would pray to God on the giver's behalf, to obtain divine intercession and forgiveness!²⁶² Clearly this 'small gift' was given as a payment for a spiritual gift, expiation of past sins.²⁶² It therefore seems to have been simony, but we cannot confirm this because the text does not extrapolate upon how this money was to be transferred to the sainted pope. Perhaps the coins were given to the poor, in which case such a gift would be not only acceptable, but highly commendable. Perhaps it was used to finance the building of shrines and churches, another equally praiseworthy act insofar as the Church was concerned.

Prayer sessions

Five regulated prayer watches existed in Zoroastrianism and the early Church. By the Middle Ages however, the Church timetable had become marginally more complex.

ORGANISED PRAYER
SCHEDULES

Magian daily prayer sessions (Gahs) were duly attended by magus priests who prayed before the holy fire and fed it with the sacred woods and incense, on an around-the-clock basis. As soon as one shift of Magi finished, the next group took over from them, ensuring that the holy fire was never unattended. At such gatherings Magian pagans used prayer beads for the repetition of the *Yasts* (lengthy prayer formulas), reciting them over and over as they worshiped Ahura Mazda, *Sraosha*, the *fravashis* and angels.

Gah Havan	6am-10am	Gah Rapithvin	10am-3pm
Gah Uziren	3pm-6pm	Gah Aiwisruthrima	6pm-12pm
Gah Ushahin	12pm-6am		

Comparable organisational features appear in a Christian context. Christian prayer vigils were frequented by priests, monks, nuns and parishioners. In the Latin Church the prayer watches were known by the following terms; *Prime* (6 am), *Matins* (7 am), *Tere* (9 am), *Sex* (noon), *None* (3 pm), *Vespers* (6 pm), *Compline* (9 pm), and *Nocturn* (midnight).

From the 1200's Christians used the rosary or a prayer string, only it carried the official title the '*holy rosary*', perhaps indicating that there may have been other kinds of prayer beads in use in Europe, chaplets deemed unholy by the Church authorities. Mention is made in the Bible of the need for Christians to avoid praying repetitiously like the pagans. Clearly the exact form of rambling prayers recited differed immensely between the Christians (prayers for the intercession of Christ and St Mary) and the pagans (prayers of *worship* offered to the *fravashis*).

ROSARY BEADS WERE
CHRISTIAN VARIANTS
OF THE HEATHEN
CHAPLETS

The holy rosary is a string of Catholic prayer beads so-called because the beads were likened unto roses. By means of this chaplet, prayers such as the 'Our Father' and 'Hail Mary' were offered up to Christ, asking not only for his intercession, but that of the Virgin Mary, as the person meditated on the life and sufferings of Christ. It had clear applications when parishioners were reciting the penances designated by their confessor (which they would have to count), or for gaining divine indulgences against time they would have to spend in purgatory. According to legend they are believed to have first entered use during the 1200's AD, through the efforts of St Dominic, but strangely, they were never depicted in art from that era. From a couple of paintings dating to the 1400's we know that they were made from glass beads (termed paternosters ie; Our Fathers) - five groups of 10 small beads, each separated by a large one. A cross was not suspended from the bottom of the chaplet as it is nowadays, leaving them resembling bead necklaces.²⁶³

NOBODY KNOWS HOW
OLD THE ROSARY IS

Although pronounced holy through a series of papal decrees (the earliest being 1495 AD), the first origins of the rosary (or the 'holy rosary' to be more precise) are ultimately unknown.²⁶³ It may go back for some time however, since the Orthodox churches use knotted prayer strings also. If the rosary was merely a 12th Century AD Roman Catholic invention, I think it highly unlikely Orthodox believers borrowed a Catholic custom during the age of schism if they felt that it was a borderline or unacceptable practice. Considering that Rome and Constantinople went their separate ways in 1054 AD, it seems the custom might be traceable to before that date, some 500 years before the decree of endorsement

MUSLIMS, HINDUS,
CHALDEANS AND
BUDDHISTS USED PRAYER
BEADS ALSO

Other types of chaplets can still be found in Asia and the Islamic East, where Muslims, Hindus and Buddhists continue to use prayer beads. In this part of the world Magian, Hindu, Buddhist and Chaldean chaplets were counteracted by the introduction of Islamic prayer beads. This being the case it is likely that the papacy decided to introduce its own Catholic chaplet to aid the process of converting Magian European pagans, by diverting their prayers away from the worship of the *yazatas* (which were praised using repetitious formulas), and directing the Magians towards a more Catholic understanding of the Gospel, in particular Rome's view of the Virgin Mary, and the nature of Christ's immaculate conception. It was probably very effective at achieving this aim, allowing prayerful devotees to meditate on Christ's sufferings and mysteries.

MAGI PRAYED TO GOD,
THE SAINTS, GENII AND
ANGELS USING PRAYER
BEADS

Contraception

CONTRACEPTION LED TO
CRIMES AGAINST
INNOCENT LIFE

Catholicism and Magianism can equally be seen as fertility religions. In Zoroastrianism, the white priests implored the faithful to protect good and innocent life at all costs. Contraception²⁶⁴ was a grave crime against life, and illicit sex was equally grave because of the sins it engendered and because eventually it resulted in the issue of child, which further caused the parties to consult midwives who brought their poisonous concoctions to extinguish that new life. The same theme of prohibiting contraception, magical infertility aids and abortifacient poisons appears in the Christian 90 AD document the *Didache* (which is said to have been tainted by heresy on account of its quasi-dualistic tone).²⁶⁵ The topic of illicit sex (translated by the Church fathers by the word *porneia*) was given wide coverage in those early days too. For the white Magi the willful destruction of the human seed was deemed inexpiable in this life and the next, on account of the level of 'crime against the Holy Spirit', the giver of life, and meriting an horrendous three-day punishment in molten metal.²⁶⁶

SODOMY WAS THE
ULTIMATE MISUSE OF THE
GENERATIVE ACT

Traditional Zoroastrian, Jewish and Christian teachings speak of homosexuality as an abomination that would be severely punished in the next world. Magian doctrine was very clear on this point.

'About the enmity of the Kai sodomite Akht, the heretic of the dark existence, to Zarathustra; and the causing of disturbance, by him and the wicked of similar kinds to him, among those who follow Zarathustra is extreme and the primeval hellish existence is for them'.²⁶⁷

Jews and Zoroastrians originally believed they should not wait for the hereafter to witness the destruction of the sodomites, they were to begin their divine punishment and destruction in the here and now, by killing them on the spot when they were caught in the act. The Church has always preached that homosexuality was evil, but has never espoused the need to kill them. Instead, it called upon the laity to understand their human frailty, whilst at the same time avoiding this form of sexuality.

MARRIAGE IS NOT
PECULIAR TO
CHRISTIANITY

Marriage

Marriage existed throughout the heathen world, predating the onset of Christianity. The Magi preached that,

'It is necessary for mankind to make an endeavour, so that they may espouse a wife in their youth and beget a child. And for women, in like manner, it is necessary that there should be a longing for espousing a husband.'

Because it is declared in revelation that every duty and good work a child performs becomes the father's and mother's, just like those which they have performed with their own hands'.²⁶⁸

Because Rus' society was a melange of Vedic and Iranian religiosity we can infer that marriage was an integral part of their society. For instance the Russian word for 'a wife' *zhena* probably came from the Avestan Persian *ghena* 'pertaining to women'.²⁶⁹ In modern Russia when people marry, they are said to *Igrat' scadby*, or literally 'act a drama of marriage'. Furthermore the woman is said to *Vykhodit' zamyzh* (lit. go outside for the man). These terms seem to be fossilised remnants of marriage rites once performed in heathen Russia. Vernadsky mentions that pagans married after the performance of a play which began with the search for the bride, a drama which took the various actors from their own home to that of friends and family, and then finally to that of the future wife, who would come outside to greet the husband as he arrived. Apparently riddles were another important part of marriage also.²⁷⁰

This Old Russian custom has an immediate parallel among the Parsees (modern Zoroastrians) who perform a play, that serves as a rite of passage into married life. During the act the groom begins a lengthy search for his bride, checking out the houses of those known to him, and finally ends up at the place where the bride-to-be lives. Following the acceptance of the groom by the bride they were joined together in a ceremony conducted by two Mobeds (the modern Parsi word for the Orthodox Zoroastrian white Magi). The rite itself was a binding, requiring that a couple be encircled by a length of holy chord, tied to symbolize their union. Marriage literally meant tying the knot, a very familiar phrase to westerners.

In Russia, during the Christian era, Christian priests tried to prevent *Volkhvy* (Magi) participating in wedding ceremonies, and so protected married couples from their influence. Presumably the Russian Magi wanted to celebrate marriages, but were prevented from doing so.²⁷¹

Marriages usually occurred within the same village, but may have included out-of-towners. Future couples were betrothed rather early in life, typically after the female's first period, since it was considered sinful to leave a field unsown. This provided topical discussion for relatives, because even more than being a union between two people, marriage was a joining of two bloodlines. People required parental permission to marry, and wives were selected or given the nod by the father of the house.

Wives had more legal standing than a concubine and legally entitled to own property, so husbands had to be more respectful of them.

With Aryan traditions being so patriarchal, women naturally adopted their husband's family name and status. Should their husband die prematurely, they promptly lost their current legal status, and would remain so unless they were wed to someone else. Further east in India women often chose to die on their husband's pyre, rather than suffer the degradation and humiliation of life without them. This custom is known as *suttee*. In the past it was a common practice among the Hindus, and the *Law Books of Manu* talks of the spiritual merits enjoyed by women who die on their husband's pyre. Nowadays Indian authorities still encounter the custom, and aim to stamp it out.

Suttee appears known to the Slavs, for as the *Strategikon* states "when their husband dies, many (Slavic women) look upon it as their own death and freely smother themselves, not wanting to continue their lives as widows".²⁷²

Women were entrusted with maintaining the household, including the home finances. Men normally gave their wives much of the housekeeping money to look after, which was usually placed inside their belt pouch. Many Russian women carried daggers (hung around their neck on a chain) for their own protection and to ward off would-be thieves.

In Aryan times, women were married after receiving a silver thread (*thali*) which was sewn into their scarf, but in pagan Rus' that thread probably took the form of a highly valuable marital-necklace. This was the thread used to bind their new family together. In the epic tale *Svyatogor, Mother Earth and Destiny*, Svyatogor ran across a smith who was forging fine metal threads, that held the fate of a couple soon to be married.²⁷³ Rus' women received one silver status necklace for every 10,000 silver coins of their husband's accumulated fortune at their wedding. Thus, wives were a very expensive business in both the Christian and pagan times.

Sure, failed marriages did exist, but divorce and social disintegration were rare in the extreme. So committed were the pagan Saxons to the concept of marriage, they demanded that adultresses string themselves up, and that

ASPECTS OF THE
ANCIENT RUSSIAN
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MAGIANISM

MAGIAN PRIESTS NO
LONGER PERFORMED
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AFTER THE CONVERSION

WOMEN DYING ON
THEIR HUSBAND'S PYRE

'TIL DEATH DO US PART

following their death and subsequent cremation, that the offending male should have a rendezvous with the noose.²⁷⁴ Alternatively the pagan fornicator, if she be a woman, might be paraded through the streets, and along the way buffeted and kicked, as groups of women beat her to the point of death with sturdy rods.²⁷⁴ St Boniface confirmed that the pagan Western Slavs held the institution of marriage in such honor that widows accompanied their husband's remains into the flames. In Ibn Fadlan's account of the Rus' funeral on the Volga, a concubine offered to die, to accompany her chieftain into the afterlife. In effect Ibn Fadlan's recollections amount to a visual confirmation of what Boniface noted, though in Rus' rather than western Slavia. Collectively the writings of Boniface and Ibn Fadlan provide information which supports the existence of Aryan marital customs in Europe.

As stated in Part I of the *Forbidden History of Europe*, the Magi believed in the next-of-kin marriage, namely marriage to relatives. This can be traced back to a belief that humanity sprang from the loins of Masha and Mashoi (a Magian version of Adam and Eve), and hence everyone was related to each other anyway. Wedding cousins, for instance, helped preserve the purity of one's family bloodline. Inter-family liaisons were regarded as especially holy as a consequence of this. Therefore it is plausible that incestuous marriage was practiced by the pagan Slavs. Incest was certainly known in Early Modern Norway, where twice as many were burned at the stake for it in the Christian era than for witchcraft.

MAGIANS PRACTICED
EUGENICS

Among the Magians some families were more admirably endowed with the royal blood, and it was of great benefit to intermarry with them if the purer family considered such a liaison acceptable, and unlikely to degrade the progeny destined to issue from the union in future.²⁷⁵ It was therefore imperative that such unions be carefully planned and arranged.

THE WHITE PRIESTHOOD
WAS CONCERNED WITH
THE ADVANCEMENT OF
LIFE ON EARTH

The Magi served as custodians of life and growth. It was their holy duty to promote the propagation of trees, crops, flowers, herbs, livestock (especially calves) and above all children. To fail in these matters was to fail the God of the Light, to fail life itself by allowing naturally created things to cross over into death's clutches unopposed. Marriage, childbirth, agriculture and animal husbandry became potent weapons against the great demon of chaos Ahriman, causing him a great deal of pain and anguish. In this respect the white Magi and the Church were in full agreement; fostering life is a holy duty. Practically and doctrinally speaking contraception, abortion or infanticide were regarded as profoundly evil in both faiths. Catholic and Magian families tended to be rather large for this very reason. As stated in Herodotus Persian kings awarded special prizes to those women who gave birth to extraordinarily large numbers of children.

The souls of children that died well before their time were to be dedicated to the heavenly lord through the performance of the *Sroshi Yast*, the ceremony of Sraosha the Deliverer, which would see it lifted straight up into heaven, where it could plead with Ahura Mazda on behalf of its parents. If this ceremony was not carried out, then the child's soul would depend utterly on the destination of its parents' souls.²⁷⁶

IT WAS A CRIME TO
LEAVE THIS WORLD
WITHOUT SIRING/GIVING
BIRTH TO A CHILD, OR
WHERE INFERTILE,
ADOPTING A CHILD

Magian scripture records a number of marital customs, which the Church regarded as impious or dastardly. For example, if a white Magian man died without having had a son, then it was believed his soul would not make it over the Khinvat star bridge. Without a son (who they termed 'a bridge') to pray for his parents' souls, and carry on his father's name, the parents, both mother and father would fall down into the abyss and rot in hell. Why? because their lives were unfulfilled, utterly contrary to the sacred mission of bringing life into the world. To this end if a man's brother or father-in-law had fallen in battle, without having had a son, then it was a kinsman's or kinsman-in-law's duty to sleep with the wife in order that they might give birth to a child, but, more particularly a son. Such a child belonged not to the relative, but to the deceased. A similar custom was known to the Vedic Daeva-worshipping Aryans,

*'Should the husband of a childless woman die, she must go to her brother-in-law, through desire to obtain a son, after having received the required authorisation from her Gurus. And he shall have intercourse with her, till a son be born. When a son is born, he must leave her. It would be sinful intercourse otherwise.'*²⁷⁷

Christian condemnation of these Aryan mating rites probably ignores the fact that such social obligations were actually a fantastic way to care for and honour war widows. In this manner a woman continued to be accepted by

her late husband's family, who provided moral and physical support. By having a child to the family, the woman was more likely to have someone to care for them in their old age.

Owing to the presence of widespread Magianism in various parts of Slavia, the heathen Russian royals probably observed similar traditions. The Russian *Primary Chronicle* records that following the war between the Russian princes Yaropolk and Vladimir' (in which Yaropolk was killed), Vladimir bedded Yaropolk's Greek wife (a former nun), who bore by Vladimir the son Svyatopolk, who Vladimir did not love.²⁷⁸ There is also a different tradition concerning this tale listed in the *Tale and Passion and Ecomium of the Holy Martyrs Boris and Gleb*. According to this version, Yaropolk's wife was already pregnant when she came under Vladimir's roof.²⁷⁹ Which story is correct is impossible to say. Very little has been written about the earliest trends in pagan Slavic family life, so it is difficult to guess what the true extent of these things might have been. As you will later see, these and other unusual living arrangements were not unknown in Christian Europe, yet stridently opposed by medieval papal reformists. This suggests a heathen point of origin for the customs, if nothing else.

Pagan Russian royals believed it was acceptable, if not desirable, to possess numerous concubines. In his early pagan days, Khagan Vladimir I, *the Ardent Sun* (later a saint), had a harem of 10 wives and 800 delectable concubines²⁸⁰ whom he kept for the satisfaction of his every whim, just as the Greek, Indian and Persian kings once did. Grand princes, petty princes, boyars and eminent personages could be expected to have any number of wives too. The *Primary Chronicle* does not state if Vladimir's predecessors kept harems also, though in fairness few personal details were preserved concerning the pre-Christian Rus' monarchs. Even so, harems could well have been the expected thing.

Rogned, the daughter of Rogvolod, a Norseman who was the prince of Polotsk, refused to marry prince Vladimir' because, though still a prince, his mother was a slave, and instead she preferred to wed Prince Yaropolk.²⁸¹ Not only does this account reveal a desire for intermarriage between Norse and Slav royals, but it also shows that while both Vladimir' and Yaropolk were 'sun' princes by blood, they both had a different status with respect to each other, not centering so much on whether or not a prince was a prince, but the degree to which a prince was a prince. Rogned's marriage to Vladimir' was detestable on account of the fact that he was of lower birth than his brother (by a different mother). Despite the lowliness of his mother's side Vladimir' wasn't prevented from becoming the highest of all princes, though he was looked upon disdainfully when compared with other royals possessing a more prestigious pedigree.

If a woman of such low station (in fact *the lowest*) could sleep with a prince and still beget a prince (of lower status), then what can we say about the number of princes born annually to the several hundred women which graced Vladimir's harems situated at Vyshgorod, Berestovo and Belgorod?²⁸² Hundreds of princes and princesses might have been born yearly from them alone, and that is before you take into account the many other women he allegedly seduced, or the offspring of the many other petty princes who ruled olden Rus'. But something is strange here. Literally hundreds, if not thousands, of princes and princesses are absent from the historical record. *We find no mention of these other princes in the Chronicles*. Who were they? Where did they reign? What happened to them? One possibility is that since *Bieloknyazi* (literally 'the White Princes') was a Western Slav name for pagan priests, harems were tasked with producing white Magi, in addition to sacral kings, princes and princesses who assumed governmental rather than religious posts.

The cited example concerns Russian royals. Even so, Western monarchs and clergy were similarly captivated by such marital customs in the post-conversion era, and repeatedly censured by the reformist Catholic Church for doing so.

Despite the fact there are no surviving details concerning pagan Russian or Persian harems, we can still gain an insight into life within a typical Aryan harem by consulting the *Puranas*. Within them we find various provisions stipulating acceptable harem conduct.²⁸³ These religious regulations applied in equal measure to the Aryan monarch, as it did to his wives and concubines. Women who brushed aside the king's advances, who stirred trouble with the other women, or acted disrespectfully could be ejected from the harem.²⁸⁴ By the same token the king had to keep his women supplied with valuable clothing, gifts and amusements, and protect them from every danger.²⁸³ In return the

CHRISTIAN CLERGYMEN
CONDEMNED MANY
ASPECTS OF PAGAN
FAMILY LIFE AND
SEXUALITY

KHAGAN VLADIMIR
HAD A SERIES OF
HAREMS

ROYAL BLOOD MIGHT
BE CLASSIFIED
ACCORDING TO GRADES
OF PURITY

NOBODY KNOWS HOW
MANY CHILDREN WERE
BORN TO VLADIMIR'S
HAREM WOMEN EACH
YEAR

HAREMS WERE FILLED
WITH ALTERNATING
BOREDOM, EXCITEMENT
AND INTRIGUE

PRINCES AND PRINCESSES
WERE PREENED FOR
VARIOUS ROLES IN
SOCIETY

king's ladies had to treat him with utmost reverence, showing every gratitude, and delighting in his presence.²⁸³

The king was to revel in the petting supplied by his wives, yet not become debauched and overly lascivious, for it could lead to 'disease'.²⁸³ Upon retiring at the end of the night the monarch enjoyed the attentiveness of his most favoured women, thereafter retiring to his bed chamber alone.²⁸³ His wives woke him in the morning with love play and scented oils, paying particular attention to dressing the 'edible thing';²⁸³ a bright start to what could otherwise be an ordinary day. The harem, therefore, served as a palace of earthly pleasures. Whether or not Aryan harems existed for the sole purpose of producing royal successors is not mentioned in the *Puranas*. Successors were no doubt desired by the king, and it was here in the harems that they were conceived. Yet having so many wives entailed a certain element of risk. Harem wives who carried the king's children were to be particularly watched, and their intra-harem machinations and intrigues guarded against, at every stage.²⁸³ The issue of succession amongst the royal progeny loomed large in the minds of royal mothers, and could give rise to damaging conflicts.²⁸³

As they grew, princesses were carefully schooled by the king in proper behaviour and etiquette, and his sons, the princes, were placed under the care of a foster-guardian, who gave them a good grounding in the arts of lordship.²⁸³ These would one day be needed, should they ascend the throne after their father, or simply perform regional appointments bestowed upon them.²⁸³

In pagan Rus' the average freemen might have had as many concubines as he could afford, and probably the more one owned, the more respect one gained socially. From Ibn Fadlan we find that most concubines were slave girls, either personal or tribal, or I guess widows who did not ride the cremation flame. Concubines were to be obedient to their master, any refusal being a sign of gross disobedience, demanding immediate disciplinary action, or abandonment. In cases where they had been insolent to their master in public they would be certain to cop a real beating (or whipping) irrespective of whether guests were there or not. Children born to bought concubines were not legal people, they, in their turn were slaves, the property of the 'Man of the House'.

'The issue of those women who have been purchased for a price (ie; slaves) belongs to the begetter. But when nothing has been paid for a woman, her offspring belong to her legitimate husband'.²⁸⁴

Ritual garments

Zoroastrians considered it sinful to remove their sacred shirt and girdle, so although initially made of white linen, they frequently acquired a grubby grey appearance due to their prolonged wearing. *Early Christians are not known to have worn these garments for daily wear*, although they did don a pristine white robe during the ritual reception of baptism. In analysing one description of parish life in the ancient See of Antioch, we can see that the Church may have countered the wearing of this Magian 'Robe of lesser priesthood' by demanding that parishioners only attend mass in clean clothing.²⁸⁵ Islam made Zoroastrian converts pray without belts or shoes. On the other hand the Magians believed that;

'At night when they lie down, the shirt and girdle are to be worn, for they are more protecting for the body, and good for the soul. When they lie down with the shirt and girdle, before sleep one shall utter one Ashem-vohu (a particular prayer), and with every coming and going of the breath is a good work of three Stroshe-karanams (scourgings)'.²⁸⁶

'The sin of running about uncovered (ie; without the holy belt and shirt on), as far as three steps, is a Farman (3 dirhems) each step; at the fourth step it is a Tanapular sin (1,200 dirhems)'.²⁸⁷

Medieval black witches were in the habit of wearing silken belts and clothing. This might be related to *Shayast La-Shayast IV: 1 'A sacred thread-girdle, should it be made of silk, is not proper'*. Silken belts (and perhaps raiment) probably signified black Magian attire, since it was sinful for white Magi to dress in that manner.

Even medieval monks concerned themselves with the matter of girdles. In an account tendered by one Western

European abbot, he exclaims how the demons made his body bloated with gas that distended his belly to such an extent that *he was even forced to untie his belt*, which amounted to a breach of obligations then current. But after their assaults had passed, he was then able to re-tie the belt in the prescribed way.²⁸⁸ Clearly the abbot regarded the removal of his belt as a serious matter, and made every effort to stress to his readers that he adhered to the proper procedures on belt-wearing; only the efforts of the demons could thwart his pious attention to such details.

The priest's curse

The notion of a divine curse (anathema) is not one that sits well with Christians, yet we see Jesus invoke such a curse on the tree that bore no fruit, an allegorical description of the unrepentant sinner. We find such a curse directed against a practitioner of incest within the immediate nuclear family, in Paul's letter to the Christian congregation at Corinth;

'It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the gentiles, that one should have his father's wife ... For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed. In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, to deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus ... Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person'.²⁸⁹

Christians of some notoriety, who had been a persistent participant in serious evil, especially in a public place, were likely to fall under the priest's curse; that of excommunication. Excommunication was a spiritual banishment from the Church community, an eschatological act preordaining abandonment by God, indeed a condemnation to the well-stoked eternal fires until repentance occurred. It was so to speak the sword of God, one that cut away the bad from the good, the diseased from the healthy. Normally this damning penalty was reserved for apostates and heretical agitators. Accordingly all practicing magicians were automatically excommunicated by the nature of their deviation from Church practices. As St Paul put it, the individual was formally 'handed over to Satan'. Once excommunicated an offender could not enter a Church, or accept communion. Nor could they be buried in holy ground unless the curse of banishment was lifted by a bishop, or clergyman permitted to do so.

Western tradition declared that not even the slightest good deed performed by the excommunicated soul would be acknowledged by God until absolution was sought, through the sacrament of reconciliation. Byzantine priests meted out penalties of excommunication from time to time but did not agree with such rigid and relentless Catholic severity.

The Christian priest's curse, has many parallels with the Iranian *yazad* curse (the 'Curse of the Wise Ones'), the mightiest weapon of the white Magi in their war against blackness and evil. With white wizards being incarnate angels and archangels, it amounted to a formal curse of banishment, the most painful penalty they could ever direct against a human being. In so doing the malefactor was cleaved away from God, pushed aside to the camp of the arch-nemesis Ahriman.

The white Magi exhibited hyper-phobias about ceremonial irregularities, deeming them an integral feature of ritual demonolatriy. And it is probably for this reason that converted pagans and Magian Christians felt rather disturbed by changes to their ritualism, which took place as the Church gained power, as the old guard ceded to the new. The forebodings and even loathing of the freshly converted pagans, are found in the writings of St Cuthbert. In 7th Century England a group of bystanders jeered some monks in danger of drowning. Refusing to render them any assistance they cried *'Let no man pray for them and may God have mercy upon none of them, for they have taken the old religious observances away from men, and nobody knows how the new ones are to be observed'*.²⁹⁰ Again the inference here is that the pagans had formal sets of dearly-held beliefs and ritualism prior to their conversion, and the arrival of the Church sacraments caused unimaginable confusion and grief for some, but by no means all.

CHRISTIAN PRIESTS AND WIZARDS WERE ABLE TO UTTER CURSES AGAINST THE UNHOLY

THE CURSE WAS CALLED EXCOMMUNICATION

THE MAGI CALLED IT THE YAZAD CURSE, THE CURSE OF THE WISE ARCHANGELS

MAGIANS FEARED CEREMONIAL IRREGULARITIES

CONVERTING TO CHRISTIANITY DISTURBED THEIR PREVIOUS RITUAL OBLIGATIONS

The uninvited guests who sat at Christ's wedding table

And Christ said to the Jews that he preached to:

*'I am the Good Shepherd: and the Good Shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. I am the Good Shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known by mine. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep. And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold (flock): them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice: and there shall be one fold and one shepherd.'*²⁹¹

St John the Apostle recorded this parable which serves to imply that there was another flock besides the people of Israel, who would surrender their allegiances to Jesus Christ, and accept him as their shepherd. From a Jewish-Christian angle, this is a parable about the salvation of the Gentiles, the advent of their acceptableness to God. In unison with the Jews who believed in him, the Magian converts formed a new Church, an outgrowth or culmination of both Old Faiths.

In another *New Testament* parable told by Christ,²⁹² the king's messengers were to bring an invitation to his intended guests (the Jews), asking them to attend the wedding feast of his son (Jesus). But it goes on to say that these expected guests refused to come, at which their Lord was greatly disappointed. Not content with rebutting the offer, they even went so far as to beat and kill the messengers. Their king's anger consumed him upon hearing of this outrage, so he sent his army to destroy the city. He then told the servants to go out into the streets and tell whomsoever would listen to come to his kingdom in the afterlife. Behind this scripture lies an inference that the pagans, those who were originally 'the uninvited guests', would eventually become the invited guests of the Father in heaven. Whereas the Jewish people, who had been *the desired guests* would snub his offer, and suffer the destruction of their city for killing the Father's messengers.

So who were these other unexpected guests? While the Gospel may or may not have been deliberately written in such a way as to entice the Magians into believing that Christ was *Sraosha*, the fact remains that to the Magian mind, it is jam-packed with blatantly obvious scriptural references which they would have guessed had special significance for them; unveiling the life and death of a figure, both man and God, whose worldly actions matched those of their much-awaited pagan Messiah, *Sraosha*. In their quest to identify *Sraosha*, Zoroastrians (and by inference Zurvanites) were faced with pagan scriptures that stressed the sufferance attached to making a wrong choice. To follow a false-Sayoshant was an abominable apostasy, but to abandon the real one when he came meant certain doom, for the *Sayoshant* was the giver of righteousness and eternal life. With the emergence of the Gospel, the life-story of Jesus Christ, the Magian nations, like the Jews, were left to deliberate upon the unenviable question; 'but is he the one?' For many he was truly the one, Christ, the King of all Kings. Ardent Zoroastrians and Jews stridently opposed any such supposition, concluding that Jesus wasn't the *Sayoshant* or Messiah, but a deceptive magician or vile apostate, hell bent on provoking a mass apostasy from their respective faiths.

Whether a missionary grasped the many similarities between Christ and the *Sayoshant* was utterly irrelevant, for the Gospel story itself contained all the essential ingredients, enabling Magians to formally identify Jesus as the World Messiah who the Magian texts termed the '*incarnate Word of God*', a phrase also found in the *New Testament* with respect to Jesus. As a result Persia and Asia Minor were an El Dorado of very eager potential converts. All a preacher had to do was walk around the bustling markets and taverns, and speak the words. It was like the story of Peter re-casting his net into the water at Jesus' command, after a fishing trip gone wrong. Each preacher found himself struggling to bring on board the massive hauls of fish, that he snatched up with every casting. It must have seemed like a miracle to the earliest missionaries, unwise to the secretive religion of the Magi. But it also meant conversions were haphazard and difficult to control.

THE NEW TESTAMENT
PARABLE ABOUT THE
UNINVITED GUESTS

THE GOSPEL STORY WAS
SO FULL OF MAGIAN
TERMINOLOGY AND
SYMBOLISM IT READILY
GAINED CONVERTS TO
CHRISTIANITY IN THAT
PART OF THE WORLD

While the Apostles marvelled over these gains, little could they have known that the catch was in danger of turning sour on them, in so far as Jewish primacy in the Church was concerned. Zoroastrians and Zurvanites may have been Christianity's largest pool of early converts, but paradoxically they were the well-spring of *every major heresy* of the Middle Ages. As you may recall, the pagan faith of Zarathustra was not expected to end, but undergo a renovation that would take place following the arrival of their Saviour *Sraosha*, and the Resurrection. If Christianity was the product of a 'renovation' of their Magian beliefs, and the Apostolic Church charged with stripping away the unwanted layer of the old faith, then it was essential that clergy stress to the flock what was fine to keep, and which traditions were unacceptable within the new order. For example, Zoroastrians believed in angels and saints and held five prayer sessions per day, at cockcrow, midday, midnight, 3 am and 3 pm. Later Christians and Muslims also maintained these same prayer schedules. What had to go, and when, were the very questions that gave 'heresy' so much breathing space in local parishes. It all depended on who a convert wanted to listen to, Apostolic priests, rabbinical Nazarenes, or Magian-Christians advocating drons, sacred shirts, barsom bundles and holy fires.

Small wonder Strabo tells us King Chosroes wanted to raze Constantinople to the ground, and turn the Christian missionary centre of Edessa into a pasture for sheep. These apostolic preachers were doing immense damage, spiritually vandalising their ancient faith, a scenario replicated among the Jews of far off Israel, but to a lesser degree. Learned Magian high priests appeared before Emperor Shapur polemicising against the Christians, who they termed '*the Nazarenes*'.²⁹³ This phraseology should not be misconstrued as a reference to actual Nazarenes. While it is incontestably a direct allusion to the sect of Judaeo-Christians, formerly deemed heretical in apostolic times, I believe it relates more to the wider Church which had mutated into something very similar to Nazarenes, owing to successive centuries and layers of censorship and intense judaising within episcopal fora. In the Magian mind Christians and Nazarenes were considered one and the same. In response to homilies enunciated by missionaries, Christian converts were contaminating holy fires and causing all sorts of havoc for the Magi. These intrusive acts aimed to disrupt and degrade Zoroastrian public worship. Being the religion of state these activities signalled a call-to-arms in defence of Ahura Mazda. And so came Sassanian state repression of Christianity on a grand scale, which at some points appears to have focused on bishops, most destined for the death sentence. In a trial leading to the execution of two bishops Shapur informs them he is '*of the race of the yazads (archangelic genii)*',²⁹³ and reviles their discordant anti-Magian behaviour, in particular the extinguishing of holy flames, long considered the product of demon worship. In a parting snipe at their god Yaweh the king rhetorically asks the condemned clerics '*Who is the God who is better than Ohrmazd, or whose anger is harsher than Ahrimans*'?²⁹³

The backlash ran hot and strong until the reign of Hormazd IV. Unlike earlier Sassanian monarchs Hormazd IV was well known for his ecumenical spirit and multiculturalism, hoping to glue his kingdom back together. This astute monarch evidently realised that Orthodox Zoroastrian bravado,²⁹³ and its vigilante-style persecution of non-believers was destabilising Sassania and his own sovereignty. The situation was bound to degenerate even more drastically following the clamp-down on conversions by the Orthodox Zoroastrian priests.

With their movements curtailed, Christian priests could no longer monitor and guide the progress of these conversions. Consequently the apostolic version of the faith climbed on board a roller-coaster of uncertainty, taking a very great number of infant Christians out of school, and down unpredictable, untravelled pathways. After 1,000 years in this state, Magian-Christians could only have believed that theirs was the true version of Christianity, and would have been very annoyed with Byzantine and Roman Catholic insinuations that it could be otherwise.

Over the next few chapters we will examine a range of historical sources, mostly written by Christian clerics. Considering the phraseology employed one might guess they are questionable as an historical yardstick. Yet those who have attentively read the preceding chapters of this book will instinctively know what sort of issues are being attacked.

THE MAGI WERE
PROFOUNDLY
DISTURBED BY THE
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CONVERTING TO
CHRISTIANITY

PERSIAN KINGS ARE
KNOWN TO HAVE
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DEATH

KING HORMAZD IV
WAS A LITTLE MORE
CONCILIATORY

Chapter

The conversion of Europe

Franks and Saxons convert

GAUL BECAME CHRISTIAN IN THE 3RD-4TH CENTURIES AD, BUT HAD TO BE RE-EVANGELISED FROM THE 6TH CENTURY AD ONWARDS

Much of Gaul had been evangelised by Christian missionaries during the 3rd and 4th Centuries AD. But all their work dissipated after a series of political and religious reversals, thus requiring a secondary wave of missionary work by Irish monks from the 6th Century AD onwards.²⁹⁴ It is thought the heathen Franks were responsible for the widespread de-christianisation of Gaul under their initial period of rule.²⁹⁵ A similar situation unfolded in early Christian Britain with the arrival of the Anglo-Saxons, who inherited a land where the culture was still distinguishable as Romano-British, long after the Romans had pulled out. With them came the very Germanic kings that changed the political orientation of Britain away from Rome towards heathendom. With them came at least one:

'temple ... filled with various adornments, where the barbarians of the area used to make offerings and gorge themselves with meat and wine until they vomited; they adored idols there as if they were gods, and placed there wooden models of parts of the human body whenever some part of their body was touched by pain'.²⁹⁶

To recover lost ground in Gaul, a counter-missionary adventure was launched by bishop Remigius of Rheims to entice Christian backsliders and pagans to enter or re-join the fold.²⁹⁶ Through his efforts, and the accomplishments of his successors, the long-abandoned ruins of former parishes (and even cathedrals) were reclaimed from their dilapidated states to once again house the faithful.²⁹⁶ This was the greatest phase in the evangelisation of Europe, and its speed and efficacy was perhaps only bettered by the Nestorians in the Far-East.²⁹⁶ Under the Irish clergy, Roman Catholicism received its greatest boost through the conversion of the Merovingian King Clovis (early 6th Century AD), though the path to realising a faith in those regions that even faintly resembled the faith espoused by medieval Roman reformists was still very distant.²⁹⁶ Gregory of Tours tells us how it happened.

The son that Clovis sired in Clothild was to be baptised for Christ according to her wish. But Clovis opposed the consecration of his heir to a foreign God. She went on the attack *'The gods whom you worship are no good ... carved out of stone or wood or some old piece of metal. The very names which you have given them were the names of men, not gods'.²⁹⁷* Clothild went on to deride Saturn and Jupiter (a seducer of his own sisters and cousins), adding: *'What have*

THE CONVERSION OF CLOVIS

Mars and Mercury ever done for anyone? They may have been endowed with magic arts, but they were certainly not worthy of being called divine'.²⁹⁷ These very gods featured in Chaldeanism and Magian Zurvanism, each accorded a mortal representative and an idol fashioned by the telestic art.

Clovis defended paganism, saying that all creation was made 'at the command of our gods'.²⁹⁷ In open defiance of her regal spouse, Clothild bade him baptise Ingomer, but the child died just after being removed from the holy water font.²⁹⁷ A similar fate almost befell their second son.²⁹⁷ These incidents were seen as omens, reasons for not seeking to convert. Not much later Clovis' forces were practically annihilated in warfare with the Franks, but a drastic change in fortune took place the moment he looked heavenward to Christ, petitioning him for assistance. He thus converted, but feared that his subjects would resist a change in faith. Gregory of Tours notes that Clovis' fears were unfounded for they unanimously, and quite spontaneously cried out 'We will give up worshipping our mortal gods, pious king'.²⁹⁷ It stretches the imagination too much to think that the transition to the new faith occurred with such apparent ease. Everywhere pagan customs prevailed. For instance during these missions in relapsed Gaul, a certain Christian set ablaze a heathen sanctuary.²⁹⁶ The man involved hastened to Clovis seeking protection against the armed pagan gang which had tracked him there, intent on putting him to the sword for his transgression. It was only due to the skillful intervention and diplomacy of Clovis that the man escaped with his life.²⁹⁶ Clearly the Old Believers were powerful enough to waltz into the royal court intent on avenging the loss of their holy site. Nor did they take kindly to other alien customs imported by the Irish missionaries, things such as tonsuring.

Rome might have got its foot in the door, thanks to the Irish, but its problems were far from solved. Internal chaos resulted from Clovis' conversion, as militantly anti-papal factions gained ascendancy among the Franks. The Church lost considerable ground from then on. Not until the coronation of Charlemagne did the papacy find stout Frankish backing. Charlemagne preferred no-nonsense sword evangelism, requiring his Saxon subjects to adopt Christianity as a matter of obedience to the crown he wore, or die.²⁹⁸ This very ethos might have been a tenacious, though clouded, survival of an old belief. The 9th Magian book of *Dinkard* tells us that Magian kings were duty bound to oppose those who opposed *Sraosha* the Redeemer, becoming 'at every time a distresser of the wicked'.

Death was Charlemagne's prescribed penalty for anyone caught refusing baptism, cremating the dead, harming the Christian clergy, *desecrating churches*, or not observing the Easter feast days.²⁹⁸ Easter was dedicated to celebrating the Resurrection of Christ, the eternally-great moment when the Father purchased forgiveness and eternal life for mankind through the death of his only son. Charlemagne defended the festival with the most draconian of reprisals; capital punishment. As brutal and unforgiving as this method may have been, it did bring about an outward semblance of pious Apostolic Christianity among the Saxons, yet the old ways were never far away in the background.³⁰⁰

Life was not easy for the foreign missionaries working in Germany and Saxony. The earlier preachers could only look forward to risking their lives in confrontations with pagans and heretics, or starving from week to week.³⁰¹ St Boniface complained that his subordinate Catholic Christian missionaries 'lead a very bare existence ... cannot procure clothing without help'.³⁰¹ Evidently they were not drawing big congregations, hence few donations for their upkeep.³⁰¹ Evidently the aristocracy didn't want to pay for them either.³⁰¹ Financial attrition could be employed against the new order with great effect.

There was a great deal of conflict between the priests of the newly converted Saxons, and the Anglo-Saxon Christian clergy who came across from Britain to evangelise them. These Saxon priests (and the nobility) carried much influence with the emperor, and affected the manner in which the Holy Roman Empire was formed. In the years prior to their conversion the Saxons had a prosperous pagan religion, which was lorded over by their own special king, *who, as in so many other places, was an embodiment of the Sun, the embodiment of prosperity, and the mortal enemy of a dark entity called Death*.³⁰² As you will recall, Sun-kings of this kind were fairly commonplace in Assyria, Persia, Parthia and among the Slav pagans, and not forgetting the Khazarians who became Jews in the 8th Century AD. Certainly Rus' royalty carried 'Sun names', such as Yaroslav (Bright Slav, Bright Glory).

Anglo-Saxon clergy from the British Isles, were not always champions of the Roman Catholic cause either. Many still maintained the old conceptions of the role of kings and the intricate link between the reigning monarch's life and

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the level of prosperity experienced throughout nature and society.³⁰³ Earlier, during the 6th Century AD, Pope Gregory sent a missionary monk by the name of Augustine to Britain on papal business, to discover the state of the Church in England. Upon arrival, he noted latent unorthodoxies which had come about because significant elements of the local British clergy originated among converted pagan Fire-priests; the *flamens* and *arch-flamens*. As in the Armenian conversion experience they conveniently slotted into their Christian vocation by fulfilling roles with a status similar to those once held during pagan times. And it is probably for this reason that Anglo-Saxon priests were heavily influenced by pre-existing customs of an essentially pagan nature. Elements of the Saxon clergy, though Christian, were still fairly pagan and continued to carry out the old ordinances. One wife of Louis the Pious mingled freely with the magicians who loitered about her husbands court, and was herself regarded as a perpetrator of demonic rituals.³⁰⁴

Many of the Merovingian and Carolingian kings considered themselves Christians, yet the way in which the faith manifested itself in their realms was at variance with what Rome expounded. Some tried very hard to maintain the high ideals of the faith, yet their ability to shrug off, or differentiate Catholicism from the ways of the past was minimal. Some behaved as would any good Christian ruler, but if they did otherwise, it was far more discrete. Still others gave the papacy cause for concern, for their misdeeds were not the byproduct of poor judgement, but 'crimes against the faith' and 'heresy'. At Amanburch in Germany, St Boniface converted two rulers who were guilty of *'the sacrilegious worship of idols which was practiced under the cloak of Christianity'*, and who *'practiced pagan ritual'*.³⁰⁵ These lords were pagan Christians. Though nominally Christian, a number of Germans persisted in the old ways;

'some continued secretly, others openly, to offer sacrifices to trees and springs, to inspect the entrails of victims...divination...auguries ... sacrificial rites'.³⁰⁶

The situation was made demonstrably worse in Saxony by the presence of Christian heretics in areas where the dukes had been overcome by the pagans;

'false brethren were brought in (by persons un-named) to pervert the minds of the people, and to introduce among them under the guise of religion, dangerous heretical sects'.³⁰⁶

'... by being misled by the insidious doctrines of heretics, they (the faithful) had forfeited their right to eternal bliss. For so thoroughly had the heretics quenched the light of (Catholic) religious teaching among the people, that a dark impenetrable gloom of error had settled down over a large section of the Church'.³⁰⁷

That is how Boniface's writings immortalise Rome's horror upon discovering the magnitude of things, the mass patronage of poisons, the soul-destroying heresies. Further eastward, Euthemius Zigabenus, Constantinople's top-gun heresiographer visualised the heretics as an impious snare for the unwary. Whatever the case, countless heretics were excommunicated following the fall of the Merovingian dynasty, with the help of armed force during his royal highness Pippin's time. They burned at the stake. These serial executions paved the way for synods aimed at ensuring the dissemination of 'true Catholic teaching', so that it could make stalwart progress. In 722 AD a similarly dismal picture was painted by Pope Gregory II, who stated;

'some peoples in the parts of Germany that lie on the eastern bank of the Rhine have been led astray ... and now serve idols under the guise of the Christian religion'.³⁰⁷

To them he sent the emboldened missionary Boniface, to remedy the said errors. Throughout Germany the 'mendacious perversions' which vampirically sucked life from the Church's doctrinal stance, only came to an end once *'the devil's disciples and the insidious seducers of the people... had been banished'*,³⁰⁸ for they and their ilk were the hungry, soul-consuming 'precursors of Antichrist',³⁰⁹ or so it was said. These heretics were not small fry either; a number of the German bishops were to be found amongst them.³¹⁰ For example, in 722 AD, at his swearing in, Boniface was required to make an oath of loyalty to the pope, and not to the Holy Roman Emperor, as had once

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BONIFACE SWORE AN
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been the norm.³¹⁰ In it he professes that he would have no dealings with heretical bishops, and report their identities to Rome once they were identified.³¹⁰ Come 739 AD, Pope Gregory III sent his trusty legate Boniface on a fact finding mission to assess whether local Bavarian bishops were ‘true bishops’, not congregational shepherds of heresy.³¹¹ By Boniface’s estimation most appear to have been suspect.³¹¹ In Bavaria Boniface re-installed the teachings and sacraments of the Catholic Church, after reclaiming the Bavarians from beneath the noses of unidentified heretics (termed ‘immoral priests’) who had *provoked the destruction of parishes, and who had their own non-catholic bishops and ordained clerics.*³¹¹

Various points of heresy were not specifically due to the teachings of heretical sects, but poor immersion in Apostolic Christian religious dogma. Boniface hoped to heal this wound by enhancing the level of tuition offered to novice priests, but to do so he had to obtain from Rome significantly greater copies of the books of the Old and *New Testaments*, which as of the 8th Century AD, were still being circulated separately.³¹² The various books of the bible could not be effectively amassed in single volumes containing the complete range of scripture, because of the bulkiness of hand written manuscripts, their costliness and the amount of time needed to produce them. Once the German priests had been properly taught he guessed the heresies would fade away. And yet even in the face of reproof, some, if not many, continued to preach displeasing variations to the faith. In these instances the heresy was not generated through ignorance, but willful rebellion against apostolic doctrines.

Still Boniface might not have been wholly orthodox himself, perhaps ‘soiled’ by the ‘diabolical errors’ of the many ‘heretics’ he ungraciously and reluctantly mingled with daily, and who outnumbered Rome’s new spiritual ambassadors to a very great degree.³¹³ In correspondence sent to Nithard c. 716 AD, St Boniface wrote ‘.. *at the moment of death, the minion of the baneful Pluto (ie; the Lord of the Underworld), barks at the door, foaming at the mouth ... Finally they are snatched by the claws of fiends and borne off to the gloomy caverns of Erebus, there to suffer everlasting torments. There is no doubting the truth of this.*’³¹³ The Erebus mentioned here is most likely Mt Albruz, which the Magi held to be the mountain from which the star bridge led to heaven. But, according to the Magi, the ‘*concourse of the demons*’ lay beneath it, the infernal hollows above which hovered devils ready to steal off with the souls of sinners who had toppled off the star bridge, weighed down by the burden of their wrongdoings.

Reform movements did not only belong to Rome. Pagan preachers went on their own counter-attack, attempting to coerce Boniface into abandoning Roman Christianity. They recommended he ‘*return to the worship of idols.*’³¹⁴

The correspondence of St Boniface provides an insight into the preaching methods they employed when attempting to convert the pagan, as well as the level of support bishops from different countries gave each other in this venture. The English Bishop of Winchester was Boniface’s shoulder to cry on.³¹⁵ Like a wise mentor, he proposed that Boniface refute the teachings of the German pagans using various forms of reasoning, broaching the subjects ‘*not in an offensive and irritating way.*’³¹⁵ Handy topics worth using included the family lineages of the pagan gods (which the Northern pagans were apparently unable to agree upon at that time), and why it was that the fertility gods seemed to have abandoned the pagans to the frosty and agriculturally marginal north (whereas the Christians held the choicest fields).³¹⁵ ‘*From time to time their superstitions should be compared with our Christian dogmas and touched upon indirectly.*’³¹⁵

Among the many things which Gregory II demanded of Boniface we find a prohibition against the selling of slaves to pagans for the purpose of sacrifice, and that genealogical records on parishioners were to be kept to the 7th degree of consanguinity.³¹⁶ Marriage was not to be solemnised where both parties were closer than the 4th degree.³¹⁷ Priests now delved into Europe’s genealogical infrastructure.

In 726 AD Pope Gregory II replied to Boniface’s earlier questions that ‘*it is not fitting that two or three chalices should be placed on the altar during ... mass.*’³¹⁸ Boniface was evidently coming across masses, during which the celebrant was using 2-3 chalices.³¹⁸ Outwardly such a ceremony might resemble the multiple chalices of the Mithraic rites, the Magian *Haoma* rites, or the rubrics of the first heretical anti-pope, Hippolytus of Rome (which used two chalices for wine, and one for milk and honey).

Pope Gregory also made reference to pagans performing a baptism of their own, and he commanded the re-baptism of these same souls.³¹⁹ The baptism practiced by the white Magi may afford a good parallel, but insufficient

HE DISCOVERED THAT THE ‘FALSE-PRIESTS’ WERE DESTROYING CATHOLIC PARISHES THEY HAD THEIR OWN ORGANISED PRIESTHOOD

SOME OF BONIFACE’S OWN BELIEFS WERE NOT TOTALLY ORTHODOX

PAGAN PREACHERS TRIED TO CONVINC BONIFACE TO RETURN TO THE DAYS OF IDOL WORSHIP

AN ENGLISH BISHOP ADVISED BONIFACE HOW TO TACKLE THEM

SLAVE TRADING WITH THE PAGANS HAD TO STOP

THERE WERE TO BE NO MULTIPLE CHALICES

THOSE BAPTISED BY THE ‘FALSE-BRETHREN’ WERE TO BE REBAPTISED AS CATHOLICS

details were provided by Gregory to enable any further exploration of this possibility.³¹⁹

Pope Zacharias vociferously condemned the activities of the German/Saxon false priests, bishops and deacons; their multiple wives; their flagrant abuses of ecclesiastical law; their patronage of ‘*infamous unions*’,³²⁰ and the perpetration of murders. ‘*Are they not afraid to handle the sacred mysteries?*’ he asks rhetorically.³²¹

King Aethebald was strongly reproved by Boniface in 746 AD, for seducing large numbers of nuns in the convents that lay within his realm.³²¹

‘*...when these harlots, whether nuns or not, bring forth their children conceived in sin they generally kill them*’.³²² Two other Mercian monarchs were likewise condemned for ‘*the violation and seduction of nuns*’,³²² but their expanded list of crimes included the destruction of monasteries.³²²

Boniface stressed the difficulties he was experiencing eradicating the use of magical incantations, divination, and talismans in Germany.³²³ The situation was even more intolerable considering that Roman parishioners were using similar ordinances and customs *beneath the very roof of St Peter’s Basilica in Rome, the nerve centre of Roman Catholicism*.³²³ If they couldn’t counter heathen rites at Rome, what hope did Boniface have in Germany, especially when Germans were holding up the happenings in Rome as the green light for such doings? ³²³ In 743 AD Pope Zacharias admitted that these unholy misdemeanours were rife in Rome once more, but added ‘*Because these evils were cropping up again, we strove to abolish them from the very outset of our pontificate*’.³²³

The many points raised here in connection with the activities of the Germanic, Saxon and Anglo-Saxon priests, lead on to the next subject, which concerns papal attempts to reform the Germanic clergymen.

Relapsae – The Heathen Dawn

At a time when the Holy Roman Empire and the papacy were busy squabbling over control of the Germanic Church apparatus, the lands of Western Slavia were fairly overflowing with pagan groves, temples and shrines.³²⁴ For those who made the crossing from one realm into the other, it must have seemed as though they were stepping into another world, setting foot upon the dark side of the moon

Extracts contained in Helmold and the *History of the Archbishops of Hamburg-Bremen* graphically illustrate the pure hostility of the environment in which the priests and monks operated during the mission to convert the Slavs (and pagan Saxons) on the periphery of the Holy Roman Empire.

It had always been so. In early Christian Gaul, before St Martin of Tours established his episcopal seat, Tours lacked a permanent bishop because ‘*In those days those who were Christians celebrated the divine office secretly and in hidden places. If any were discovered by the pagans to be Christians they were either beaten severely or had their heads cut off with a sword*’.³²⁵

If that is what it was like in areas with permanent parishes, it must have been an even more frightening experience for those clergy who worked up enough guts to walk across the barbarian frontier, bible and sacramental paraphernalia in hand, into what might easily be the jaws of death. If the medieval armies of the Frankish emperor were encountering stiff resistance from the multi-pronged assaults of Magyars and combined Dano-Slavic forces, that could penetrate the Western Roman empire even up to the gates of Cologne, how much more worrying and precarious was the predicament of the wandering priest.

Returning to the penetration of pagan themes into Europe, we might ask how it was accomplished. Earlier I raised the spectre of a pagan holy war, in which the pagans sought to protect ‘paganism’, by pushing back Christian expansionism into heathendom. It may well be that the following accounts were a manifestation of their dream to protect, and even advance, the Old Faith whatever the cost.

During ‘*the Saxon rebellion, ... Widukind, stirring up a persecution against the Christians, devastated the territory of the Franks as far as the Rhine*’.³²⁶

The Frisian monarch Radbod incited his pagan subjects to make repeated raids into the lands of the Frankish Prince Charles. As a result ‘*the greater part of the Christian churches ... were laid wasted and brought to ruin. Moreover, the pagan shrines were rebuilt and, what is worse, the worship of idols restored*’.³²⁷

MAGIC WAS RIFE
THROUGHOUT THE
REGION

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PRESENCE

MISSIONARIES TOOK
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HANDS WHEN TRYING TO
CONVERT THE SLAVS AND
BALTS

IN EARLY GAUL THE
CHRISTIANS HAD TO
REMAIN SECRET

THE PAGAN HOLY WAR
AGAINST CHRISTIANITY

'In the meantime the Northmenn ... subjected the Frisians to tribute' ... they besieged Cologne and ... set fire to Hamburg. The celebrated city was utterly ruined by the pillage and the fire. The church, monastery, the library collected with utmost effort, were destroyed'.³²⁸

'Saxony was overwhelmed by a most frightful persecution, as from one direction the Danes and Slavs; from the other the Bohemians and Hungarians wrought havoc with the churches. ...Hamburg was laid waste by ... the Slavs, ... Bremen by ... the Hungarians'.³²⁹

In bishop Unni's time 'the Hungarians devastated not only Saxony and the other provinces on this side of the Rhine but also Lotharingia and Francia.... The Danes, too, with the Slavs as allies, plundering first of all the Transalbingian Saxons then ... this side of the Elbe'.³³⁰

'the rebel Slavs wasted ... Nordalbingia with fire and sword; then, going through the rest of Slavia, they set fire to all the churches and tore them down to the ground. They also murdered the priests and the other ministers of the churches with diverse tortures and left not a vestige of Christianity beyond the Elbe'.³³¹

(The Saxons) 'Ordulf and Hermann ... were mindful of the ancient though concealed hatred ... their fathers had borne against the Church'. They decided that 'vengeance was now openly to be wrought on the bishop and the whole cassalage ... Duke Ordulf ... devastated ... the bishopric of Bremen in Frisia and blinded the vassals of the Church'. By his command the captives were 'to be publicly whipped and shorn; lastly, he in every way assailed, plundered, struck, and insulted the Church and its ministers'.³³²

During the early Middle Ages paganism was rampant in Saxony and among the Slavic nations.³³³ And there were other players. In the year 954 AD battles abounded as Magyars pierced the Bohemian heartlands, bringing to everyone's attention the dangers of the eastern menace, for they were widely regarded by the papacy as minions of the Antichrist, an appellation which presumably might have rubbed off onto those Bavarians who worked in closely with them.³³⁴

Come 955 AD, an alliance of several Saxon nobles and Slav chieftains was formed, which launched aggressive frontal assaults on Saxony, an uprising which was put down by the emperor, and provided the *causa bellum* for projecting his forces against the insurgent Slavs and rebel Saxons.³³⁵ The emperor's plans for war in the East were beyond his capabilities in many respects. The logistics of the operation necessitated a financial burden that was barely sustainable, and what is more, his troops had a poor knowledge of siegecraft, and were unlikely to have much success in assaulting the formidable fortifications of the Slavs. He had only to look to the past to see a litany of military failures, which greatly outnumbered whatever successes had been made by Frankish troops in military expeditions against the Slavs.

In 959 AD the arrival of a communique at Otto's court, from Ol'ga the Christian mother of the heathen Khagan Svyatoslav, requesting that he send a bishop and a priest to Kiev, allowed him to sense new possibilities for building an eastern power base.³³⁶ He would couple the acquisition of power with evangelisation, and use this as his platform for the eastern campaigns. But many things conspired against this, not the least of which was the fact that no priests were willing to undertake missions among the Slavs, preferring to leave them remain pagan.³³⁶ We might think that this was due to a climate of fear, especially when it came to light that Adalbert, one priest who did reluctantly go to Kiev, had only just made it back alive after his entire retinue had been slaughtered.³³⁷

Missionary work among the Slavs suffered setback after setback as viking raids increased in frequency and ferocity during the 9th and 10th Centuries AD. The fate of the border priests evangelising eastern Slavia was made especially precarious as numerous Slav tribes fell in behind the Norsemen.³³⁸ Rapidly multiplying pagan forces, acting with a greater sense of direction and purpose, provided certain Norsemen with enhanced military and naval capabilities. Slavic combatants were gainfully employed to wage war across a number of fronts, and bring conflict even father afield, even to Constantinople.

DANES, SLAVS,
BOHEMIANS AND
HUNGARIANS WENT ON
A SPREE OF
DESTRUCTION

MANY CHURCHES WERE
DESTROYED

IN EFFECT CHRISTIANITY
WAS WIPED OUT IN
SLAVIA

THE SAXONS AND
SLAVS WERE DEVOUT
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AFTER THE
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SON

THE SLAV MISSIONS
FAILED REPEATEDLY

THE PAGAN DANES AND
SLAVS JOINED FORCES

These audacious pagan military gambles, which split asunder the dominion of the western Christian emperor, were not only a reaction against the new faith, but the burgeoning taxes of greedy Dukes like Billung.³³⁹ Between 911 and 918 the Hunnish Magyars devastated all the German and Saxon provinces east of the Rhine River, and even fell upon Francia and Lotharingia, on the other side of the Rhine.³⁴⁰ During that same period a double-foe emerged, a combined Dano-Slavic force that unleashed a wave of terror in Saxony. One of the key figures in this incursion into the Holy Roman Empire was Gorm a 'savage worm'³⁴⁰ with a ferociously anti-Christian spirit. *'In his determination utterly to destroy Christianity in Denmark, he drove the priests out of his territories and even tortured many to death.'*³⁴⁰

THE EMPEROR
RETAIATED

In retribution King Henry began a series of retaliatory strikes against the heathen hosts which had violated the Imperial frontier. Attacking them one by one, he assailed first the Magyars with devastating effectiveness, then the Northern Serbs and Bohemians of Central Europe. Next he repeatedly triumphed over large formations of Slavs fielded by diverse tribes between 928 and 932, and again in 933-934 AD. His grand finale though, was an invasion of Denmark, where he beat Gorm into submission, and pushed northward the border as far as the Eider River. Though Gorm remained adamantly hateful of Christianity, King Henry still gained sufficient concessions to enable missionaries to operate there, if somewhat tenuously. The task of co-ordinating this missionary effort was left to Archbishop Unni, the only recorded preacher to attempt conversions on Danish soil since the failed missions of Ansgar and Rimbert some 70 years previously.

HE INVADED DENMARK
AND PLACED
MISSIONARIES THERE

A DUKE HATCHED A
PLOT AGAINST THE
EMPEROR

Newly appointed to the Dukedom, Bernhard planned insurrection against the Western emperor.³⁴¹ To bring his conspiracy to fruition he stirred dissension among the Saxons, inflicting debilitating tyrannies on those who would not rally behind his cause, or who supported the Church.³⁴¹ He turned on the Slavic Winuli tribe, with whom the Germans and Saxons had come to be on good terms.³⁴¹ No longer able to stomach the outrages perpetrated by the Duke, violence simmered over, as Mizzidrag and Mistovoi advocated the abandonment of Christianity, and an immediate return to paganism.³⁴¹ The act which finally tipped the Slavs over the edge was an unbearable insult which the Duke flung at them somewhere between 963-983 AD. For the Slav chief had given a thousand horsemen to the Duke to engage in his campaign against the Italians, on the promise that he could wed Bernhard's niece.³⁴¹ With most of the Slav auxiliaries dead on a far off battlefield, Bernhard rescinded the proposed marriage deal, and labelled them dogs.³⁴¹ Mistovoi's response was *'if we are dogs then we will take big bites'*.³⁴¹ By this he meant the Slavic war machine would rain down on the Germans, and do immeasurable damage. Thence began the Polish insurrections of bitter memory, that gutted huge tracts of the Holy Roman Empire.³⁴¹

HE MISTREATED THE
SLAVS, AND WHATEVER
ONES HAD CONVERTED,
RELAPSED BACK INTO
PAGANISM

MORE SLAVIC INVASIONS

SOME OF THE SLAV
RAIDERS WERE SPOKEN OF
AS CRIMINALS

The Saxon Duke Billung Ordulph, son of Bernhard II, conjured even greater troubles for the Church through his alliances with the Abrodites and Wilzi tribes.³⁴² These pacts were formed after Billung seized upon an insidious plot according to which he could consolidate his domination of the area by harnessing the Slavs into raising their deadly hand against the Franks and Saxons.³⁴² This he calculated would draw down the emperor's fullest wrath and lead to vicious reprisals against the Slavs, following which Duke Ordulph could rule the area with minimal church interference.³⁴²

EVEN ONE MISSIONARY
WAS A DANGER TO
PAGANISM

Next came a new round of wars. The chief protagonists were an unlikely bunch; some Slav chieftains and a 'bad Christian', in addition to the Duke of Saxony and his Saxon subjects, who had caused the degeneration of Christianity in their region, by cutting off funding to the churches, thereby starving out the priests.³⁴³ *'Having brought together a multitude of robbers, he (the pagan Slav Gottschalk) smote, out of vengeance for his father, the whole land of the Nordalbingians.'*³⁴⁴ There, only two well-fortified settlements escaped his unrelenting carnage, until he was captured by the Duke's forces, and slapped in irons as though he were a 'robber-chieftain'.³⁴⁴ Prior to his apprehension he had tried to arrange a truce.³⁴⁴ The wording of his peace offer was preserved, and in it he declares he would hand over the 'band of robbers' who had aided him on his retributive forays into the Holy Roman Empire.³⁴⁴ Gottschalk went to live in the court of the Danish king Canute, and served abroad with Canute's forces in Britain, as well as Normandy, distinguishing himself by his heroic exploits.³⁴⁴ This Gottschalk then married into Canute's royal family and, upon Canute's death, returned to Wendland to recover his possessions, which had been commandeered by pagans in his absence.³⁴⁴

GOTTSCHALK
CONVERTED ONE THIRD
OF THE POLES SINGLE-
HANDEDLY

Missionaries were dangerous, even just one of them. After their relapse into paganism, roughly 30% of the Polish tribesmen were re-converted through the efforts of Gottschalk alone.³⁴⁵ Whereas previously the Western Slavs received precious little tuition in the teachings of the Catholic faith, Gottschalk's new initiatives created far better pastoral care than before.³⁴⁵ New religious centres were founded by brethren at Mecklenburg, Lubeck, Ratzeburg, Lenzen and even as far as Oldenburg.³⁴⁵

It was not long after that, in 1057 AD, that pagan upheavals again revisited the Church in Western Slavia. Internecine warfare broke out between the Wilzi (ie; the tribal federation of the Circipani, Kicini, Tholenzi and Redarii) and the Luticians.³⁴⁵ The trouble makers during these hostilities were the Tholenzi, and the Redarii foremost, militants who other heathen Slavs looked towards.³⁴⁵ They sought to install themselves as Western Slav rulers, with their claims to lordship planted firmly in the pre-eminence of the pagan holy sites gracing their domains, and the greatness of their noble stock.³⁴⁵

*'The Redarii and Tholenzi desire to rule because of the high antiquity of their stronghold and the great reputation of the fane in which there is exhibited an image of Redigast. They claimed for themselves special preferment in respect of nobility because, on account of the oracle and the annual offerings of sacrifices they were frequently visited by all the Slavic people'.*³⁴⁶

And there is no forgetting the influence of the Rani;

*'Now the Rani, who are called Runi by others, are a fierce people who dwell in the heart of the sea. They are given beyond measure to idolatry. They maintain a primacy over every Slavic tribe and have a king and a very celebrated fane. Wherefore, too, on account of the special veneration paid this fane, they hold first claim to respect. Although they impose their yoke on many, they themselves are subject to no one's yoke, since they are hard to reach by reason of the nature of their situation'.*³⁴⁷

Following the collapse of the Church's infra-structure during the pagan uprisings, the Slav temples were built anew. These resurrected Western Slav pagan temples were not re-modelled or refurbished Christian churches. After all, every last one of the chapels had been burned to the ground.³⁴⁸ But in a very short space of time immense capital outlays were made to rebuild the heathen temples.³⁴⁸ For their part, overseas contributors helped make this happen all the quicker; probably pagans sympathetic to the cause.³⁴⁸

Some clergy felt it was best to keep lobbying certain Slav rulers, to see if they could re-convert the Wends tribe by tribe. Bishop Gerold made one such risky venture into Slavia. After visiting the court of a prominent Wendish pagan, bishop Gerold recalled the following:

*'Still the cups of the Slavs were neither sweet nor pleasing to us because we saw the shackles and diverse kinds of instruments of torture which they were wont to use on the Christians brought here from Denmark. We saw there priests of the Lord, emaciated by their long detention in captivity, whom the bishop could not help either by force or by prayer'.*³⁴⁹

These incarcerated Danes were religious prisoners, layfolk and clergy, held by the Western Slavs. They languished there not because of their race or political persuasion, but because of their faith. Such sufferings were a foretaste of what the pagans themselves might expect in Christian jails once the tide had turned against them.

But there were other issues. The Ottonian emperors were supposedly supportive of the papacy, and leading lights in the reform papacy's push to wipe out simony and any other non-canonical heretical vice within the clergy, that seemed linked with the old ways. This succeeded in getting the German clergy off side, because his policies constituted a direct attack on them. The truth is, I believe, that the German clergy, like every level of German and Saxon society, was deeply connected with the pagan Western Slavs. They were in no mood to take Rome's judaised version of the faith to the Wends in the East. They simply refused to go. Despite this we have cause to wonder about the secret allegiances of Otto, who was addressed by the non-reformist Avignon Pope Sylvester II (himself of

MORE OUTBREAKS OF WARFARE WITH THE POLES

CERTAIN WENDISH TRIBES WERE POSITIONING THEMSELVES AS REGIONAL LEADERS

THE PAGANS BEGAN AN INTENSE PERIOD OF TEMPLE BUILDING

THEY RECEIVED OVERSEAS DONATIONS

A BISHOP VISITED AN INFLUENTIAL SLAV TO TRY AND RESOLVE THE CONFLICT

DURING THE FEAST HE WAS SHOWN A NUMBER OF DANISH CHRISTIANS HELD PRISONER BY THE PAGAN WENDS

THE EMPEROR IN HIS
ZODIAC CAPE

'suspect' nature) as *'ever august Caesar ... my Glorious Lord Otto'*.³⁵⁰ Now Otto does not seem to have been the sort of ruler that later apostolic popes would have hoped for, somehow steeped in the Mithraic mysteries. He partook of ceremonial banquets at a horse-shoe table, that sat atop a dais, just as the brotherhood once did.³⁵⁰ Before him, onlookers and his many attendants witnessed the unfolding proceedings, bowing, in eastern fashion,³⁵⁰ in his presence. Apocalyptic motifs decorated his full robes,³⁵⁰ and *gold filagree zodiac signs* his cape.³⁵⁰ In his hands rested the orb of dominion, and a spear granting temporal power, otherwise known as the Spear of Longinus, or the Holy Lance (the Roman spear supposedly used to pierce Christ's heart as he hanged on the cross).³⁵⁰ A web of special, nay secretive offices were instituted by him, each bearing some semblance to those of Ancient Rome.³⁵⁰ If Otto III's personal entourage of clergy were party to the same warrior-priesthood, who in a very Mithraic way were also worshipping Jesus as an incarnation of *Sol Invictus* it may explain a recurring tradition of Christian warrior-priests. Boniface wrote *'We have forbidden the servants of God to wear showy or martial dress or to carry arms'*.³⁵¹ Similar traditions may have existed in Ireland. One Irish bishop of the blood, Cormac Mac Cuilleannain, had his seat at Cashel. He once dreamt of installing himself as the High King of Ireland, but his grab for power perished, as he fell mortally wounded in the thick of battle. Obviously he fancied himself as a bit of a warrior, not to mention a fitting king. Perhaps the military orders of Templars and Hospitalers were the last vestiges of this Christian sub-cult, an outgrowth of the ancient Mithraic mysteries.

SLOWLY THE EMPEROR
WORE DOWN THE
RESISTANCE OF THE SLAVS

Having eventually subdued many of the Slavs, the Frankish emperor put forth his desire for the right of political control over the entire Slavic East, but Pope Agapitus II allowed them as far as the Oder river only.³⁵² Agapitus was a man much preoccupied with the task of reforming the German clergy, and, in addition to that, intent on extending the influence of the Catholic Church over the pagan Scandinavians and Slavs. The sway of the Frankish emperors was to be halted there for the pope did not grant the German clergy permission to go proselytising in areas which it personally sought to tackle.³⁵² This might have been due to suspicions he held concerning undesirable influences in the German clergy at that time. Otherwise the pope might simply have wanted to curtail the emperors military exploits, where campaigns were conducted under a vague pretext of evangelisation. But the tide changed, as anti-reformists periodically gained power at the Vatican.

HE WANTED TO REVERSE
THE SITUATION AND
INVADE THEIR
HOMELANDS

UNDER THE OTTONIANS,
THE HOLY ROMAN EMPIRE
WENT FROM STRENGTH
TO STRENGTH

The creation of an exulted German nation under the Ottonians caused much disquiet among the other crown heads of Europe.³⁵³ Nevertheless Otto III (reigning 996-1002 AD) did manage to gain the upper hand in Germany, perhaps riding high on the nationalistic sentiments of a Germany which had climbed to ascendancy over the French under his family. Thus he began implementing his designs in the east, which were intended to win the Slavs over to the papal cause; since he desired to place the Poles and Magyars under the jurisdiction of the papacy, thus freeing them of the German Church.³⁵³ Under the standards of the emperor, Frankish troops waged war against the pagan Slavs who offered strong resistance to the overtures of Christianity. On the death of the last Ottonian emperor (1002 AD), his successor Henry, a Bavarian Duke, together with Polish mercenaries, attacked the Poles once again, and proved so victorious that his troops marched into Bohemia.³⁵³ Little quarter was given, with pagan Slav war prisoners often strung up.³⁵³ This came back to bite them during the 1030 AD pagan Polish uprisings against the Church, when many clergy were murdered.³⁵³

A MASSACRE OF SLAVIC
WAR PRISONERS IN
BOHEMIA

CONVERTED SLAVS
SWAPPED SIDES, JOINING
FORCES WITH THE
CHRISTIAN EMPEROR

As constantly relapsing heathens they were seen by the Franks as 'stinking' lawless brigands; debased and most untrustworthy. And yet once they had converted to Christianity their 'stink' disappeared in some people's eyes, as Slavs were granted their own autonomy by Emperor Otto, who ensured that they were very favourably treated. Might it not be that the stench disappeared once they ceased using urine in their purificatory ablutions? Otto probably had some understanding of the Slavic mind, after all his wife, the Empress, was formerly a Rus' princess. While many Saxons were significantly allied to the Slavs, other Franks and Saxons wanted nothing whatsoever to do with them, for the Slavs (the Poles especially), were supposed to have been *'born criminals'*.³⁵⁴ It seems evident that Otto's animosity towards them centred not so much on the Slavs as an ethnic group, but on their staunch adherence to the pagan faith in the face of Christianity. By converting, many Slavs at once regained the friendship and respect of the Germans. Indeed many of these Western Slavs accompanied the Teutonic knights on their crusades further to the East.³⁵⁵ Paradoxically, the emperor's evangelisation plans for the East caused fissures to

appear within Frankish society. Not all Germans were in favour of converting the pagan Slavs, and would have preferred it if the emperor left them well alone.³⁵⁶ No doubt those who held such sympathies were in some way related to the Slavs in either an ancestral or religious sense, and might have been fearful of what would happen to the Slavs once the upgraded Ottonian military machine bore down upon them.

Many Western Slavs lived in the German states of Thuringia and Brandenburg, especially the Lutizian tribe.³⁵⁷ Naturally Saxons had elaborate ties with them, largely through intermarriage, especially at a royal level, and had initially been reluctant to go crusading against them.³⁵⁶ But beginning with the Anti-Slav battles of 930 AD, Saxons and Lotharingians (at the instigation of Otto III) became steadily more embroiled in warfare against these Western Slavs.³⁵⁶

Despite the large number of Frankish troops deployed in the East, the evangelisation missions to the Wends and Magyars (dating to the mid to late 10th Century AD), were predominantly spearheaded by the Czech bishop Adalbert, under the patronage of their princes. The Czechs appear to have been staunch allies of the Catholic Church in this respect. So highly regarded and trusted were they that Pope Sylvester II placed on the head of King Steven a crown imparting the apostolic right to found Czech parishes as he saw fit; no small gift during an age when the papacy eyed the many surrounding monarchs with deep suspicion, and sought to remove their powers of lay investiture. Owing to the timely diplomatic marriage of their princess Dobrawa to the Polish Duke Mieszko, the Poles abandoned the old ways in favour of the Cross of Calvary, and in 966 AD became a nascent Catholic state. And like a falling domino, next came the conversion of the Hungarians. Thus the Hungarians and the Poles became committed allies of the papal State (rather than the Frankish Church) on the very periphery of Western Christendom.

Without question the pagans who had crossed over into the Christian faith must have found the whole experience very confusing, for they were greeted by vistas of bickering, faction-riddled Churchmen from the Frankish Catholic Church, not to mention Orthodox missionaries. In the Balkans, amid the strife caused by the jockeying for political control of the region (by the Eastern and Western Church), it was not uncommon for the average Slav or Bulgar to become lost amid the disputation. This is precisely the thing Alcuin warned of during Charlemagne's attempts to convert the Saxons. Alcuin, a clergyman acting as advisor to the Frankish monarch, implored his liege not to baptise by the sword without properly teaching the newly-conquered barbarians the basic precepts of the Christianity. Little heed was paid to his words. The Slavs had been 'converted' and 'baptised', yet had little understanding of the faith. In time this changed due to the efforts of far-sighted missionaries like Cyrill and Methodius, but even still the political agenda was never far from away on the horizon. And so it all turned sour.

Although the Poles had converted in the late 10th Century AD, they began relapsing into paganism soon after.³⁵⁷ Accordingly, Saxon-orchestrated, anti-Slav crusades began anew during the 12th Century, which caused Pope Eugenius III great disappointment.³⁵⁷ All they succeeded in doing was solidifying the pagan resistance, and unravelling the past gains made by missionaries sent into that area.

In Ukrainian and Belorussian we find the word *kostjol*, which meant 'a Catholic Church'.³⁵⁸ It is related to the Polish *kościol*, the Czech *kostel*, which have the same meaning. This says something about the Catholic Church's tenuous state of security in Western Slavia, for in the Latin and Old High German such words indicate 'a castle or fortification' rather than 'a church'. There was a preponderance of lay invested parishes in Germany prior to the medieval papal reforms, and many were no doubt situated inside the castles of their sponsors. Even so this did not lead to a surviving linguistic correlation between 'a fortification' and 'a church' in Germany or Rome. Since *kostjol* and variants of it are not found in the Baltic languages this connection is unlikely to have arisen during the Northern crusades. Therefore the overlaying of both concepts most likely dates to the 10th Century attacks visited on the Church by the Hungarians and Slavs. As a result churches of the period were probably heavily fortified.

That it does not appear in the Serbo-croat, Rumanian, or Hungarian is problematic, and suggestive that Polish and Czech parishes were particularly risky places in former times, more so than in the Balkans. Either churches were regularly attacked, or priests and bishops were vulnerable to assassination; hence the need for permanent protection.

That the connection is preserved in the Belorussian and Ukrainian suggests that these populations were living in

MANY SLAVS LIVED ON GERMAN SOIL

SLAVS INTERBRED WITH THE SAXONS AND GERMANS

THE CHURCH HATED IT

THE POPE WAS FAR MORE INTERESTED IN HAVING THE CZECHS EVANGELISE THE SLAVS

THE CZECHS PROVED SUCCESSFUL

PAGANS WOULD HAVE BEEN CONFUSED BY THE POLITICAL SITUATION WITHIN CHRISTIANITY

THEY BEGAN RELAPSING INTO PAGANISM, DISSATISFIED WITH THE NEW FAITH AND ITS DEEP POLITICS

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH NEEDED FORTIFIED PARISHES

close proximity to fortified Catholic parishes, or were mixing with people who worshiped at such places. Either situation is likely considering that Orthodox Belorussia and the Ukraine abutted the remotest of Catholic regions.

The conversion of the Slavs and the mission to Kiev

ST ANDREW SUPPOSEDLY
BROUGHT CHRISTIANITY
INTO SCYTHIA

The origins of Christianity in Russia are exceedingly vague, and traceable to a period many centuries earlier than what is normally supposed. In truth the Scythians were the first Christians to inhabit Russia, and had done so for some time prior to the 325 AD Nicaean council. Scythians kindly supplied their own ecclesiastical delegates to this first synod;

PERSIAN AND SCYTHIAN
BISHOPS ARRIVED AT THE
NICAEAN COUNCIL OF
325 AD

*'A Persian bishop too was present at this conference, nor was even a Scythian found wanting to the number. Pontus, Galatia and Pamphylia, Cappadocia, Asia and Phrygia, furnished their most distinguished prelates...'*³⁵⁹

Scythian parishes probably continued to exist throughout most of the 400's. I say this because of what *Canon 28 of Chalcedon* stated, written in 451 AD;

PARISHES EXISTED IN
BARBARIAN DISTRICTS

*'For the Fathers (ie; the Church Fathers) rightly granted privileges to the throne of old Rome, because it was the royal city. And the 150 most religious bishops, actuated by the same consideration, gave equal privileges to the most holy throne of New Rome ... and enjoys equal privilege with the old imperial Rome, should in ecclesiastical matters also be magnified as she is, and rank next after her; so that, in the Pontic, the Asian and the Thracian dioceses, the metropolitans only and such bishops also of the dioceses aforesaid as are among the barbarians, should be ordained by the aforesaid most holy throne of the most holy church of Constantinople.'*³⁶⁰

CONSTANTINOPLE WAS
GRANTED
ECCLESIASTICAL POWER
THROUGHOUT THE EAST

In this passage the Holy See of Constantinople possessed equal privileges to those of Rome, especially the right to deliberate on ecclesiastical matters in the eastern jurisdiction in the same way Rome did in the West. Eastern ordinations became the preserved domain of Constantinople. Note also the existence of *dioceses which were situated in 'barbarian' regions*. It is plausible that this is a reference to Scythian dioceses, in addition to the Anatolian, Balkan and Asiatic dioceses.

SCYTHIAN MONKS AND
THEOLOGAINS
PERIODICALLY
TRAVELLED TO ROME

Later, just after 520 AD, during a time when Rome was embroiled in problems arising from the smoky aftermath of Chalcedon we discover that Christianity was still present in Scythia. Scythian monks appeared in Rome seeking St *Hormisdas* (the then Bishop of Rome) to discuss a possible solution to the crisis, a novel teaching which they had put together. This became known as the Theopaschite formula.³⁶¹ Though essentially in accordance with the anti-monophysite stance of Chalcedonian christology, the Scythian formula was rejected as having monophysite affiliations. Yet it might also be that this home-grown brain-child of the Scythian monks was formulated by peace-makers, hoping to provide an equitable solution to the Chalcedonian schism. Anyhow it did not gain endorsement for fear that monophysite adherents could subvert its intended meaning and turn it to their own use.

CHRISTIANITY
DISAPPEARS DURING THE
EARLY 6TH CENTURY AD

And it is at this point, some time after 519 AD, that we lose track of any reference to Christianity in Scythia. For some reason pagan dualism displaced the ancient Christian Church of Scythia (however big or small it may have been) and found favor with the Slavs until officially ousted by Vladimir after his 989 AD decision to (re-)baptize the cities of Russia.

MISSIONARIES ATTEMPT
TO RE-CONVERT THE
SLAVS

The almost impossible task of re-evangelising the Slavs began around 850 AD when Constantinople, under Patriarch Photius, tasked St's Cyril and Methodius with bringing the word of God to the Slavs. These two saints became champions of the Slav cause and, with papal blessing, were instrumental in having the Slavic tongues introduced into Christian worship, by translating the Bible using the cyrillic alphabet. This legacy of the written word still remains today, a virtual insignia of Slavic society.³⁶²

So it came to pass that German clergy represented the Western Church at the polemical mission to Vladimir of

Kiev during the reign of Pope John XV, at which legates from Islam, Judaism, and the Byzantine Church also arrived. Unwilling to trust in the mere words of delegates and underlings, the Russian royals decided to send trusted nobles abroad to see these other faiths in action for themselves. What particularly struck the Slavic boyars (nobles) when they visited the native countries of these faiths was that the grandeur of Byzantine architecture and Church ritual outshone by a very great degree everything else they had witnessed among the German Catholics, the Khazarian Jews and the now Islamic Bulgars of the Upper Volga. Certainly German Church buildings were more primitive during the 10th Century and would have seemed insignificant when compared with the engineering and artistic magnificence of the Byzantine Hagia Sophia basilica, for it was not until the 12th Century that the awe-inspiring medieval western cathedrals were built. Largely unimpressed by what they saw elsewhere the Slavs gravitated towards what was arguably the greatest Empire in the world; Byzantium. It had it all; power, majesty, and wealth. Despite their acceptance of Byzantine ecclesiastical influence, the Rus' Khagan and subsequent generations of reigning princes continued to interact with the papacy for many centuries.

GERMAN PRIESTS
TRAVELLED TO KIEV

THE RUSSIAN KHAGAN
DECIDED TO ALIGN
HIMSELF WITH
CONSTANTINOPLE

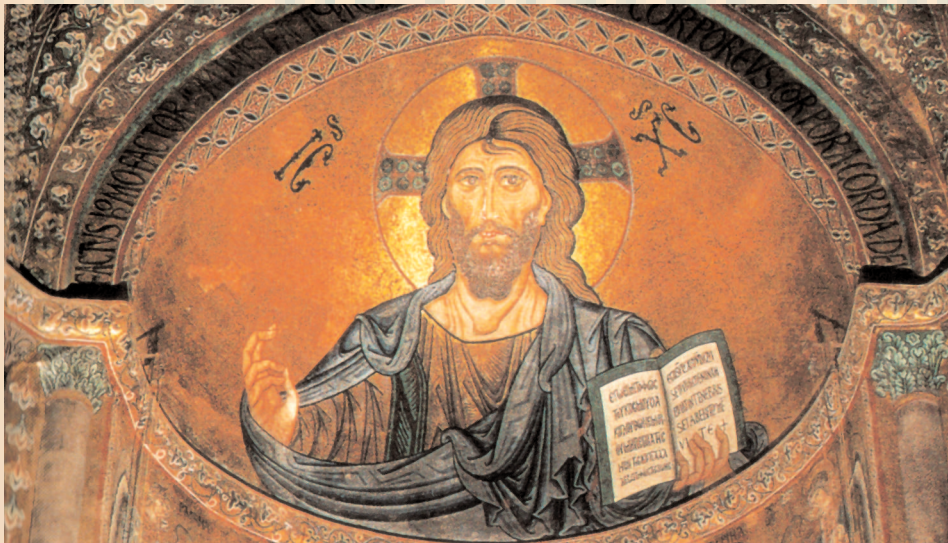


Fig 16. Jesus Christ on the dome of the Hagia Sopia basilica, Istanbul

During the 10th Century AD German, Bulgar and Byzantine Christian missionaries sent their own representatives to Kiev bearing aloft the message of Christ to the (Magian) heathen Khagan Vladimir. And so began the lead up to Russia's adoption of Apostolic Christianity, for the conversion of the Eastern Slavs took place more through diplomacy than by punitive military expeditions, such as were pitted against the Magyars and Western Slavs. It is unlikely that these missionaries even faintly understood what was required to convert the Eastern Slavs, but most assuredly Vladimir did. Following his baptism under the Byzantine rites, Vladimir gathered sufficient troops and a number of Byzantine clergymen and set off for Mother Russia, cross in hand. Whether Vladimir prepared the entourages of priests from Tsargrad and the Crimea for what their eyes would see upon crossing the Rus' frontier is hard to say; certainly their priestly tutors couldn't have. Split-level sunken temples, towers, idol sanctuaries, sacred fires, white and black magic, demon-worship, astrology, magus-mounds, writing, human sacrifice, towered celestial observatories. These were elements of a civilisation that in some respects technologically surpassed that of Byzantium, and yet threatened to destroy it. The 2,000 wheeled-ship attack on Tsargrad in 907 AD (found in the *Primary Chronicle* and Byzantine sources) proved they were of some concern.

CHRISTIAN PRIESTS
WERE PROBABLY
DISTURBED BY WHAT
THEY ENCOUNTERED
INSIDE RUSSIA

At once St Vladimir's newly baptised troops began their search for the pagan *Volkhvy* (Old Russian: 'Magi'), a prey who, like the wolves, proved most difficult to track. Catching wind of Vladimir's surprise plans for conversion, many *Volkhvy* were spirited away by the *Boyar* nobles, or fled to more secluded locations, where they were likely to evade detection. As the new lawful faith of the people, the Church had to try and 'install piety and reverence into the heathen', but the job was beyond measure. Trouble was brewing, sworn alliances between the *Volkhvy* and the princes, merchants, nobility and the private standing armies of the *boyari*, guaranteed safe-havens for the *Volkhvy* that stayed on. Others migrated out into the deepest recesses of the forests, or to the militant pagan strongholds of

VLADIMIR'S PERSONAL
TROOPS WERE BAPTISED

THE VOLKHVY MAGI
WERE OUTLAWED

the Baltic states, and rural Bulgaria. The Baltic forever remained a wasp's nest of paganism, vitriolically repulsing any form of Church expansion onto their turf. This same area, *Askala*, 'Land of the Wizards' was festooned with indigenous Baltic Magi.³⁶³ In the Balkans, too, the cup of heresy was filled to overflowing, and spilled out into Europe and Byzantium, making them drunk on such heady brews as Bogomilism, the new association of heretical sects galvanised under the 'Black Pope', the supposed grand master of all heresies (ie; the head of the pagan religious apparatus).³⁶⁴

It has long been assumed the conversion polemic was called by Vladimir, due to evolving political and economic considerations. While these two factors might have played a major part in it, I believe that deep down there was a religious reason for their having to abandon the old pagan faith.

Vladimir's rejection of the Muslim delegate allows us to delve inside his mind. When the Muslim told him that by converting to Islam he and his people would be required to give up pork and alcohol, Vladimir dismissed their religion on the spot, exclaiming, '*Our forefathers followed no such teaching*'.³⁶⁵ Here his thought processes become accessible. The religion he expected to adopt had to be practically identical to the old faith, or at least partly based on it. That Muslim prohibitions on pork and alcohol were sufficient to have them immediately discounted from the selection process, was as much a testimony to the expected continuation of libations inside the new faith, as it was the expectation that the new faith would in some way be allied with the teachings of his ancestors.

The writer of the *Primary Chronicle* had his own agenda to think about; it is clearly a political-religious document, rather than a strictly historical treatise. This is something I have been very careful to take into account when using anything from it. While *it does contain a large amount of invaluable historical source material*, it is more famous for what it does not tell the reader. And, I hasten to add, it is a far cry from Roman Catholic documentation from the period, which, in addition to its many references to good things, hung out its dirty washing for all to see.

I have found no evidence of blatant lying in it, but put simply, it is one of the best acts of censorship you're ever likely to see. It served to steer the mind of the reader in certain directions, rather than record for posterity a full account of what the Russian pagan world looked like before the advent of Christianity, or preserve the exact nature of the polemic which led to the conversion of the Russes.

The order in which the delegates were seen by Vladimir was Muslims, German Catholics, Jews, and Byzantine Orthodox Christians. The Chronicle has only a few brief things to say about what the first three faiths put forward. The Chronicler writes that he could not record what the Muslims said during the Polemic, out of sheer decency. The Catholic emissary's speech was several sentences long if you are to believe the Chronicle. In no way does it explain Christianity from a Catholic viewpoint, and likewise very little was written about what the Jews said. When at last we reach the Byzantine delegate, we see a lengthy discourse lasting 12 pages!

But it does yield some interesting morsels of information. The forefathers of the Slavs were not circumcised. Herodotus mentioned in the *Histories*, that circumcision was a peculiar custom practiced only by the Egyptians, and those who they taught it to, namely the Jews and the Armenians.

Vladimir's mention that his forefathers practiced no such fasting to the German emissary *sent by the pope*, tells us that Vladimir's pagan faith was not Manichaean in nature; asceticism and restraining the sexual act was not part of the old faith. While the Magi believed that gluttons would be thin in hell, and the malnourished robust in heaven, this did not cause them to recommend fasting, in fact they disdained it. On the contrary white families partook of religious feasts, and shared their food with those who had less. Food was good and wholesome, a gift from God.

And so he chose to formally ally his Church with Byzantium. The Church of early Russes did not possess its own nationalistic autonomy, but was under the direct authority of Constantinople (Tsargrad). Its first 70 or so years were spent in brotherly communion with Rome, largely in name only, thereafter it became exclusively answerable to Byzantium. All Rus' metropolitans (arch-bishops) were appointed by the Greeks, but the *Velikiy Knyaz'* or *Khagan* had a right of veto concerning any prospective metropolitan. In turn the metropolitan could appoint bishops, who in turn ordained *soyashchenniki* and *popi* to serve in their own diocese.

Whilst effectively being an agency of a foreign power, the early Russian missionary Church was still permitted freedom of operation by the prince, partly as a diplomatic concession, and partly on account of his gradual

VLADIMIR REJECTED
ISLAM, BECAUSE IT
REQUIRED THINGS HIS
FOREFATHERS NEVER
EXPECTED

EVENTUALLY THE
RUSSIAN CHURCH
BECAME AUTONOMOUS

embrasure of the Orthodox Catholic faith.

With the establishment of the Church's rights by the formal first statute of the year 996 AD, the Russian Church became for all intents and purposes a powerful and legitimate socio-political entity.³⁶⁶ Prior to this time Christianity was an impotent political force, devoid of any authority amongst the Russes. As always the countryside proved an untouchable seed bed of the old ways, separated from the early Russian missionary centers by considerable distances and thick forests. From that time the Rus' Church could expect the total support of the secular authorities, especially with regard to the implementation of Christian laws and the mission of conversion. After 1054 AD adherents of Roman traditions were most likely seen as followers of untruth, and vice versa.

1054 AD - The Great Schism

With several unresolved issues at hand, and the bishop of Rome (by virtue of NT; *Matthew 16: 13-19*) increasingly asserting primacy in religious doctrine over the immovable eastern Patriarchs, Christendom was fast on a collision course with major schism. While the physical distance between Rome and Constantinople was great, differences of opinion about the ways the two camps enacted the scriptures were not nearly as distant, but significant. Issues such as purgatory, the type of bread used during mass, the filioque and the use of statues proved difficult to solve. For the East the inclusion of "and the Son" to the Apostolic creed was the last straw. The Holy See of Rome (due to the modifications made to the creed by the German bishops), they believed, had gone too far this time. The inability to resolve these vexing questions led, in 1054 AD, to not the first, but certainly the greatest schism of Christianity, one which led to an ideological partition between the eastern and western parts of christendom. The fact that these individual Churches were so similar in their beliefs made the rifts of this time all the more ironic and tragic for all concerned. In that year, the Papacy and Constantinople exchanged anathemas which stayed binding until 7 December 1965. Until then Orthodoxy and Roman Catholicism regarded each other as heretics.

The fledgling Church in 10th Century Rus' was cognisant of the Pope's seniority amongst bishops until the time of the split. No doubt some polarisation did occur between pro and anti-papists, with supporters of the Papacy moving closer to Poland. Germany, France, Italy, Poland, Moravia, Bohemia, Croatia, Hungary and Transylvania stayed with Roman traditions, under the title Roman Catholic. Byzantium, Cyprus, Georgia, Bulgaria, Serbia, Makedonia, Rus' and Ossetia parted with their "latin" brothers, as the Orthodox Churches.

In the main, most Christians barely knew of the major rifts emerging between the hierarchies of Rome and Constantinople. Instead they were absorbed in the problems of day to day living, or more importantly trying to lift Christianity up from the mire of local pagan fervour and "impenitence".

The misdemeanors of Bohemund I, Reynald of Chatillon (1st Crusade), and the 4th Crusade in the early 13th Century (in which the entire Crusade was diverted by the Venetian Doge to capture and sack Constantinople) did more damage to Church unity on a parish level, than the split could ever have done.

But that was nothing compared with Reynald's grand plan to pillage Islamic coastlines throughout Africa and Arabia using an enormous naval flotilla launched from the Mediterranean into the Red Sea.³⁶⁷ This culminated in them violating and plundering the harbours of Medina and Mecca, two of the holiest places in the Islamic world.³⁶⁷ Nothing could have so easily reactivated the tenuously dormant military pennants of Islam than this. What then ensued was protracted warfare with Saladin and a rapidly swelling Muslim army formed in response to their war-mongering.³⁶⁷ But, all the problems between Rome and Constantinople in those days were just symptomatic of Frankish-Byzantine political wranglings, and jealousies exacerbated by Charlemagne's surprise coronation by the Pontiff at Christmas in the year 800 AD, which Constantinople saw as a threat to its worldly power. This led to a confusing situation in which Christianity experienced the presence of both an Eastern and Western Roman Emperor.

From an early Russian Calendar of saints it has been ascertained that until the time of the "Great Schism" (in 1054 AD), the east and west of Christendom shared a plethora of saintly devotions.³⁶⁸ From the small selection of foreign saints published by Bishop Kallistos Ware, these included mainly English saints. There is no degree of academic consensus concerning the degree to which western (and even Byzantine) saints were venerated; some believe they were widespread, others think they existed on a much smaller scale. The fact that there is no clear picture of the number of western saints in Russia of the Middle Ages is no doubt a bi-product of inter-sect rivalry between

IN 1054 AD A SERIOUS
RIFT TORE ASUNDER THE
CHRISTIAN UNITY OF
CONSTANTINOPLE AND
ROME

ORTHODOX
CHRISTIANITY WAS
BORN

SOME WESTERN SAINTS
WERE VENERATED INSIDE
RUSSIA

Catholics and Orthodox believers as time went by.

The cults of St's Ol'ga, Boris and Gleb predominated in the early Russian Church, but besides them it has been very difficult to reconstruct folk beliefs regarding the minor saints of the early period. Some examples of saints were St's Columban, Alban, Martin of Tours, Paraskeva-Pyat'nitsa (patroness of weavers), Katherine, Joseph, Blaise, Illya (Elijah) and Valentine. Obviously there needs to be more work done if we are to expand our knowledge of the Mediaeval saints in Russia, particularly the patronages that they held. In Kievan Rus', who were the patron saints of jewellers, bee-keepers, cobblers, carpenters, inn-keepers, the blind, the sick, the mentally ill, accountants, infantrymen, cavalry, farmers? Since only a handful of transcripts appear from the thousands of birch papyri surviving from the earliest period of the Church there, I am unaware of the number of instances in which saints were mentioned. This might be the very source that enables us to rebuild a faithful Calendar of Saints during the early Russian Mediaeval period.

From the time of the schism though, any new saints were seen as particularly eastern or western in nature, so much so that one side was less likely to venerate the saints of the others faith and vice versa. There was also some degree of denigration of "rival" saints at this time. For example, although beggars were in his line of work, the marvel-working French warrior-saint, St Martin of Tours became relegated to the patronage of drunks, petty thieves and tricksters in Russia!³⁶⁹ I believe Saint Martin of Tours (the western saint of cavalry) might have been (in reality) as close to the hearts of the Slav bogatyr', as he was to the Frankish and English knights.

Foreigners venturing into Rus' might have brought their own privately sponsored priests along too, to say Mass. This is just another small reason for the existence of Western saints in the East.

All parish Churches possessed their own patron saint and therein, beneath the parish altar, resided the foundation relic of the Church, usually a personal item of the saint in question. Indeed, many saintly relics were said to possess remarkable powers, which strengthened the faith of the Church in their love of the creator. For instance the "Shroud of the Virgin Mary" (once known to have been in Constantinople) was attributed with decimating the marauding 860 AD pagan Rus' invasion tasked with taking the Holy City.

THE SHROUD RELIC OF
THE VIRGIN MARY

The dedication of a person to a saint was not to be misconstrued as worshipping the saint, but spreading the word that the Lord had a heavenly servant, higher even than a guardian angel which was available to aid, or join in prayer for the living in their earthly life. Just as angels were tasked to come to our rescue and enter into the Lord's presence under specific circumstances, so too were the saints similarly active, since in their rising to heaven, they had become like angels.

From the *Primary Chronicle* we know that some of the Norse Varangians who settled in Rus' were staunch Christians ready to die for the faith. Some might have received baptism back home in Scandinavia as a result of St Ansgar's or Unni's missions (by Roman rites), whilst others (that saw service in the Varangian guard) entered the Church via the Byzantine rite. The major spin off of this amongst early Rus' Christian communities was a *unique* inter-familiarity between both rites. Western customs were widely tolerated, but probably not widespread. Rarely though did small chapels of a thoroughly western nature exist, except perhaps amongst the Varangian colonies. St Olav's Church built by the Norsemen in Novgorod was perhaps one such example of Western religiosity in the East. This was where the famed King Olav Tryggvason supposedly went to mass during his formative years in Novgorod. In a 13th Century Russian account of those times, we are further told that,

*"The Norwegian king Olav went to the court of Vladimir' in Gardarike (ie; Rus') and there he went with him to the (pagan) temple, and having brought the sacrifice to the idols, Olav stood behind the door, and awaited prince Vladimir'."*³⁷⁰

Catholic Church reforms in the Middle Ages

The tussle between the Scandinavian King Svein and a German archbishop was noted by Adam of Bremen. The seriousness of this particular clash between a representative of the Church and a crowned head of state, epitomised the reform papacy's struggle to totally eliminate a range of practices seen as serious heresy;

KING SVEIN CENSURED
FOR HIS INCESTUOUS
MARRIAGE

King Svein *'by and by forgot the heavenly King as things prospered with him and married a blood relative from Sweden. This mightily displeased the lord archbishop, who sent legates to*

the rash king, rebuking him severely for his sin'. Excommunication would surely follow if Svein failed to comply. 'Beside himself with rage, the king .. threatened to ravage ... the whole diocese of Hamburg. Unperturbed ... our archbishop, reproving and entreating, remained firm'. Eventually 'the Danish tyrant was prevailed upon by letters from the pope to give his cousin a bill of divorce.... Soon after he put aside his cousin he took to himself other wives and concubines, and again still others'.³⁷¹

HE THREATENED TO LEVEL THE BISHOPRIC

During the Middle Ages it was noted that royalty and simoniacal members of the clergy had very many concubines who were financed by the parish. These were often hearth girls who carried the children of priests in their wombs. Again all of this was contrary to Church canon law. Clerical unchastity was outlawed and vigorously policed during the 11th Century AD, especially during the reigns of Pope Leo IX, Stephen IX, Nicholas II, and Alexander II. These were just some of the popes responsible for reforming a Church, which according to the *New Catholic Encyclopedia* was bordering on decadent. However the complex reasons for the so-called decadence have not been apparent to everyone. In any case, these popes did not enjoy the full support of the Church elsewhere. In Germany and France indigenous clergy reviled Rome's attempts to reform the Saxon and Germanic priesthood. Alexander II's edict that married priests were no longer permitted to serve at mass would have incensed not only the covert and overt Magian converts within the clergy, but clergymen who had nothing whatsoever to do with them, and whose only wrong was to be married.³⁷² These men too paid the price.

CLERICAL UNCHASTITY AND SIMONY WERE NOTED

THE PAPACY INTRODUCED POLICIES TO ELIMINATE THESE PRACTICES

Around 1063 AD, the pace of reform was reaching dizzy levels, with successive popes dispatching powerful and trusted deputies abroad to ensure that reforms were being implemented. As time progressed, the inquisitors became intertwined with the business of Church reform. Via such agencies, the papacy hoped to discover what was *really* happening out there in Christendom. Certainly it successfully identified reprobate clerics and nuns, who Rome hoped to expel from the Church; such as an inner circle of five simoniacs (Magians or Magian-Christians) acting as advisors to the emperor.

THE POPE DEMANDED CONTROL OF ALL GERMAN PARISHES

The last straw came when Gregory VII decreed the German emperor was no longer to have any say over his bishops, who were to be placed under full papal control. Similarly, his right to oversee lay investiture was rescinded, where a specific appointment had not been countenanced by Rome. This robbing of the emperor's powers over the German Church provoked a synod of Frankish bishops at Worms which renounced the pope and discourteously installed bishops favourable to the emperor in major sees across Germany and Italy. In retaliation, Gregory invoked the penalty of excommunication against Emperor Henry IV. By this stage the pope had lost the support of some thirteen Cardinal bishops, and a host of other clergy. The whole issue of internal reconstruction was tearing the Catholic Church apart. Driving the wise men out of the clergy entailed a very rocky road, which must have seemed unbearable for either faction.

THE EMPEROR AND HIS BISHOPS WERE FUMING HENRY WAS EXCOMMUNICATED

As far as the Magians were concerned, the act of celibacy was believed to aid and abet the demonic forces. The pope's banning of married priests, and enforced celibacy was bound to ruffle their feathers badly, and proved to be the very decree which shunted his adversaries into even greater militancy. To add to the confusion of the period, the emperor plotted with bishops in Lombardy and France, to get them to consecrate his preferred candidates for positions in certain sees. Not wanting to be outdone, the pope inserted his own candidates into the sees instead. This frequently led to situations where archbishoprics unofficially had two archbishops, though in reality one only ever presided, since their opponent was usually militarily ousted from the city, or subjected to even worse sufferings.³⁷³ Just whose candidate prevailed depended a lot on the secular powers of local barons, dukes and lords, and how close it was to Rome. Naturally the further away it was, the less able the pope would have been to get control of the situation.

THE OLD BELIEVERS COULD NOT REMAIN CELIBATE

IT WAS AGAINST THEIR BELIEFS

So who were the unchaste priests with all the concubines? Well it is just possible that during plagues, or in times of war, when there were large numbers of casualties, there would have been a certain number of childless widows. Perhaps the priest was being a nice guy, and helped with their upkeep. But if these priests were Magian-Christians, then we might think that some were fulfilling their Magian duty to fallen kinsmen who had died without sons, by looking after their wives, and siring children by them.

Wolves' among the flock

Regarding the outbreak of witchcraft, *Malleus Maleficarum* stated that witches were present, even among the clergy.

*'...in certain territories which lie along the borders of the Rhine, nevertheless not a few clerics and lay folk of those countries, seeking too curiously to know more than concerns them...'*³⁷⁴

Despite the many synods held during the papal reform period (which denounced simony and clerical marriage), some bishops appear to have refused to implement the decrees in their own dioceses.

*In that council (at Mainz) a certain bishop of Speyer, Sigebod, who stood accused of the crime of adultery, was cleared by sacrificial ordeal. Many other measures besides were there adopted for the welfare of the Church, in the fore of which simoniacal heresy and the abomination of clerical marriage were forever condemned, over the signatures of the synod. That our archbishop, when he came home, did not keep silence about these evils is proved'.*³⁷⁵

MANY HIGH RANKING
GERMAN PRELATES
REFUSED TO IMPLEMENT
ROME'S NEW EDICTS

The last line intimates that some archbishops returned back to their respective dioceses without as much as telling anyone about the events of the Mainz synod. Such clerics obviously did not agree with the reforms. These might have been suspect bishops, who were still largely present during the 10th and later centuries;

THESE BISHOPS
FRATERNISED WITH
"FALSE-PROPHETS"

*'But there were with the bishop others, false prophets, who made promises of a far different kind, and in them he had greater faith'.*³⁷⁶

Cardinals such as La Grange are likely to have been Magian-Christians, judging by his desire to be defleshed after his death.³⁷⁷ They may have succeeded in installing one of their kind as pope. Pope John XXIII, for example, was charged not only with murder, gross sexual indecency and immorality, but *simony*. And there's that word again! Behind the ejection from office of Pope John XXIII at the Council of Constance (15th Century AD) can we discern the apprehension of an enterprising Magian dualistic infiltrator? A man politically removed by his adversaries among the bishops? Or the Church's rebuttal of a man greatly weak in the flesh, who was dragging the papal seat into disrepute, turning into little more than a sham during his reign?

SOME BISHOPS WERE
PROBABLY MAGIAN-
CHRISTIANS

One of the most highly placed heretical personages to have ever usurped a post inside the reformist Vatican was perhaps none other than Pope Boniface VIII, who was arraigned and convicted as a practitioner of the infernal arts after his death in 1310 AD.³⁷⁸ His principal accuser was one Nogaret, who was linked with the French monarch (the pope's main political enemy), with whom the pope had entered into a bitter struggle over taxes.³⁷⁸ Nogaret kidnapped Boniface to bring him to trial, and held him detained inside a castle.³⁷⁸ So harrowing an ordeal was it that Boniface died barely a month after being released from imprisonment by a crowd of sympathisers.³⁷⁸ Boniface VIII's successor, Pope Benedict excommunicated the intriguers who had incarcerated him.³⁷⁸ However, within a year Benedict had passed away, only to be succeeded by a French Pope, Clement V, who moved the papal throne to Avignon (*a phase during which no German cardinal bishops were recognised by the papacy*).³⁷⁸

BONIFACE VIII WAS
EVIDENTLY ONE OF THE
OLD BELIEVERS

As it stood German Popes were always related to the nobility.³⁷⁹

Clement, it just so happens, was a friend of Nogaret, Boniface's original accuser.³⁷⁸ Accordingly Clement removed the heavy sentence of excommunication from Nogaret's shoulders and ordered a full enquiry into the matter. The trail of evidence that emerged was lengthy and damning of Boniface VIII, who in prior years was called Benedict Caetani. Having missed out on election as pope the first time around, Caetani was said to have been repeatedly seen entering his private chamber, to summon up demonic serpents and beasts amid billowing clouds of incense. These supposedly made the earth belch and quake upon their arrival.³⁷⁸ On one occasion he was allegedly heard to have derided and blasted the essences within the room for not granting him the papal throne, only to receive the reply, *'It was impossible this time. Your papacy must come from us, you must not be a true, legitimate pope'*.³⁷⁸

HE IS ALLEGED TO HAVE
INVOKED SPIRITS

There was no end to the number of (supposedly hand-picked) witnesses who came forth offering evidence at Boniface's trial in 1310 AD, though later, during the Roman phase of the trial, a handful of monks provided additional accounts. These were clergy in no way connected with the power factions involved in this particular case.³⁷⁶ According to their testimony, Boniface VIII was in league with three demons, one of which was bestowed upon him as a gift by a *Hungarian* fellow.³⁷⁶ Boniface always wore a magical gem ring which contained an unspecified spiritual essence, and which carried images such as the head of an unnamed animal, images which were seen to change from time to time (perhaps a reference to his choice of different talismanic rings on a given day).³⁷⁸ A parallel can be drawn here with Magian and Chaldean gem engraving, which turned ordinary gemstones into magical talismanic devices. According to the *Malleus Maleficarum*, witches used such paraphernalia.

HE WORE MAGICAL RINGS

Fig 17. 1



Fig 17. 2

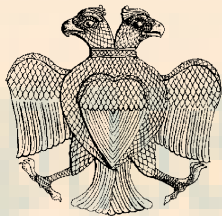


Fig 17. 3



Fig 17. 4



Fig 17. 1. A depiction of one form of Iranian headress - Note the similarity between his mitre and that of Boniface VIII. This example from a picture found at Dura Europus.

Fig 17. 2 Boniface's device might have resembled this Sassanian double-headed eagle which dates to the 6th C. AD.

Fig 17. 3. Several Popes donned mitres like that worn by Boniface. These deviated from the conventional Catholic mitre shown in 17.3.

Fig 17. 4. The controversial Pope Boniface VIII - Is this the face of the most daring heretic to ever infiltrate the Catholic Church?

One monk testified that Boniface VIII payed homage to an idol *which held a demon within it*, whom Boniface regarded as God himself.³⁷⁸ This effigy might have been made via the telestic or Chaldean art of idol making, which required that a lower *daemone* enter into the fashioned image. Far from reverencing the idol behind closed doors, Boniface thought nothing of standing for lengthy periods before the idol in plain view of the *many unconcerned guests* he had invited to attend a dinner party at his residence. Shocked at what he was witnessing, a monk who had arrived there late enquired of a guest what was going on, only to be matter-of-factly informed that Boniface VIII was worshipping the '*evil majesty*'.³⁷⁸ Another account relating to events some thirty years prior, saw him inscribing a magical circle of protection with a *sword*, as a prelude to the *slaughter of a chicken*, and the bleeding of a canister of fiery embers. To add to the mounting case against him, Boniface was not only accused of being a blaspheming apostate, who in private unashamedly attacked the core beliefs of the Church magisterium, but the murderer of Pope Celestine V, a sodomite (performed on children, amongst others by all accounts), a simoniac, as well as in

AT ONE DINNER PARTY HE PRAISED AN IDOL IN PLAIN VIEW OF THE GUESTS

IT DIDN'T BOTHER THEM IN THE SLIGHTEST

ACCUSED OF RITUAL
MAGIC

THESE REPORTS MAY
HAVE BEEN PART OF A
SMEAR CAMPAIGN

BUT THEY MIGHT HAVE
BEEN TRUE

POPE SYLVESTER

A POPE NAMED AFTER
AHURA MAZDA, THE
HIGH GOD OF THE MAGI

POPE HORMISDAS WAS
ALLIED WITH THE
OSTROGOTHS

league with the Knights Templar. The evidence fielded at trial cleaves two ways, which I will now illustrate. One interpretation is that Boniface was an innocent man who had his life destroyed by the intrigues of the French king and his co-conspirators. The trial may well have been a wicked character assassination. Perforce this required a high level conspiracy against him, spearheaded by a fistful of prevaricated testimonies based on a wide spectrum of informed knowledge about Magianism and Chaldeanism

But the other view is that the evidence was all too true. I myself have suspected that Boniface was a 'heretic' for some time. Not because of anyone's specific (supposedly libellous) account, but because of a statue of the man himself. This effigy shows him wearing a peculiar conical shaped mitre, which deviated somewhat from the types normally worn by previous popes. So numerous were Boniface's statues, that he was accused of virtually preening society for the idolatrous worship of himself. As if that isn't enough, he wore the double-headed eagle insignia,³⁸⁰ a symbol used by numerous European royal families, which can be traced back to Ancient Rome, the Turks, Persia, and finally to the Aryan Hittites. Just about every aspect of the case implicated him in the performance of the Magian Zurvanite or Chaldean rites of wizardry, which included fairly precise descriptions of the Chaldean arts. Boniface's lack of beard and long hair, plus his intense opposition to medieval defleshing customs in some quarters of the Western Church probably signify that he was a Chaldean-style wizard rather than Magian or Magian-Christian, because Chaldees only excarnated criminals.

Pope Sylvester II was yet another contender for the title of usurper. Formerly known as Gerbert of Aurelliac, Pope Sylvester was a great scholar, well versed in geography, geometry, astrology and astronomy.³⁸¹ Rumour had it that Pope Sylvester's personal concubine was an Arab witch, who taught him the most part of the sinister arts, including the fabrication of astronomical devices, terrestrial orbs and the like.³⁸² At the time of his death, gossip spread that he wanted his corpse reduced into pieces, *a rumour which in the 17th Century was found to be false* when his tomb was broken open and his remains found perfectly intact.³⁸³ Was this just wishful thinking on the part of the people, hoping for a return to the old ways, or were there other mischief makers out there trying to stir up pagan sympathies by concocting false stories? Or might his bones have been reclaimed by the heretical faithful for use as relics, and the sarcophagus filled with some unidentified corpse?

They held positions of great esteem inside the Church even in the 6th Century. In Part I, I described the Mithraic presence in Rome, Mithraism being, in effect, an outgrowth of the Magian mysteries. It was, from very early times, led by the heathen Roman *Pontifex Maximus*, who the Persians themselves termed *Magupat u airharpat Rum* (ie; the Chief of the Roman Magi and fire priests).³⁸⁴ Bearing this in mind, the existence of a Pope Hormisdas in the 6th Century AD is suggestive of a significant Magian-Christian presence within the Vatican beyond the primitive period.

The question of Pope Hormisdas³⁸⁵ (St Hormisdas) is an interesting one indeed. How is it that a Catholic pope chose to be named after the high God of the Magi (Hormisdas being derived from Ormazdes, a hellenisation of Ahura Mazda). Surely if he charmed Catholics with names like Pope Horus, Pope Hephaestus, Pope Pythagorus, Pope Jupiter, Pope Mithra or Pope Zeus academics would ask serious questions not only about his religious sub-affiliations, but the politico-religious atmosphere inside the Vatican during the early 6th Century, which could be so receptive to such a name. Instead all we hear is that the pope had a Persian name. Well it was a Persian name with a difference, and no doubt a religious statement. The saga probably began with his papal predecessor and colleague Symmarchus, whose name I believe came from the Magian deity Simurg, the fire bird. Symmarchus was a heathen convert who as a lowly deacon found himself as head of the Church toward the end of 498 AD, his election secured by the Ostrogothic king Theoderic, a Christian of the Arian persuasion. Not surprisingly this took place amid intense opposition. After all, far more senior Church prelates lost their chance to become pope, by-passed in favour of a deacon. Either the man was outstanding, or there was more to this Symmarchus than met the eye ... his bloodline I expect. His captaincy at the Holy See was marred by controversy, he himself being reproved and ignored by not a few dignitaries. Yet he is probably best known for running the Manichees (a Christian heretical cult shown next chapter) out of Rome. By my estimation, his interaction with Hormisdas, a Roman noble, runs a close second. Features of St Hormisdas' reign included interaction with Scythian monks who had found

their way to the Holy See, and the birth of his son Silverius, who would ascend the papal throne in 536. Its a recurring theme ... the son of a pope becomes vicar of Christ, in his turn. As with Symmachus, Silverius slid comfortably into position once the Gothic king's bullying was applied to his opponents, in timely fashion. What a stroke of luck it must have been for a man who had not even reached the trifling level of deacon!

As for whether a large faction of Magian-sympathetic clergy existed at the dawn of the Church we must resort to an analysis of the names used by bishops in the four Holy Sees until 324, as supplied by Eusebius. Amongst them we find a Symmachus a bishop at Jerusalem somewhere between 138 and 161 AD. Then there was Elagabalus (Rome 218 AD), Babylas (Antioch c. 238 AD), and unquestionably Mazabanes (Jerusalem c. 249),³⁸⁶ not to mention Bishop Cyrus of Poti.³⁸⁷ In all it amounts to a very small percentage with positions of eminence within apostolic Sees. Even so, none were so bold as to use the name Hormisdas. Clearly times were different in 6th Century Rome. Perhaps Gothic pre-Christian religious sensibilities and clout were the decisive factor.

Somewhere between the mid-740's and 780's AD, an Irish bishop from the diocese of Salzburg (perhaps Virgilius) had loyalist Catholic clergy foaming at the mouth, by postulating that there was another world beneath ours, complete with its own sun and moon.³⁸⁸ With only a little imagination it is possible to glean that he was spreading the word about the 'counterworld', or *antichthon* as the Greeks called it. The counterworld was where demons lived, a miserable, light-starved precinct. As the opposite of heaven high, the counterworld contained an infinitely-enormous, bottomless abyss, the lowest point of existence.

In the writings of St Boniface, two notorious heretical priests are recorded as having been tried before an emotionally charged Roman synod in 745 AD, which led to their imprisonment.³⁸⁹ One of the many errors divulged at the hearing was that Christ had descended into the underworld in order to resurrect not only Christians, but pagan idol-worshippers.³⁸⁹ The more damaging of these and other schismatics claimed to be apostles specially sent by God, living saints who charged their many followers to build chapels and churches in their honour while they were still alive.³⁸⁹ Catholic bishops listened on in horror as their diverse heretical doctrines were read from 'abominable' writings which they had assembled and circulated to the faithful, texts that the synod unanimously condemned to be burned, but on better judgement recommended be placed in the Vatican archive to serve as an eternal condemnation of their evils.³⁸⁹ In concluding the Holy Father at length decried them as '*slaves of the devil and the precursors of Antichrist*'.³⁸⁹

Trouble in the papacy

In the above examples we find potential evidence that some popes were not exactly who they purported to be, and not necessarily supportive of the new reformist stance, which gave rise to the Catholicism and Orthodoxy we know today. Magian Christians were resilient to many of the new changes, and eager to have their people on the papal throne. You may ask how a 'heretic' could bypass the entire system and see himself made the Vicar of Christ? Well, for want of an example, it may have gone something something like this.³⁹⁰

Pope Steven V³⁹¹ (reigned 885-891 AD) moved to forbid the usage of Slavonic in the liturgy, and tried to bring German and French clergymen under closer papal scrutiny and control. Whereas he had initially sought the aid of Arnulf in these matters, he soon found himself talking to a brick wall, and was in some respects forced to look elsewhere. And it was to Duke Guido of Spoleto that he turned, and in him found someone who would be a guardian for the papacy at a time when Muslim military power was on the rise, and threatening Italy.

During the 800's AD Western Christendom technically had two emperors, one of the House of Spoleto (who underwent coronation to the Imperial throne under Pope Steven V in 891 AD), and the other being the Frankish rulers who stemmed from the kin of Emperor Charlemagne. The, some would say, ill-conceived coronation of Spoleto (which may have been performed by Steven V under duress) ignited warfare of such magnitude that it shook the papal throne to its very foundations, and divided the entire Catholic Church into two factions; those who believed that the Frankish kings should rule over the Holy Roman Empire, and those who followed the Spoleto dynasty. Behind this series of intrigues, European royalty and nobility hoped to gain control over the papacy, to reduce it to little more than their puppet. It is possible to infer that other factors were involved, *namely the degree to*

THE SON OF A POPE
BECOMES POPE

EUSEBIUS' LIST OF
BISHOPS

HERESY TRIALS

HOW WERE HERETICS
ABLE TO INSTALL ONE
OF THEIR OWN AS POPE?

ANOTHER EMPEROR
WAS CROWNED, THE
DUKE OF SPOLETO

EUROPE HAD TWO
HOLY ROMAN
EMPERORS

THIS PREPARED THE
WAY FOR A LENGTHY
PERIOD OF IDEOLOGICAL
AND MILITARY
CONFLICT BETWEEN
ROME AND GERMANY

which clerics permitted royal personages with magus blood to continue influencing the papacy, or even rule as pope. Unfortunately we don't know if the issue of flourishing Magianism and Magian-Christianity in Francia in any way influenced Steven V's decision to crown Duke Guido III. Within a very short time Guido had moved on Rome and reduced it to vassalage. Following the death of Steven V (in 891 AD), Pope Formosus was enticed or cajoled into re-confirming the nature of Spoleto's Imperial investiture by performing a repeat coronation of Guido and his son in 892 AD. However, Pope Formosus³⁹² had realised the potentially disastrous mistake of Pope Steven, and summoned the aid of the Frankish King Arnulf, who, having gathered considerable forces, marched onto the Italian mainland in 896 AD and defeated the army of the Spoletan emperor. At this point the Franks recovered control of the Holy Roman Empire.

ARNULF INVADES ROME

Arnulf was also involved in a pact with the Bulgar prince Vladimir-Rasate to mount a two-pronged war against the Church, in both the east and the west, aiming to re-install the old faith.³⁹³ We also find a Bulgar connection with Pope Formosus, whom the Bulgars wished to be their personal Metropolitan (Archbishop), a hope that was ultimately quashed by regulations within canon law. Formosus was highly active in the promotion of missionary work in Britain and Germany, and one might suspect, had much to do with the formation and development of the ecclesiastical bodies of these countries.

Anyhow, having taken Rome, Arnulf was struck down by a mysterious paralysis (poison?) and thus forced to return to Germany. But on his departure Pope Formosus (no longer able to rely on the protection of Frankish forces) passed away under unknown circumstances (I believe foul play) only to be replaced in April by the son of Hadrian, an Italian bishop. This (formerly?) unsavoury figurehead (who had been excommunicated more than once in prior years for debauchery) took the papal mitre at the head a mob of pro-Frankish Roman citizenry. He in turn ended his all-too-brief 15-day reign as Pope Boniface VI³⁹⁴ by dying, we are assured, of an attack of gout. Enter Pope Steven VI,³⁹⁴ an obscure priest who had switched sides from the Franks, and placed his full weight behind the Spoletans. Steven sought to continue the work of exerting Roman papal control over the German clergy, and aimed to head off moves among the Normans to start returning to the old pagan ways. Arguably the most controversial, and the gravest decision of his reign, was the disowning of any clergyman ordained via Pope Formosus. Equally scandalous was the posthumous kangaroo court which he ordered for Pope Formosus, whose rotting cadaver he had dug from the ground and seated before the trial body. Following this, the corpse of the humiliated and discredited pope was abandoned in a grave for the lowly, only later to be retrieved by his followers and taken for proper burial elsewhere by a monk. This act came back to haunt Steven VI, for it amalgamated large numbers of incensed clergy, in addition to the numerous Frankish-sympathetic supporters of the late Formosus. In the wake of miracles reputed to have been effected by the mortal remains of Formosus, insurrection and violence ensued among the pro-Formosans, who fell upon Steven VI, whom they dethroned and incarcerated. In jail for only a brief while, Steven was strangled to death. Some would say his murder was an act of assassination, others the action of an enraged jailer or prisoner. I am willing to speculate he may even have been sacrificed by the particularly pagan method of strangulation, which probably carried with it an infernal destination for the deceased.

THE ROTTING BODY OF
POPE FORMOSUS PLACED
ON TRIAL

THIS WAS A
PROPAGANDA STUNT
THAT WENT TERRIBLY
WRONG

He was in turn replaced by Pope Romanus,³⁹⁵ a supporter of the late Pope Formosus, who had no particular claim to fame, and who, after a mere four month stint, was arrested, removed from office, and shunted off into a monastery. It has been speculated that his moderate stance saw him cast aside in favour of a more militant successor. Next came Pope Theodore II who ruled as pope for barely 20 days during the month of November in 897 AD and then suffering an untimely (and undocumented) death. After him came John IX, a militant pro-Formosan clergyman. Not only did he concern himself with clearing the name of pope Formosus, but he attempted to intervene in religious matters in Bavaria, but was kicked out by the Bavarian bishops. That's right, the pope was told to keep his nose out of their business! He died an apparently natural death in 900 AD after a period of exactly two years in office, but strangely *the papal throne lay vacant for roughly four months* until the ascension of the pro-Formosan Benedict IV,³⁹⁵ perhaps owing to the lengthy soul-searching and politicking among the bishops who had to elect a successor. Violence among the pro and anti-Formosans continued unabated during his reign, however the Formosan faction to which Benedict was party was thrown into disarray by the death of Lambert the

BAVARIAN BISHOPS TOLD
THE POPE TO KEEP HIS
NOSE OUT OF THEIR
COUNTRY

FOR FOUR MONTHS THE
PAPAL THRONE WAS
VACANT

Spoletan emperor, who left no heir apparent. Accordingly, by this twist of fate, Benedict was left no other option but to crown as Emperor Louis the Blind, thus allowing the Franks across the threshold of the Vatican once again. But any Frankish presence was short lived once the Italian King Berengar arrayed forces against them, and ejected the Franks from Italy. Shortly thereafter Pope Benedict IV was apparently murdered only to be replaced by Leo V³⁹⁶ in August 903 AD, who was sympathetic to Formosan overtures. Within 20 days Leo fell victim to a coup masterminded by an usurping pro-Formosan clergyman (commonly referred to as Anti-pope Christopher) who had him tossed in jail. Christopher was in his turn deposed by Sergius III,³⁹⁷ a figure who had been previously invested as pope back in 897 AD, but owing to the prevailing pro-Formosan faction (where it counted) was forced to step down to make way for John IX. As leader of a military force, he seized Christopher, who was subsequently imprisoned with Leo V, the very pope he himself had deposed. Most likely sensing them to be a threat, in 904 AD Pope Sergius ordered that Christopher and Leo be executed while in detention (once again by choking). Sergius had the support of the noble houses of Rome, and clamped down on the pro-Formosans. Having won over whatever nobles wielded substantial financial and military power he set about involving himself in quarrels with Constantinople and strengthening his grip on the Vatican and Rome in general. He was intimately involved with the nobility, and with a girl of high birth in particular, who had a son by him, who would later become a pope. Interestingly, his mitre deviated from previous papal examples, and was tall and cone-shaped, like Boniface VIII's mitre. Following his death in 911 AD he was succeeded by Anastasius III³⁹⁸ who by all accounts was a conciliatory ruler, who did not overly involve himself in the Formosan affair or its lengthy backwash, and attempted to heal the differences between Rome and Constantinople. After the natural death of Anastasius in 913 AD, Lando³⁹⁹ became pope for just over half a year before dying naturally.

The next pope was John X³⁹⁹ (from the diocese of Ravenna), who enjoyed a lengthy reign until 929 AD, his stance on the Formosan issue being far from clear. John was the rumoured former lover of Theodora (one of the most powerful women of the Patrician families in medieval Rome), whose claim to the papal throne caused outrage. Despite these early troubles he helped regain the people's respect for the papal institution, and readied Italy for war against the Muslims. Politically he seemed inclined toward an Italian ruler, namely King Berengar, upon whom he bestowed the mantle of emperor, over the Frankish monarchs. John X also played a part in throwing aside the Slavonic liturgy, and at the Swabian synodal meeting of 916 AD, sought to bring the German clergy to heel. Meanwhile forces were mustering against him in Tuscany, where nobles bolstered by Magyar forces planned to depose him. This they achieved in 928 AD. Accordingly, John X wound up in prison, where he stayed under lock and key until asphyxiated about 929 AD. As John sat rotting in prison, Leo VI⁴⁰⁰ took his place for a reign of seven months. It would seem he was highly favoured by Marozia, the woman who, at 15 years old, apparently bore the child of Pope Sergius III. Following Leo VI's death, after a relatively uneventful period of office as pope, Steven VII⁴⁰⁰ served on in a similar manner, as a political marionette of the Theophylact nobility. He held this position for three years, until being superseded by John XI,⁴⁰¹ the bastard son of Pope Sergius III. John was denuded of all political power, and reduced to being little more than a convenient tool with which she could cement greater ties with Constantinople. Marozia's marriage to the Italian king permitted her to become even more firmly entrenched within the halls of early medieval Roman power, and allowed for a period of stable rule which stretched until 954 AD. At his death, Leo VII came to power in 936 AD, and set about facilitating the exile of Jews, plus the overhaul of the monastic scene and the Germanic clergy. Three years later he was superseded by the saint-like Steven VIII,⁴⁰² who ruled for just three years under the watchful eyes of the Spoletan, Alberic II. Even so, Steven was closely tied to the court of Otto I, the Frankish German king. When it was revealed that he had been conspiring with the Germans against Alberic, Alberic had him tortured to death.

Marinus II⁴⁰² came along after this, and did much in the way of church building. He made the archbishop of Mainz his personal legate, and bestowed upon him the right to scrutinise the entire German Church. The papacy was now on its way to rectifying any travesties of canon law once they were detected. This was a pruning phase, which, as you shall see, snowballed and culminated in the uprooting of the Magian-Christian clergy from within the German churches.

WITH NO SPOLETAN HEIR, THE POPE WAS COMPELLED TO ACCEPT A FRANKISH EMPEROR

BENEDICT MURDERED

A COUP AGAINST LEO

CHRISTOPHER DEPOSED

TWO DEPOSED POPES EXECUTED

THE INFLUENCE OF THE ROMAN NOBILITY

JEWES SENT INTO EXILE IN 936 AD

Pope Gregory VII⁹⁴ acted in unison with Henry III and loyal monks to recover the lay invested parishes from their secular sponsors and protectors. Stamping out ‘infernal’ simony, priestly marriages (together with the clergy’s attendant concubines) was equally high on his list for the reconstruction of the Frankish Church.

With such intrigues a regular part of life at the papal court, little wonder popes changed quicker than a game of musical chairs. The many advisors, retainers, envoys, clerks, priests and nuns close to the papacy must have swooned at the political developments ever unfolding at the Vatican (and Avignon), wondering about the labyrinthine allegiances permeating the Holy City. These tribulations were merely a prelude to those unfettered by a series of reformist popes who aimed to rid the Church of deeds condemned in repeated synods.

The old ways had a special longevity, a supernatural resistance to change. And so they remained, colouring the spiritual landscape of Old Rome. The reformist situation became somewhat less tenable and desperate during the Middle Ages, as Europe experienced a massive influx of people from Eastern and Central Europe, displaced by waves of immigrants arriving in the previous zones from Central Asia, the Caucasus and Iran. Things looked bleak for the reformists.

Chapter

Intermediate states of Christianity

The heretics so-called

From this point on the reader will repeatedly come across the terms heretic, heretical and heresy. I use these words partly to add some flavour to the text, partly to recreate the racy and unrestrained jargon of inquisitorial heresiographers. Unfortunately much of what we know about the Christian heretics and witches comes only through Church sources, and it is commonly thought, not without good reason, that this renders them entirely suspect, especially considering they were the very people burning the said heretics. So it is assumed that the clergy's recollections of the heretics are notoriously unreliable, their written testimonies and demonological writings rife with clichés. And yet, as one delves ever deeper into the close interrelationship between paganism, heresy and witchcraft one begins to realise that much of what the priests wrote about heretics and witches could not have been purposefully fabricated on any large scale, despite the state killings. Their records become a window through which the discerning eye can visualise non-Jewish Christianity in its rawest form, and understand its special allure to the people of bygone years. If anything medieval Catholic and Orthodox clergy were overcome by a bewildering range of alternative religious beliefs then present in Europe, and much of which had freshly arrived out of the East. For these mortified clerics of the apostolic mold it was like waking in the middle of the night and seeing a large hairy spider resting on the pillow, right next to their face. Like any true arachnophobe the churchmen leapt up in fright, flicked it onto the floor and squashed it. It was an instinctive reaction driven along nicely by panic and fear. Their solution to these alternative forms of Christianity was to kill them off, ideologically and physically; to eliminate their entire infrastructure. In some respects Catholic and Orthodox theologians were utterly incapable of reasoning out points of difference between their more-Jewish version of the faith, and dogmas championed by the dualistic Christian schools of the East. Nowadays, thanks to advances in DNA research, paleo-linguistics and archaeology, not to mention historical and religious studies, we, of this age of enlightenment, have the necessary tools enabling a peremptory understanding of heresy, and what actually took place.

So far the reader has witnessed the convoluted relationship between Christianity and Magianism, especially Zoroastrianism. One other religious movement warrants close attention, for it greatly contributed to the heretical notions espoused by a later wave of medieval European heretics. As with the Magi this tale too begins in Persia;

HERESY - AN
UNORTHODOX
RELIGIOUS SCHEME

HERESY IS A DEVIATION
FROM AN ACCEPTED
FORM OF RELIGION

DETERMINING PRECISE
HISTORICAL
SURROUNDINGS
CONCERNING A HERESY
IS DIFFICULT

THE SORT OF DETAILS
FOUND IN THE
INQUISITORIAL
WRITINGS COULD NOT
HAVE BEEN EASILY
CONTRIVED, NOT
WITHOUT RECOURSE TO
COPIES OF THE MAGIAN
TEXTS

EUSEBIUS' COMMENTS
ON MANICHAISM

MANICHAISM WAS
FOUNDED BY MANI, FROM
LONG EXTINGUISHED HERESIES

*'Meanwhile, the maniac whose name (Mani) reflected his demon-inspired heresy (Manichaeism) was arming himself with mental derangement, since the demon, God's Adversary Satan himself, had put him forward for the ruin of many. A barbarian in mode of life, as his speech and manners showed, and by nature demonic and manic, he acted accordingly, and tried to pose as Christ: at one time he announced himself as the Paraclete, the Holy Ghost himself, being a maniac and a boaster too; at another he imitated Christ, and chose 12 disciples as partners in his crazy ideas. Bringing together false and blasphemous doctrines from the innumerable long-extinct heresies, he made a patchwork of them, and brought from Persia a deadly poison with which he infected our own world. From him came the unholy name of Manichee, which is still in common use. Such then is the basis of Knowledge falsely so called, which grew up at the period mentioned (3rd Century AD).'*⁴⁰⁴

HERETICS WERE TREATED
IN A VARIETY OF WAYS

In this passage, Eusebius mentions, behind all that bluster and bravado, that the heresy of Mani was founded on 'long-extinct heresies'. If this were so, then some of the most damaging heresies to first afflict the Church were those of Magi who had themselves deviated from certain core teachings of Zoroaster in order to worship Jesus, plus devotees of Mani's doctrines. The vast teachings of the Magi and Manichees subsequently gave rise to underground pagan-Christian movements in no way allied to the Apostolic Church,⁴⁰⁵ yet which parodied it in so many ways. Most Christian heresy is therefore traceable to pagan customs accidentally or intentionally brought across into Christianity with heathen converts.

WHITE MAGIANS AND
THE CHURCH SAW THEM
AS MINIONS OF THE DEVIL

You should, by now, appreciate the role of dualistic Magianism in the formation of invidious heretical doctrines. This chapter largely draws upon the observations of Catholic and Orthodox heresiographers, examining the manner in which the old and new faith mixed, and ultimately formed new heterodox cocktails based on a synthesis of the former and the latter.

I cite here one brief example. In England, the Venerable Bede wrote of a church with two altars, one dedicated to Christ, and another to Devils! This account has long been seen as a parish with one altar for the new faith and another commissioned for gods of the old. Yet if dualistic notions are applied to the interpretation, Bede might really have been describing a dualistic sanctuary, with an altar to Christ on one side, and one to cthyonic morbidities on the other. If King Edgar worshiped Christ side by side with devils, his brand of Christianity was founded on the principles of practical, and not just philosophical, dualism.

HERESY IS A TERM
RELATIVE TO
TRADITIONAL
THEOLOGICAL
BENCHMARKS

Beliefs common to Heresies'

Heresy can only exist relative to the views of a given belief system. With the exception of hardened devil-worshippers, Christian heretics did not perceive themselves as advocates of falsity, but much rather a corpus of learning that, for the most part, differed from that of the judaised Apostolic Church. Many medieval heretics subscribed to dualistic philosophy, a belief in the existence of two gods, one good and one evil, or indeed a multiplicity of angels, devils and deities. Quite apart from the common geographical regions in which they arose, features of this kind suggest unmistakably Magian, gnostic and Chaldean beginnings for Christian heresy. Elements of pagan philosophical gnosis were additional pigments dropped into this ideological and spiritual paint vat. This raw and often uncontrolled synthesis allowed for highly evolved cults to emerge, such as the immensely popular Mithraism. The nuances of belief and understanding employed within a dualistic framework differed considerably from sect to sect.

DUALISTIC ELEMENTS

The bipartite (and even tripartite) nature of cosmic dualism dictated that heaven *had to be* mirrored below ground in the Abyss, so that cosmic equilibrium was maintained between the greatest height and the most unimaginable depth: *'Just as it is above, so shall it be below'*. While this philosophical dogma is only contained in *The Emerald Table: 2*, in a treatise attributed to Hermes Trismegistus, it nicely encapsulates the fundamentals of practical dualism. Without doubt the earliest Christian texts shed much light on the nature of Christianity's ideological womb. The *Didache* (also called *The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles. The Lord's Teaching to the Gentiles by the Twelve Apostles*),⁴⁰⁶ the most important surviving document of the early church (besides the Gospel), is believed to have

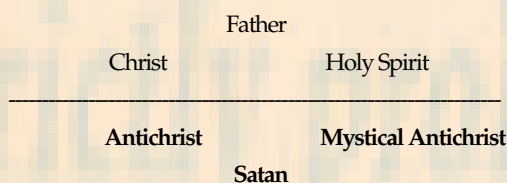
been written c. 90 AD, as was the *Epistle of Barnabas*. Within the *Didache* you will discover mention of deacons, bishops, the Eucharistic celebration (materially based on the Jewish passover meal and *not Haoma ritualism*), as well as the need for confession before receiving the host. However, in the work of Hippolytus of Rome (the first Antipope) we discover the use of a chalice filled with milk and honey, in between the consecration of the bread, and later the wine. Milk and honey is referred to in other early texts, but only allegorically. Therefore the milk-filled chalice is unlikely to have been an original or sanctioned part of the mass, for if it was, there would have been even more references to it in the writings of the primitive Church. Parallels between this and the Magi's *Haoma* chalice, are very obvious indeed. In these ancient Christian works formal doctrines concerning 'the Two Ways' were noted, which the Church of later years perceived as textual falsifications foisted upon the unwary reader by heretics.⁴⁰⁷ The teaching of the 'Two Ways' has an evidently dualistic flavour, and concerned the existence of the path of light and the path of darkness, one which took Christ as its heavenly Lord, the other governed by Satan, the 'Lord of Darkness'. As with Zoroastrianism, neither path could be considered in any way similar, and were irreconcilable. One was the trail of peace-lovers and the holy. But, according to the *Didache*, the other was the byway of sorcerers, astrologers, whores, robbers and knaves.

Were these the authentic beliefs of the early Church? It's an interesting proposition. There has always been a faintly perceptible sub-strata of quasi-dualism within Christianity (a point which even the Zoroastrian Magi saw fit to mention in their scriptures). Quite possibly for this reason, heretics parodied the Church of the Apostles, though it is just as likely that apparent similarities were due to commonalities acquired by the Church in its embryonic phase. At the end of this book you will examine the possibility that St Peter and the apostles may, in those earliest days, have expanded upon the Christian sacramental mysteries, by incorporating elements of pagan and Jewish ceremonies and theology *loosely* based on that of the former white Zoroastrian hierarchy, thereby crafting an essentially *new religion*. What emerged was a non-Magian, Judaeo-Chaldean-Aryan priesthood, *without bloodline*, and *the ideal vehicle to achieve the missions of conversion amongst all three groups*. The superficial similarities between them, and the reasons behind those resemblances, is something later authors were fearfully *reluctant to comment upon in any great detail*. Though to medieval clerics blissfully unaware of Christianity's formative stages, and lacking knowledge of archaeology and comparative linguistics, the strange similarities between the apostolic and heretical beliefs systems would have been extremely disturbing. Certainly in the case of the Manichees, potential points of similarity were deliberately sewn into their doctrines by Mani, who had been an ordained and defrocked Christian priest at one point. However it should be remembered that Apostolic Christianity has never formally acknowledged any link with Zoroastrianism, perceived or actual.

Tempered by Zurvanite Magian trinitarian teachings (those wizards who *ceremonially interacted* with the forces of light *and* darkness), the Christian holy trinity transmuted into symptomatically dualistic form. There were now two trinities, one holy, the other abominable.

Holy	Unholy
The Father	Satan
Jesus Christ, God the Son (God incarnate)	Antichrist, Son of the Devil (the Devil made flesh)
The Holy Spirit	The Unholy Spirit, the Mystical Antichrist
The Virgin Mary	The Whore

The following schematic illustrates the upside-downness of the unholy trinity.



THE "TEACHING OF THE TWO WAYS" IS ONE OF THE EARLIEST CHRISTIAN DOCUMENTS

Fig 18. The icon at the top (fig 18. 1) is an acceptable depiction of our Lady, whereas the icon at the bottom (fig 18. 2) is very suspect. I have taken the liberty of inverting the Black Madonna, as it is called, to highlight the theological duality present in the Great Heresy, where the lustre of heaven is mirrored in the murky darkness of the counterworld below.

Fig 18.1



Fig 18.2

The very concept of Antichrist as a man-devil was very much in accordance with Hippolytus' view that *'the wicked one'* would eventually materialise in a form antithetical to Jesus Christ's incarnation. Whereas Jesus (a royal Jew from the line of King David) was true man and true God, the Antichrist, on the contrary, would be both man and demon, all in one.⁴⁰⁸

A much later opinion, as postulated by St John Damascene, held that the Antichrist could unspiritually possess the bodies of those he wished, to enact his own plans.⁴⁰⁸ So too was it believed that Antichrist-like individuals had always existed throughout each successive generation, and yet ultimately he himself would come to annihilate the world, walking the earth in human form.⁴⁰⁸

Visions of the apocalypse

The fast-approaching millennial doom

THE YEAR 1,000 AD WAS FILLED WITH FOREBODING

The year is 999 and Glaber, the most celebrated of the mediaeval apocalyptic writers, unveiled that *"Satan will soon be unleashed because the thousand years (since the incarnation of Christ) have been completed"*.⁴⁰⁹ The upheavals and missionary reversals of the past century had really taken their toll. War was an enduring fact of life across much of Europe, the Holy Roman Empire particularly scorched in anti-Christian uprisings. For many it was not just a matter of the faith's survival, but a grim struggle to stay alive. Such were the catastrophes which singed the Christian psyche.

ARMIES AND DRAGONS SEEN FIGHTING IN THE HEAVENS

In France, fiery armies were seen fighting in the heavens, as well as flaming meteors and a catalogue of celestial aberrations like dragons and sky chasms.⁴⁰⁹ There too, a worshipful wolf began paying homage to god in the Church, serving as a bell-ringer, and being a cause of scandal and disquiet.⁴⁰⁹ Assassins made after abbots.⁴⁰⁹ What fearful times it must have been.

PROMISCUITY

Others threw all care to the winds. A number of low born Christians took after the high, engaging in concubinage, promiscuity and incest. Vicious crimes of every nature found currency, as well as warfare and disjointed seasons. With the agricultural sector so ravaged, crops failed miserably, leaving bellies empty everywhere.

FAMINE

CANNIBALISM

The hunger was unbearable. People ate the basest of fare not the least of which was human flesh, often of their own children. At Tournus the flesh of men was carved from murdered wayfarers and peddled as fresh meat in the marketplaces, snapped up by the grimly emaciated. There were instances where the desperately hungry fell upon more recent graves, gouged the body from the earth, rending it and ghoulishly feasting on the remains. Serial cannibals were apprehended and executed, burned alive.

MANY CHRISTIANS TRAVELLED TO ROME TO SEE OUT THE FIRST 1,000 YEARS OF CHRISTIAN HISTORY

Small wonder then that the end of the world was prophesied for the not to distant future. Christians took to their heels heading straight for Jerusalem where it was hoped their sufferings would be minimised once the floodgates of hell burst open bringing armageddon, judgement, and the end of all god's creations.

Still others made their way to Rome to hear the pope say mass Christmas mass in the year 1,000, trembling to be sure. They assumed that this would be the final moment, though the passage of midnight brought relief to the nervous and exacerbated throngs, which converged there to be with the Holy Father when the end presumably came. Yet if they felt that this earned them prolonged respite from 'the horrors' they were misguided; centuries of conflict ensued. For many and varied reasons the German Franks suffered the grievous affliction of continuous internal warfare from the year 1198 AD until 1208 AD, some of which may well have been due to religious factors, be it resurgent paganism, or the divisions invoked by the Papal attempts to reform the German Church.⁴¹⁰

CHRISTIAN APOCALYPTICISM

Traditional Church sources of the Middle Ages regarded the 10th Century outbreak of heretics in the Balkans, and the heathen uprisings as the official fulfilment of *NT Revelation 20*, with the emergence of Satan from his 1,000 years of incarceration in the Abyss.⁴¹¹ According to this prophecy, the armies of Gog and Magog would burst out from their lair of 1,000 years, to surround the Holy city and the saints. Just as the Gospel would be circulated to the ends of the earth before the end of the world, so too would Gog spread their deceptions from one end of the earth to the other, in the shadow of the Gospel. However this was only one small chapter in the history of Christian Apocalypticism. Worse was yet to come. From time to time during the Church's battle with the old beliefs of the

Europeans, they came face to face with sectarians that even the pagans were very wary of, the avowed devil-worshippers. Some were disciples of the Antichrist, of whom much was said. Notions of what his coming entailed changed slightly with time, and so some of the more important aspects of the Antichrist myths are here recounted.

There was general consensus among early Christians that the fate of the earthly Church would mirror the life of Christ. Like Christ, it was born in obscurity; worldly rulers tried to kill it, so that it was raised in persecution. Like the youngest years of Christ, it grew up in obscurity, and eventually emerged as a powerful force of good in the world. But at the very end of its time, it was to undergo its most traumatic ordeal, perhaps worse than anything it had ever experienced, when the Church, like the Saviour, would be crucified. In the end the Church, like Christ hanging on the cross, would be abandoned except by the very few faithful, the remainder having run in panic, in a climate of fear. But this was only a prelude to its glorious resurrection.

St Augustine reveals the prevailing beliefs of the early 4th Century AD regarding that final period of 'the Church's persecution'; few baptisms, the dumping of the saints and parishioners peeling away from the faith in droves. At the 'end of the world' just prior to Armageddon and the return of Christ, the Church would exist in an almost crucified state, with the malice of Satan's deceptions having reached the zenith of their potency. If the crucifixion and ascension of Christ was the pivotal moment in the redemption of human souls, the arrival of the Antichrist, meant the advent of the saviour's primary antagonist, the living embodiment of damnation.

That the devil came to tempt Christ on a number of occasions, is sufficient proof of a genuine apostolic belief in the evil principle. The very notion of Antichrist strongly suggests the Church possessed a significant undercurrent of dualism from its birth.

The second millennium of Christianity saw a radical distancing process, waves of secular and ideological repression that hoped to divorce parishioners from these obvious dualistic trends within the faith. In the Middle Ages soul-saving inoculation from the 'Infernal One's deceptions' came by way of the inquisitors, who strived to rid mother church of the 'Great Heresy', that fatal malady. St Boniface aptly characterised the attitudes of the soul-doctors, with the comment '*one diseased sheep will infect the whole flock*'.⁴¹²

Even so, the inevitability of a once and future 'Antichrist' is driven home in St Paul's *Epistle to the Thessalonians*. Evidently the existence of the detestable Antichrist was, in truth, a legitimate part of traditional Christian dogma.

*'And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels. In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day.'*⁴¹³

'That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away (from the Church) first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.'

Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity (in some translations called the Mysterious Wickedness) doth already work: only he who now leteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked (One) be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish: because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause

THE CHURCH
MIRRORED THE LIFE OF
CHRIST

ONE DAY IT WOULD BE
CRUCIFIED, AND MANY
WOULD FALL AWAY
FROM THE CHRISTIAN
FAITH

THE PERIOD OF THE
ANTICHRIST

ST PAUL WARNS OF THE
ANTICHRIST

ANTICHRIST, THE SON
OF PERDITION, WILL
MAKE HIMSELF HIGHER
THAN ANY FORM OF
RELIGION

THE SPIRIT OF EVIL

CHRIST WILL DESTROY
THE ANTICHRIST
PERSONALLY

God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness. ... Therefore brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle. ... Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition (of Christianity) which he received of us'.⁴¹⁴

CHRIST'S RETURN WOULD
BRING CONFLICT AND
SPIRITUAL WARFARE

What is spoken of in 2 *Thessalonians* is the advent of a false-Messiah, preceding the avenging return of Christ. In that time, the devil's age, the Lord Infernal will come to be seated in the temple of God, worshiped as the Lord God himself. He will persuade the masses that the path of sin and unrighteousness is not barred to mankind, that these things are permissible. He will come to savage every religion, and further install himself as a God higher than all other gods, as holier than every sacred thing. Here the devil masquerades as the supreme being, hateful not just of Christianity, but all religion. The epic can be equated with what was foretold of the wicked one in the scriptures of the Magi, and the *Papyrus of Ani* too - the final rebellion against heaven, and the glorification of non-belief.

IN THE AGE OF
ANTICHRIST MANKIND
WOULD REBEL AGAINST
RELIGION

Further indications that the Antichrist originated not in Christianity, but in eastern dualistic paganism are subtly buried beneath Muslim legend, for they held that the Antichrist would, during the last days, pit his forces not only against Christianity, but Islam. In this Islamic tradition the Antichrist's emergence preceded the second-coming of Christ.⁴¹⁵ The forces of the Antichrist (who the Muslims, as indeed Magian converts, portrayed as legions of Jews) would be led by the Adversary himself, riding confidently on a donkey as his accompanying troops visited untold destruction on the world.⁴¹⁵ From an Iranian perspective these Muslim notions of Antichrist appear to contain a dualistic parody of the *Book of Bundahishn's* account of *Sraosha*, who was to sally forth from heaven not on a slovenly, cantankerous ass, but in a speedy chariot drawn by fleet footed horses, and leading a vast throng of mounted angels and saints to destroy the Lord of Demons and the evil host. But in the Muslim legend it is Mecca and Medina alone that will be spared from the harm the Antichrist would bring.

ANTICHRIST WILL
HUMILIATE THE EARTHLY
KINGS

'only he who now leteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked (One) be revealed'.⁴¹⁶ Perceptions of what held back the Antichrist were widely agreed. It was the kings, who were the faith's sword and shield. But they too were destined to fall at the end time, and in so doing Antichrist would enter the Church unopposed. The chameleon-like 'Evil One' would pose as the Most High.

HE WOULD MAKE
CHANGES TO "TIMES AND
LAWS"

In Augustine's discourse on the Antichrist we find his appraisal of Daniel's *Old Testament* visions in relation to the matter. Four kingdoms were to pass '*the Assyrians, the Persians, the Macedonians and the Romans*', and thereafter ten kings would find ascendancy. '*And after them will arise another who will surpass in wickedness all who preceded him. He will humble three kings, and will speak insulting words against the Most High; and he will harass the saints of the Most High, and will conceive the notion of changing times and laws*'. After that, all kings would surrender their powers of dominion to the saints in heaven above. St Augustine continued as follows.⁴¹⁷

THERE WOULD BE
HARDLY ANY KINGS LEFT
WHEN HE ARRIVES

*'... in respect of the ten kings whom Antichrist, as it seems, is to find, who are ostensibly ten men; I am afraid, that is, that Antichrist may come unexpectedly, seeing that there are not as many kings as that in existence in the Roman world'.⁴¹⁸ Then '*there will be a time of distress unparalleled from the first beginning of mankind on the earth until ... those who are sleeping in the heaped-up earth will rise up (at the Resurrection), some to eternal life, some to shame and eternal disgrace*'.⁴¹⁷*

ANTICHRIST COMES
AFTER THE FALL OF THE
HOLY ROMAN EMPIRE

In the prevailing theory of Augustine's day Antichrist was expected some time after the fall of the last Roman emperor. Historically speaking, the assassination of Franz Ferdinand and his heirs in 1914 (the spark which fired World War I) saw the conclusion of the Empire.

SOME BELIEVED THE
FINAL PERSECUTION
WOULD BE UNLEASHED
BY CHALDEANS

In the late 12th Century Joachim of Fiore, a reformist writer on apocalyptic issues drew parallels between the persecutions suffered by the Israelites, and those of the Church. The successive persecutions were, in turn, that of the Jews, heathens, Arian Christians, and Muslims.⁴¹⁹ The final persecution was reckoned to be a Babylonian putsch, which would see Chaldeanism enter the Church in no small dosage.⁴¹⁹

While himself a king, the Son of Perdition will turn on the few kings remaining in the relatively-kingless world of that time. But amid this prophesied turmoil, the Church would succeed in gaining a very large number of converts from the army of Satan, a mass exodus from the ranks of the deceiver which would help bring about his ultimate downfall, and the collapse of the Satanic kingdom. Augustine remarks that this shall be a miraculous occurrence, befitting of the majesty of Christ, and a testimony to the redeeming power of the spirit of God. And it was precisely at that point that Christ was supposed to return to pass judgement on the world.

The Middle Ages marked a period of renewed apocalypticism. End times prophecies were again popular to say the least, prompting discussions among the literati and commonfolk alike; especially so between the 5th and 9th Centuries.⁴¹⁷ Medieval apocalyptic Christian literature acquired a Persian spin, particularly through the prophetic ministrations of the Pseudo-Methodius.⁴²⁰ Or at least that is the source so attributed. *The Revelations of the Pseudo-Methodius* were written somewhere between 660-680 AD, in Syria no less, but spread at a rapid pace throughout much of the Middle East and Eastern Europe.⁴¹⁹ It was translated into Latin around the 8th Century AD under the title *A Sermon on the Kingdom of God and Sure Demonstration of the Last Times*,⁴²⁰ perhaps to achieve a greater readership. Besides being a fountain of end times theory, it had a distinctly anti-Islamic agenda. Some would even call it an open incitement toward warfare with the Muslims.⁴²⁰

The text begins with Alexander the Great's imprisonment of the 'monster nations' (which included Alans and the Iranian Sarmatians amongst others) behind the mountains in Gog and Magog, a tale also found in the *Quran*.⁴²¹ Alexander's quick, though fictional, engineering project gave the world a momentary reprieve from the predations of the monster nations, a godsend for mankind.⁴²¹ But some day in the future they would break free once more, and war would come.⁴²¹ The tale pans into the future, to the unleashing time, and the conflict of ages. The chief champion of the Christians in this war of wars would be the Last World Emperor, defender of the Holy Roman Empire, and God's right hand man on earth.⁴²¹ This theme was even more elaborately built upon in the *Play of Antichrist*, penned by some erudite visionary within the Frankish royal court.⁴²¹ In the *Play of Antichrist*, the last emperor of the Holy Roman Empire heroically makes his way to the Holy city of Jerusalem, an army in tow.⁴²² Otto of Freising sycophantically thought to cast the illustrious King Louis in this virtuous role, but it could have been any one of them.⁴²² In the last great act of defiance against the devil, the emperor awakens Jerusalem from the catalepsy of its Babylonian captivity.⁴²² Wherefore, upon completion of his divinely inspired mission, the emperor relinquishes his office to Christ, the King of Kings.⁴²² Offering his orb and sceptre skyward, he steps down. With Imperial power now vanished from the earth, the stage is set for the dramatic emergence of the Antichrist.⁴²²

Born and raised in the Church from its inception, that unknown man, who is the incarnate Antichrist, comes to Jerusalem, flanked by his two lieutenants Hypocrisy and Heresy.⁴²³ Then, this enemy from within proclaims:

*'The hour of my kingdom is come! ... I have nourished you for it thus far ... The nations honour Christ ... Therefore, blot out his memory, and transfer his glory to me'.*⁴²³

At what could only be called a public inauguration ceremony, Heresy and Hypocrisy pompously swear fealty to Antichrist, wholeheartedly endorsing his proposal that they win over the laity, and destroy the apostolic clergy. This objective attained, Antichrist is invited by the masses to sit on the throne of Jerusalem.⁴²⁴ He accepts their offer and sets about dismantling the Church's ancient ecclesiastical and sacramental infrastructure, confounding the old order by issuing new laws to the people.⁴²⁴ It would seem that Antichrist had no temporal power originally, but it would be given him by popular consensus, by those well groomed by heresy, including a certain number of priests 'deceived' into his way of thinking.⁴²⁴

As the lamentable proceedings unfold, the King of Jerusalem (probably one of the Crusader kings) hurriedly decamps to the court of the former Emperor. There he rebukes him for abandoning his role as defender of the Church, thereby handing it over to the jackals. But, again according to prophecy, the damage is irreversibly done.

Meanwhile, back in Jerusalem, the Antichrist, now magnified in his evils, is inaugurating his own kingdom, or so Guibert of Nogent foretells.⁴²⁵ In this additional tradition, Guibert further divulges that the Antichrist vents his rage against one institution only, namely the Christian church. Heathens and Jews would be spared this suffering.⁴²⁵ The

KING OF THE DAMNED

PROPHECIES OF THE
END DAYS WERE HIGHLY
SOUGHT AFTER IN THE
MIDDLE AGES

GOG AND MAGOG ARE
SUPPOSEDLY
UNLEASHED TO PUNISH
EUROPE

EUROPE'S KINGS
SURRENDER THEIR
ALLEGIANCE TO CHRIST

ANTICHRIST AIMS TO
DESTROY THE
CHURCH'S
ECCLESIASTICAL AND
SACRAMENTAL
INFRASTRUCTURE

10th Century AD monk Adso finely honed the more time-worn apocalyptic traditions; now Antichrist's image was taking even firmer form. *'He will destroy the Law of the gospel, call the worship of demons back into the world, seek his own glory, and call himself almighty God'*.⁴²⁶

ANTICHRIST WILL CLAIM
TO BE GOD

It would be true to say that these images and acts do not appear in the Bible in precisely this form. Other authors stuck more faithfully to the *Book of Revelations*, breaking it down, scene by scene, painting in extra explanatory details. These embellishments imbued the dramatic though etheric moments of the apocalypse with a certain semblance of medieval modernity. It became relevant to their time.

SOME WRITERS
ASSOCIATED THE
ANTICHRIST WITH
ARMIES OF HERETICS

Notably there was Anselm of Havelberg's discourse on the seven seals of the Apocalypse.⁴²⁷ In it the black horse is equated with *'the dark teaching of the heretics whom the great dragon we mentioned raised up against the Church of God'*,⁴²⁸ so that the devil *'might now disturb (the Church) by the most wicked dogma of the heretics'*.⁴²⁸ With the 4th seal came *'false Christians or false brethren of whom there is now an innumerable multitude'*.⁴²⁸

SOME SAID THE BATTLE
BETWEEN THE PAPACY
AND KINGS WAS A
SYMPTOM OF THE
ANTICHRIST

In his *Investigation of the Antichrist 1:19*, Gerhoh of Reichersberg advocated that the rift between the papacy and the empire was of its self, the primary manifestation of the beast's roaming.⁴²⁹ For following hard upon that time, clergy had become prone to the evils of simony and lewdness, adding that *'The rare bishop who wished to correct his clergy did not dare to do so through fear of the Roman curia'*.⁴³⁰

Russes - Typecast as the legions of gog and magog

FOR SUCH A LONG TIME
THE RUSSES WERE
TYPECAST AS THE BAD
GUY, THE SERVANTS OF
THE EVIL ONE

The quasi-Scandinavian tribe which found themselves linchpins in the formation of the Old Russian state are recorded variously as *Rus'*, or *Ros*. If the *Ros* were one and the same as the *Rus'*,⁴³¹ which I have to admit is a much closer phonetic match than *Ruotsi* (the word currently favoured by academics), then the *Rus'* had long inhabited the far north, particularly the Volga area. This is supported by Greek records, which, in 838 AD, stated that the name of the tribesmen who devastated Amastris was the *Ros*. Moreover a number of rivers in Russia bore the name *Ros*, or *Rhos* - part of the Nieman River, an offshoot of the Bug River, and according to a Greek map *dating to the 400's AD*, the Volga river was known as the *Rhos* river.⁴³² The *Ros* seemed particularly connected with the Volga area. *Rus'* traders frequented this zone upon their arrival among the Slavs in the 9th Century AD, from whence they traded with the once Magian city of Rai, Baghdad and other Caspian cities, together with the Volga Bulgars.

SOME CLERICS
ASSOCIATED THE RUSSES
WITH THE LEGIONS OF
GOG AND MAGOG

No scholar has ever managed to conclusively solve the problem of the *Rus'* tribes ethnicity, there are just too many loose ends. It has long been taken for granted that the *Rus'* were a group of Scandinavians who just decided to budge their way into the Slavic lands and settle there (as stated in the *Primary Chronicle*), and that in a short time they became completely Slavified. After all, the *Rus'* were kindred to the Norse, a hard-fighting, hard-drinking, high-spirited breed of "Nordic" stock, who saw great merit in using strong arm tactics on the surrounding tribes of sedentary Slav farmers, in order to get whatever they wanted.⁴³³ However, in the mid 800's AD, the Arab Ibn Khurdadbih regarded the *Rus'* as sort of Slavic, but he didn't extrapolate. It is fairly obvious from this account that *the Russes were Slavs who weren't really Slavs*.

From Greek sources we have a few bits and pieces written down by the chroniclers in relation to their early attacks on Tsargrad and Byzantine provincial towns, as well as information gleaned during the formulation of one Russo-Byzantine peace treaty. As it turns out a group of *Rus'* lived in the far north of Russia (perhaps near Rostov), who had ties with some Finns, Slavs and Bulgars, and were demon-worshippers. Indeed Rostov was well known to the Varangians as *Rathstofa*, a locale which later figured heavily in the anti-church uprisings. It became an undeclared pagan protectorate during the time of the conversion, a safe-haven for fervent pagans and the pagan Russian priests, the *Volkhvy Magi*.⁴³⁴

The *Ros* allegedly indulged in bloody Taurian sacrifice, sparing no one from their deadly hands, especially strangers, who were particularly at risk.⁴³⁵ Most notorious were the *Arsa* (also translated as *Artha*), a clan sub-unit of the *Rus'* tribe,⁴³⁶ who slew and/or drowned anyone who came into their lands, then tossed their corpses into the water, at places where their Lord the Great Serpent frequented.⁴³⁷ In the *Ros* (*Rus'*) attack on Amastris it was noted that they deliberately desecrated churches, derived much pleasure from the spilling of blood and destroyed almost any living thing they came across. As for their holy sites, the *Ros* worshiped springs and trees.⁴³⁸

The main demon worshiped by the Ros was Zmeya-Volos (the Great Serpent), the enemy of the earthly/celestial god Perun (who was the Thunder God of the Slavs, Balts and Prussians under diverse names; the god of both war and justice, and the primary champion of the Creator).⁴³⁹ Zmeya-Volos is said by some to be an alter-ego of Azi-Dahaka,⁴⁴⁰ an Iranian demonic prince of darkness enshrined in Magian/Zoroastrian thought and fear, a serpent who in some respects also resembled Apollo Delphinios, the pythonian genius of the famed Delphic Oracles. By my reckoning Zmeya-Volos had its origins in Magian religious tradition⁴⁴¹ rather than the Greek, for according to traditional Russian (and for that matter Norse) mythology, the highly venomous serpent dwelt in the watery underworld somewhere near the roots of the World tree (the Sacred Ash).⁴⁴² This I equate with the Magian tale of Gokard, the world tree (the Golden Ash), whose produce, the *Haoma*, was destined to play a significant part in the resurrection of the pagan Magi and their followers. The Norse recounted (as did the Magi in their Book of *Bundahishn*), that a Great Serpent (Nithogg) chewed away at the roots of that tree. In Magian lore, it did so to kill off the sacred *Haoma* and so prevent the much longed for revival of the deceased in the afterlife.

SERPENT WORSHIP

Therefore, Zmeya-Volos would be more properly equated with Ahriman, the Magian equivalent of the devil (rather than Azi-Dahaka), who the Magi believed could appear as either a serpent, or a black winged goat or dog, covered with a shaggy fur. Thus can we account for the name Zmeya-Volos, a title which seems contradictory and dubious, for it denoted a being who was both a serpent, and a hairy creature. The Norsemen spoke of a similar beast known as the Midgard Serpent, who would emerge to wage war against the Gods of heaven during Ragnarok, and whose sworn foe was Thor. As you will read later in this book, there is some reason to believe that the Slavs had not inherited a belief in Zmeya-Volos from the Norse, nor the Norse from the Slavs, but that a few Slavs and Norsemen (and I stress only a few) paid homage to a serpent which had its origins in a common Magian source.⁴⁴³ Since Zmeya-Volos was thought to reside in many bodies of water, it was there that some Slavs drowned or slew cattle, cocks and babies to it in sacrifice.⁴⁴⁴

The Rus' warriors went raiding in dragon ships (perhaps in emulation of their venomous snake lord who plied the watery realms), and were linked in with the Alans (Asii) and Goths by past military allegiances, and common ancestry to the old Bosphoran city-states (founded in the Crimea by Mithridates IV⁴⁴⁵ of Mesopotamia c. 100 BC) referred to by Ptolemy as Metropolis and Azagarium.⁴⁴⁶ During this historical phase the indigenous Graeco-Scythian clothing was replaced by traditional Iranian dress and administration.

DRAGON SHIPS

One vitally important heraldic connection existed between Magian Khorezm, these Bosphoran Kingdoms of old and the Rus' Rurikid dynasty which would eventually rule over the fragmented Slavic and Finnish tribes during the 9th Century AD.⁴⁴⁷ Both the Bosphoran and the Rurikid royal houses possessed the same style of royal tamga (a heraldic device) as the Khorezmians, and the Asii (Alanic) Burgalty clan, which incidentally equated to the letter "r" of a unique magical script designed by the Pharaohs, called the Alphabet of Kings (it was assigned the Hebrew sound "resh")⁴⁴⁸, a script which has had a very long history of usage among sorcerers and alchemists from Egypt to Asia Minor.⁴⁴⁹ Both the bident and trident devices were stamped into ancient Russian coinage. These kingdoms were later annexed by the Goths (c. 300 AD), which provided the basis for a permanent Germanic presence in Crimean Bessarabia, until this century (though the last confirmed sighting of the Crimean Goths was in the 16th Century AD). Here dwelled the Tetrakhitae Goths (ie; Scythian Goths associated with the Indo-Iranian *Tigraxauda* sub-group of the Messagetae) who were partly composed of Melanclaenae and Iranian Sauromatians.⁴⁵⁰

THE TRIBESMEN IN QUESTION WERE BELIEVED TO BE A CULT OF DEVIL WORSHIPPERS

So, what is the possible significance of this place Azagarium, that Mithridates IV founded in southern Russia. Well *Cosmography*, a mediaeval copy of Ptolemy's 2nd Century AD world map *Geographia*,⁴⁵¹ shows a number of cities in Scythia beginning with the Iranian word *Az*, perhaps indicating the presence of Iranian settlements on the Steppe. Certainly the cities of Metropolis and Azagarium were associated with a period of de-Hellenisation in this region, which as mentioned saw the adoption of Iranian-style dress codes. In Iranian, the name of the city of Azagarium is translated as "the Hill or Mountain of Az".⁴⁵² And this is where the connection with devil-worship comes in, for *Az* (pron. *As*) was an Iranian word which caused a fearful surge of adrenaline in many a Zoroastrian, Zurvanite or Manichaean. *Az* was the "Black robe of Wickedness", the powerful magical garment of darkness worn by the Black God Ahriman and his devoted black-magian priesthood.⁴⁵³ It was also the name of the libation of the Black Magi, which they drank from a chalice "filled with all the sins of the world".⁴⁵⁴ *Az* embodied the powers of vice, chaos, theft, corruption and lust, which in turn has a phonetic parallel in the Avestan word *Azi*, which means

“serpent”.⁴⁵⁵ In relation to this, the Ros were described by one Byzantine Chronicler as drinking libations of lawlessness. Were they drinking Az, or was this just high blown rhetoric? Az could also be another title for “the Great Serpent”, who was also known as Zmeya-Volos, or Azi-Dahaka,⁴⁵⁶ “the very essence of concupiscence and insatiable avarice”. Azi-Dahaka’s iniquitous hobbies, robberies, scandals and greed were an endless theme for Manichean, Zend and Pahlavic scriptural literature. Consider the following Magian passages;

HIGH DEMONS WERE
CONDEMNED
THROUGHOUT THE
SCRIPTURES OF THE MAGI

*“The Demon Az (Greediness) is he who swallows everything, and when through destitution nothing has come he eats himself; he is that fiendishness which, although the whole wealth of the world be given up to it, does not fill up and is not satisfied... Pus is the demon who makes a hoard, and does not consume it, and does not give to any one; as it says, that the power of the demon Az is owing to that person who, not content with his own wife, snatches away even those of others”.*⁴⁵⁷

THEY BROUGHT DEATH,
INIQUITY, DESTRUCTION,
LUST, CRAVINGS AND
MOST OF ALL GREED

*“And the fiend of gloomy race, accustomed to destruction, changed into causes of death the position of the brilliant, supreme heaven of the pure, heavenly angels - which he ordained through the power of Mitokdt (falsehood) and the triumph of the world’s creatures, as ordained through two decrees: one, the destruction of the living by the power of death, and one causing the manacling of souls by a course of wickedness. And he made as leaders therein that one astute in evil who is already named, and Asto-vidad who is explained as the disintegration of material beings; he also entrusted the demon Bushasp (lethargy) with the weakening of breath, the demon Tap (fever) with stupefying and disordering the understanding, and the (serpent) demon Az (greediness) with suggesting cravings and causing drinking before having the thirst of a dog”.*⁴⁵⁸

GREED CONSUMES
EVERYTHING

The depiction of the super-greedy Azi-Dahaka as a serpent who eats itself may be reflected in the *ouroboros*, a pagan Gnostic insignia (such as can be found engraved into gems, or in rendered in alchemical texts) which shows a serpent devouring its own tail. If the worship of Az the serpent-demon was to be found there at Az Mountain, at the Azagarium settlement, then one might expect that the devotees of Az assumed the character of armed robbers, and brigands who plundered other people’s women-folk and hard earned wealth, and who were gluttonous eaters with a massive thirst. It is known that one of the major preoccupations of the Russes was the extortion of grain and stock from nearby farmers, and numerous plundering raids on Constantinople and the Caucasus.⁴⁵⁹ Coincidentally some Slavic tribesmen were known to have taken wives only after they had seized them by force.⁴⁶⁰

THEY STOLE OFF WITH
WIVES

From the preceding examples of Zoroastrian scripture we discover that the earthly arrival of Az (and a number of other princely demons) was an essential part of Magian eschatological doctrine concerning the coming of evil into the world. They arrived in the form of demons and reptiles, each to the last evicted from the Iranian heaven, by the archangels and saints of the white Magi, and the radiantly sunny Ahura Mazda. The serpent Ahriman hit the water and slithered down inside the world,⁴⁶¹ as his other demonic creations smashed through the earth’s crust, then rumbled and growled in the middle of the earth, causing mountains and hills to sprout where the putrefying swarm collided with the ground.⁴⁶² Azagarium might therefore have been the impact site for the arrival of the demon Az, a holy site for Iranian devil worshippers, a mountain wherein lay a dragon of immense might and greed. Maybe Azagarium, the Hill city of Az, was also called Azgrad (ie; Az city) if you were a Slav, or perhaps even Azgard (ie; Az city) if you were a Norseman. Whether there is any connection between Azagarium and the Norse Asgard is difficult to prove; personally I doubt it. The name of the subterranean holy place in which Odin’s underground feast hall *Val-holl* is translated as “the hall of the Dead” or “the hall of the slain”, in the Old Norse. There in that underground realm Odin (the magician-god), raised the bodies of fallen warriors from death. Turville-Petre speculates that the term *holl* came from *hwall* (“a hill”), thus signifying that burial mounds served as homes for the dead. This is yet another seemingly Iranian custom, that of the *kurgan* burial mounds. By some coincidence the Scythians built extensive underground kurgans, many of which were emptied of treasure by fossickers. A maze-like complex near Cherson⁴⁶³ was dug some 8 metres below ground.

Such Iranian parallels seem well engrained within Norse and Slav circles. I, like Vernadsky, deliberately make this connection with Asgard.⁴⁶⁴ Firstly there seems to be a connection between the Norse, Slavs, Alans and the Magi - the Iranian word used to describe the walled ramparts of Ahura Mazda’s heavenly City of the Good was *Garodoman*. The Norse and Slav words for city seem to be derived from the Magian *Garodoman*; the Russian word for a walled city is *Grad*, or *Gorod*, and the Norse word is *Gard*. Azagarium can thus be directly translated into the Norse as Asgard, which in *Ynglinga Saga* was called the principle settlement of Asaheim (the home of the Asii, or

Alans). Thus, Azagarium might have been linked with, or even dedicated to, the worship of the widely venerated serpent (Iranian: Azi), who was still being revered and *deeply loved* in 10th century Rus' under the name Volos, and perhaps in Scandinavia as the Midgard Serpent! Sadly neither Metropolis nor Azagarium have been unearthed as yet by archaeologists (nor such *massive* sites as Gelonus which was burned to the ground by Darius), but we can only hope. The most likely location for Azagarium is under a mountain or hill sited near the wide-flowing Dnieper.

The reasons why the Ros made sacrifices to serpent demons were many and varied, but included buying their friendship to avoid evil, and some may even have felt sorry for them, viewing them not so much as evil, but more human than the other celestial essences.

Zmeya-Volos (also called Veles) was the serpent of knowledge (gnosis), the arts, music and prophecy, and widely consulted by seers for the purpose of fortune-telling.⁴⁶⁵ There is some reason to believe that the serpent did not confine itself to Russia, because as far as the Catholic clergy of the Middle Ages were concerned, all witches, mediums and fortune-tellers were said to be under the power of the "Pythonian spirit", the serpent.⁴⁶⁶ As you will read later in this book, this may well indicate that the worship of the Great Serpent was present in western Europe during the time of the Inquisitions. Volos shared the same patronages as the Greek Apollo or Hermes, or the Roman god Mercury, in particular the fine arts. Divine serpents had long been in worshiped in Russia. Ginzburg tells us that the serpent lauded by the Scythians was a pythoness. Whether this serpent was the same as Zmeya-Volos is unclear; but Azi-Dahaka was a female. Magian tradition makes mention of several great serpents of the underworld, so this is another explanation.

Anyhow, the 842 AD attack on Amastris by the Ros resulted in the wholesale destruction of villages, stock, crops, simple folk and churches, as they pillaged and raped their way across the countryside. According to eyewitnesses, their eyes reflected a greedy lust for Byzantine booty, and their enormities defied description. Having broken down the doors of the parish churches at Amastris they sacrificed prisoners and offered pagan libations on the desecrated altars. Churches were razed to the ground.⁴⁶⁷ They used prisoners for archery practice and punched iron spikes into their brains. Such delinquent behaviour reemerged some 18 years later as Rus' longships offloaded their army of fury on the vulnerable outer suburbs of Constantinople and the Byzantine monastery at Terebinthos. In one go they are said to have wiped out whole generations of Greeks.⁴⁶⁸ Following these accounts all mention of the Ros faded until their re-emergence as the Rus' not too many years thereafter.

If the Rus' (Ros) were anything like the Germanic Goths which they once associated with, then these accounts echo much more than a shade of truth. This is precisely the type of treatment the Romans received from the Goths some centuries earlier when they descended on a dying and barely recognisable Rome. The Goths were a race fearsome in the extreme, and the greatest army of the east.⁴⁶⁹ In a few days they could pull apart a city as big as Rome, and they did. Their unprecedented looting spree, saw them rob both living and dead, for they broke open sepulchres deep in the multi-storey subterranean Roman catacombs, in search of skeletal material, particularly that of the saints.⁴⁷⁰ Who knows, they might even have got their hands on the bones of St's Peter and Paul, which according to legend were held at the crypt of St Sebastian in Rome until around that time.

An historian's task is to study the many events of yesteryear with a view to reconstructing what once took place. How incomplete that reconstruction is without a character sketch of the long-dead participants, without fathoming their frame of mind and perceptions. One concept that repeatedly intruded upon the thoughts of Mediaeval Christian men, women, or children, was the notion that all hell was about to break loose, quite literally. Forces had been freed which would soon ravish Christian civilisation as they knew it. These widespread forebodings materialised as a result of the intense and uneasy happenings then taking place beyond the farthest German and Byzantine frontiers, in the land of pagans. From there issued war-like hosts and alien idolatry, that pounced on even the largest Christian cities like a wolf. It was the emergence of pent up forces, heathen Slavs, Norsemen, Hungarians, and Bulgars, that so terrified them. Some advocated that these events amounted to the fulfilment of the Bible's most chilling prophecies.

During the Hunnish explosion of 433 AD, Proclus, the then Byzantine Patriarch, spoke of the dawning barbarian upheavals as the emergence of the Prince of Rosh, heading the army of Gog. To be sure Attila had come out of Scythia intent on war. Scythian Goths and their one-time enemies the Massagetae were just some of the easterners filling his ranks.⁴⁷¹

THE HILL OF AZ, A
POSSIBLE UNHOLY SITE
FOR DEVIL WORSHIP

DEMONS COULD
BESTOW BENEFITS UPON
THOSE WHO
WORSHIPPED THEM

THE PYTHONIAN
GENIUS

THE RUSSES WERE
RENOWNED FOR
ATROCITIES THEY
COMMITTED WHILE
RAIDING SETTLEMENTS
AND CITIES

MEDIAEVAL CHRISTIANS
BELIEVED HELL WAS
ABOUT TO BREAK OPEN,
FREEING ITS DENIZENS
TO AFFLICT THE WORLD
IN UNTOLD WAYS

PROCLUS FELT THE
HUNNS WERE TOOLS OF
SATAN

ATILLA THE HUN GOES
ON THE WARPATH

Turbulent chaos adequately describes the Ukraine throughout the 4th-5th Century AD, judging by the level of insurrection and inter-racial combats taking place. Something monolithic was taking transpiring beyond Rome's Dacian frontier, out of visual range, depositing a debilitating smell of danger in the air. Catastrophic events were building. Roman sentries patrolling the Dacian wall were oblivious to Atilla's coming fist. Around 360-370 AD Hunnish and Hunno-Bulgar forces tore through Southern Russia and into Dacia, like a cyclonic maelstrom, his army fattened by recently absorbed Indo-Iranians (Alans, Sarmatians). Khan Atilla put paid to the Germanic Goths inhabiting the Bosphorus area and pressed them into service also. Unluckily for Rome there was no stopping there. Ukraine looked and felt like a marshalling point for the destruction of a chronically ill Rome, whose dwindling strength was in some cases propped up by former enemies serving as auxiliaries. The Hunnish barbarian vulture, emboldened by their herculean grip on the region's militarists, circled the frontier, ready to pounce. Thrace, Rome, Francia, Roman Gaul; they were all on his hit list.

SOME GERMANIC AND
GOTHIC TRIBES LENT THE
HUNS THEIR SUPPORT

The Hunnish arrival had a drastic effect on Germanic tribal unity. Only those willing to submit to the Khan were safe to stay on, others loyal to the Germanic kings were progressively squeezed from their homes, moving west. As time went by a good many (Ostrogoths, Herulians, Alans) stuck with the Hunns, while others (Visigoths, Alans) drew back to join their arms with the Franks, Lombards. Some Teutons, it would seem, were won over by the Romans, and encouraged to offer spirited resistance to the barbarian incursions. Others, seeing the once-invincible Empire dying before their very eyes, turned to opportunistic looting, as opposed to open warfare.

OTHERS WITHDREW
FURTHER WESTWARD
INTO EUROPE, PREPARING
TO COMBAT THEM
SHOULD THEY ARRIVE

Obviously Proclus was mistaken that the end times were underway in his age, for with Atilla's death Christians breathed a welcome sigh of relief. The danger had passed for the time being.

Later, in the 9th Century AD, it was the Mediaeval pagan Russes who ended up carrying the infamous title of Magog, almost as if it were Atilla's passing of the baton, in an apocalyptic medley relay. According to the author of *The Life of St George of Amastris*, the very name Ros was infinitely more horrific than the many terrible afflictions they visited upon their prey,⁴⁷² because, in the same tradition as Proclus, he identified them with the army of Gog from the land of Magog.

Thus the Rus' tribe was linked in two separate Church traditions with the prophesied Prince of Rosh (the Greek pronunciation was Ros) of the septuagint, the leader of the army of Gog. It is of interest that the 10th Century AD Rus' Rurikid tamga was identical to one letter in the so-called Alphabet of the Kings, which in Cornelius Agrippa's later work *De Occulta Philosophia* was assigned the Jewish sound "Resh". In other words the Rus' princes may have worn as their emblem the device of Resh, *thus indicating they might have in some way identified themselves as being the Princes of Rosh*. For those unfamiliar with the ancient prophecy, the dawning of the nations of Gog is shown here, as recorded in the Jewish *Old Testament*.

"Son of man set thy face against Gog, the land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshech (Rosh) and Tubal, and prophesy against him....And I will turn thee back, and put hooks into thy jaws, and I will bring thee forth (Gog), and all thine army, horses and horsemen, all of them clothed with all sorts of armour, even a great company with bucklers and shields, all of them handling swords...Persia, Ethiopia (some translations have Sudan) and Libya with them: all of them with shield and helmet. Thou shalt ascend and come like a storm, thou shalt be like a cloud to cover the land, thou and all thy bands, and many people with thee....And thou shalt say, I will go up to the land of unwall'd villages; I will go to them that are at rest; that dwell safely, all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars or gates. To take a spoil, and to take a prey; to turn thine hand upon the desolate places that are now inhabited, and upon the people that are gathered out of the nations, which have gotten cattle and goods, that dwell in the midst of the land. Sheba and Dedan, and the merchants of Tarshish, with all the young lions thereof, shall say unto thee, Art thou come to take a spoil? Hast thou gathered thy company to take a prey? to carry away silver and gold, to take away cattle and goods, to take a great spoil?And thou shalt come from thy place out of the north parts; thou and many people with thee, all of them riding upon horses, a great company, and a mighty army. And thou shalt come up against my people of Israel, as a cloud to cover the land: it shall be in the latter days, and I will bring thee against my land, that the heathen may know me, when I shall be sanctified in thee, O Gog, before their eyes. And I will lead against him with pestilence and with blood; and I will rain upon him, and upon his bands, and upon the many people that are with him, an overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire, and brimstone".⁴⁷³

This passage is connected with the later *New Testament* prophecy concerning Gog, which reads as follows -

*“And he (the angel) laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season....
And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea.
And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city; and fires came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them”*.⁴⁷⁴

Things were not looking good for Christendom during the 9th and 10th Centuries AD, with the Moors in Spain, and Muslim forces from Libya having gained a foothold in Sicily and throughout the Middle east. But following the campaigns of the combined Rus', Slav, Finn pagan army against the Khazarian Jewish empire (where the Jews of the diaspora finally gathered), and its piecemeal destruction at Khagan Svyatoslav's hand, nervous Byzantine onlookers had even greater cause to dwell on the old septuagint prophecy, and link the heathen northmen with the hosts of Gog. This was not strictly a Christian perception either; even Mediaeval Arab geographers like Ibn Hawkal regarded the Russes as inhabitants of Magog. The Muslims and Jews of the far-east were similarly loathe to allow them free passage into the Caspian Sea, for fear of the destruction they would bring.

The cleric who wrote the *Life of St George of Amastris* (in which he recorded the Ros attack on Amastris) didn't go on to specify why the name Ros provoked feelings of horror and revulsion, but his readership evidently knew the reason, so much so that he didn't need to expand upon the point. It was enough to make them shudder at the mere mention of it. We can only guess why this was so, but presumably there was a logical explanation for his comment, known to the people of his day. One possible reason for the "horror" which the hagiographer felt was inherently attached to the name Ros might exist in the writings of St Augustine. Like so many Christians, St Augustine tried to fathom the true meaning of biblical prophecy, however he stated that nobody knew the timing for the events except God himself. In the following passage he theorised about the meaning of Ezekiel's ancient prophecy (as countless Christians have tried to do, before and after him), and supplied what he understood to be the meaning of Gog and Magog. What language he derived the definitions from he does not say.

“For the nations called Gog and Magog are not to be taken as standing for some barbarian peoples, whose home is in some particular part of the earth, whether the Getae (Goths) and the Massagetae (as some have guessed on account of the initials of their names), or some other peoples of foreign race, outside Roman sway. It is indicated, in fact, that they exist all over the world, when the first statement about “nations in the four corners of the earth” is followed by the remark that those nations are Gog and Magog. I find that the names mean Gog, “a roof” and Magog “from the roof”.⁴⁷⁵

These, then, are the nations in which, according to our interpretation given above, the Devil is shut up, as it were, in an abyss; and the Devil himself is, in a way, one who rushes out and proceeds from them; as they are “the roof”, he is the one who proceeds “from the roof. If, on the other hand, we refer both names to the nations, instead of applying one to them and the other to the Devil, then they will be “the roof” (ie: Gog) because the ancient enemy (the Devil) is shut up in them and, in a sense covered by them; and they will also be “from the roof” (ie: Magog) when they burst out from covert into overt hatred”.

The Russian word for “a roof” *Krysha*, comes from the word *Kryzh*, which has the following cognates - *Kryzh* or *Kryti* (Old Slavonic: “to conceal” or “to hide”), *Kriya* (Bulgarian meaning “I am concealing or hiding something”). These are cognate with *Kriti* (Slovenian, Serbo-croat), *Kryti* (Czech), *Krys* (Polish), all of which mean “to conceal”, “to hide”, “to drown”, or “to cover with a roof”. Then there is *Krauju* (Lithuanian) and *Kraut* (Latvian) both of which mean “to impose a burden on someone”). Lithuanian *Kruva* (“a heap” or “a pile”), Latvian (“a load”), *Krauja* (“a hole in the ground” or “a cliff”), *Kruties* (“to impose yourself on someone”), *Hraukr* (Old Icelandic meaning “a pile”), and *Cruach* (Irish meaning “a pile”).⁴⁷⁶ The Russian word for “roof” *Krysha* is not only connected with *Kryzh*, but with *Hroysar* and *Hroyse* (Old Icelandic), *Ros*, or *Rose* (Danish), and *Ruse* (Low German) which in these Germanic tongues meant “a pile or cairn of stones”.⁴⁷⁷ See how similar *Ros*, *Ruse* and *Hroyse* are to *Ros*, *Rhos*, *Rus'* and *Hros* (the latter group being names exclusively applied to the Russes). Is this why the churchmen were afraid of the names *Rus*, *Rhos*, *Hros* or *Ros*? Were they terror-inspiring words because the Danish or Old Icelandic words are cognate with the Russian

CHRISTIANITY SEEMED
BESIEGED FROM EVERY
ANGLE

ONE WRITER FELT THE
NAME OF THE RUSSES
WAS SPINE CHILLING

word for “a roof”, therefore signifying they were the actual race of Gog (ie; the Roof)?

The Muslims (unlike St Augustine) regarded Gog and Magog as elements of a specific barbarian race renowned for its brutality, which had been around at least since the time of Alexander the Great.⁴⁷⁸ They existed as instruments of God’s punishment, especially against the Jews. In the *Qur’an* we find:

IN ISLAMIC SCRIPTURE
ALEXANDER THE GREAT
BUILDS A WALL TO HOLD
BACK THE MEN OF GOG
AND MAGOG

“Then he followed yet another route until he came between the Two Mountains and found a people who could barely understand a word. “Dhul-Qarnayn” (ie; Alexander the Great) they said, “Gog and Magog are ravaging this land. Build a rampart between us, and we will pay you tribute.” “He replied: “The power my Lord has given me is better than any tribute. Lend me a force of men, and I will raise a rampart between you and them. Come, bring me blocks of iron.” “He dammed up the valley between the Two Mountains, and said: “Ply your bellows.” And when the iron blocks were red with heat, he said: “Bring me molten brass to pour on them.””⁴⁷⁹

The *Qur’an* goes on to say;

GOG AND MAGOG
WOULD ARISE IN THE
LAST DAYS

“It is ordained that no nation We have destroyed shall ever rise again. But when Gog and Magog are let loose and rush headlong down every hill (just before the Last Judgement); when the true promise nears its fulfilment; the unbelievers shall stare in amazement, crying: “Woe to us”! Of this we have been heedless. We have done wrong.” You and your idols shall be the fuel of Hell; therein you shall all go down”⁴⁸⁰

In Islamic thought the re-emergence of Gog and Magog is commanded by God at the end of days, when Alexander’s wall is finally taken out of the way by divine edict. *Surah 18* states;

THEY ARE TO BE
UNLEASHED BY GOD’S
COMMAND. THE EVENT
WILL BE A SIGN AND
PUNISHMENT ON THE
UNBELIEVERS

“Gog and Magog could not scale it, nor could they dig their way through it. He said: “This is a blessing from my Lord. But when my Lord’s promise has been fulfilled, He will level it to dust. The promise of my Lord is true. On that day We (the Archangels) will let them (the legions of Gog and Magog) come in tumultuous throngs, The Trumpet shall be sounded and We will gather them all together. On that day We (the Archangels) shall lay Hell bare before the unbelievers who have turned a blind eye to My admonition and a deaf ear to My (the Archangel Gabriel’s) warning”.

Similar feelings to those mentioned by St Augustine were held by Adam of Bremen concerning the Goths then living among the Norsemen. In his *History of the Archbishops of Hamburg-Bremen* we find Adam linking the Goths with the army of Gog, just as many people did during the time of St Augustine.

ST AUGUSTINE DIDN’T
FEEL IT WAS PROPER TO
ASSOCIATE GOG AND
MAGOG WITH A SPECIFIC
RACE

“And unless I am mistaken in my opinion, the prophecy of Ezechiel about Gog and Magog here appears to have been very aptly fulfilled. “And I will send,” says the Lord, “a fire on Magog, and on them that dwell confidently in the islands.” Some think that this and similar sayings were spoken about the Goths who captured Rome. When, however, we consider the fact that the Gothic peoples rule in Sweden and that all this region is dispersed in islands scattered far and wide, we are of the opinion that the prophecy can be applied to them, especially since the prophets made many predictions which as yet do not appear to have been fulfilled”⁴⁸¹

Two Mediaeval Norse texts (*Arrow Odd* and *Hauksbok*) equated Rus’ with Magog.⁴⁸² These writings stemmed from the Christian era, so the references are more likely to be a Christian gloss, than a traditional heathen Scandinavian tradition.

SOME HISTORIANS MAKE
A LOT OUT OF THE OLD
MYTHOS SURROUNDING
THE RUSSES

Professors Rybakov, Vernadsky and Florovskiy have had a tendency to give credence to the writings of mediaeval clerics (such as the Syrian who wrote *History*, the Greek who wrote *The Life of St George of Amastris*, not to mention Patriarch Photius himself), and make an actual linkage between the Rus’ and the armies of Gog and Magog which lived at the farthest reaches of the world. We must use caution when examining their position. The mediaeval texts written by these figures are either historical evidence that Church leaders believed that they were witnessing the startling reappearance of the race of Gog, or that they wanted to falsely persecute a pagan tribe known as the Rus’, or that the Rus’ were in truth Gog.

PETRUKHIN FEELS IT
SHOULD BE TAKEN WITH
A GRAIN OF SALT

Petrukhin⁴⁸³ quite logically points out that analogies between Rus’ and Gog belong only to legend and should in no way be taken as evidence that the mysterious Nordic Rus’ tribe and the mythical biblical legions of Gog were in any way connected. For instance in the Syraic text the *Hros* are mentioned as inhabiting realms wherein also lived

amazons and dog-men. Such inclusions tend to denude the account of any believability, and for this reason I felt inclined to favour Petrukhin's views. And yet as I sat there year after year, thumbing my way through reams of archaeological, linguistic, mythological, folkloric and historical data I began to find amazing shreds of information (that were more tamper-proof than historical documentation) which intimated that maybe, just maybe, there was more substance to what Rybakov, Vernadsky and other like-minded scholars had been saying. At least more than I was initially prepared to admit anyway. Though I would temper this comment by adding that something was truly re-emerging from that geographical regions with cataclysmic implications for Christian civilisation, and to the Christian faithful this could be emotively termed Gog.

As you will read later, the emergence of the long forgotten Ros/Rus' was a source of deep anxiety for the Jews and Church alike, amply fuelling the apocalyptic fears⁴⁸⁴ that riddled Byzantium during the early Middle Ages. Most importantly, the spontaneous materialisation of the Ros after dusty, long-forgotten ages, along with the Bulgars, Magyars, Serbs, Croats and others eastern heathen nations, set the stage for the flowering of heresy, as Iranian dualistic religion (which permitted the worship of light and dark forces) mingled unchecked with Christianity in the lands of the Slavs. With pagan Magyar horsemen lunging across the frontiers of the Holy Roman Empire, the western Church got to share in the same smorgasbord of fears as the Christian citizens of Byzantium.

Merlin's prophetic cycle of the last days played its part in medieval apocalypticism too, as did his *Book of Kings*. They were popular reading in at least five countries, especially so in the 12th-13th Centuries.⁴⁸⁵ But they were ultimately confined to the British Isles alone, owing to the Counter-Reformation's condemnation of Merlinist writings.⁴⁸⁵

A significant number of Celtic prophecies have persisted down to the present day, recorded right throughout the low to high middle ages. At the behest of Lincoln's bishop, Geoffrey of Monmouth applied himself to translating the Prophecies of Merlin. It includes a raft of demonizing phraseology like: "*Woe to the red dragon for his banishment hasteneth on. His lurking holes shall be seized by the white dragon, which signifies the Saxons whom you invited over: but the red denotes the British nation, which shall be oppressed by the white. Therefore shall its mountains be levelled as the valleys, and the rivers of the valleys shall run with blood. The exercise of religion shall be destroyed, and churches be laid open to ruin*".⁴⁸⁶ It is my belief prophecies in this vein provided excellent propaganda tools for reformist clergymen desperately trying to place a bridle in the mouth of the 'wayward' Germanic and Saxon church. People's sentiments could be raised, opposing forces could be mustered with greater ease.

One such prophecy concerned repeated invasions of Ireland. "*On the arrival of the Tuatha De Danann in Ireland, a vision was revealed in a dream to Eochaid, son of erc, high king of Ireland. He pondered over it with much anxiety, being filled with wonder and perplexity. He told his wizard, "Cesard ... employ your skill and knowledge, and tell us the meaning of the vision"*.⁴⁸⁷ Cesard did so, and by means of ritual and the use of his science the meaning of the king's vision was revealed to him: and he said: "*I have tidings for you: warriors are coming across the sea, a thousand heroes covering the ocean; speckled ships will press in upon us; all kinds of death they announce, a people skilled in every art, a magic spell; an evil spirit will come upon you, signs to lead you astray ... they will be victorious in every stress*".⁴⁸⁷ Such tales are fairly typical of Irish seership, even that of Merlin (originally called Myrddin), which seem to hover over the topic of Anglo-Saxon and Viking invasions that would swamp the Celtic people.

The Celts hoped for a pleasing reversal to their misfortune, a repeated theme of their Seers, appearing in uplifting visions. Ambrose's prophetic glimpse of the future mentioned "*the two serpents are two dragons; the red serpent is your dragon, but the white serpent is the dragon of the people who occupy several provinces and districts of Britain, even almost from sea to sea; at length however, our people shall rise and drive away the Saxon race from beyond the sea, whence they originally came*".⁴⁸⁸

One tale of Merlin is recounted in psalmody in the first person, and seems to identify him as a pre-existent soul whose origins lay in heaven (similar to a *fravashi*), and who was repeatedly reborn into the world as a provider of assistance to those in need of knowledge and protection ...

"Primary chief bard am I to Elphin, and my original country is the region of the summer stars; Joannes the (Egyptian) diviner called me Merddin, at length every king will call me Taliesin. I was with my lord in the highest sphere on the fall of Lucifer into the depth of hell; I have born a banner before Alexander; I know the names of the stars of the north and

HAVING SAID THAT
DEVIL WORSHIP WAS
KNOWN IN THE AREA

MERLIN, THE DRUIDIC
WIZARD

CELTIC PROPHECIES

MAGICIANS AND
WARRIORS COME TO
IRELAND

MERLIN'S SOUL
EXPERIENCED MULTIPLE
INCARNATIONS

*the south (ie; stars of the northern and southern hemisphere). I have been on the galaxy at the throne of the Distributor; ... instructor to Eli and Enoc ... I have been for three periods in the court of Arianrod; I have been chief director of the work of the tower of Nimrod, I am a wonder whose origin is not known ... I was in Africa before the foundation of Rome, I am now come here to the remains of Troia ... I have been with my Lord in the manger of the ass; I strengthened Moses through the water of Jordan ... I have obtained the muse from the cauldron of Ceridwen ... I have been a teacher to the whole universe; I shall be until the day of doom on the face of the earth ... I was for nine months in the womb of the hag Ceridwen: I was originally little Gwion, and at length I am Taliesin".*⁴⁸⁹

The Old Believers promoted their own texts of import. One such example, the *Great Battle of the Antichrist*, contains lines like;

'Now it will be clear who has faith! ... The moon is black, the sun darkened. I see the stars fall from heaven. The ancient dragon seems to be unleashed... The sun is Christ who now gives no sign to strengthen his servants ... The whole of the clergy has galloped off and taken the wrong way'.⁴⁹⁰

A good deal later Lauch issued end times sermons in the final years of the 16th Century. The monster nations of Gog were Turkic by his reckoning.⁴⁹¹ Such a detail conforms to Magian thought concerning the devil's people, but his association of the Turks with the devil-worshippers, might have been grounded in the activities of the Ottoman Turks who occupied the Balkans.

But for the present time, the currently-reigning kings were their sworn enemies, the adversaries of their imprisoned master. It was standard belief that the kings and queens were the only forces able to physically stop the spread of the devil's religion. At the end of the day this was probably because a number of European royals could trace their ancestry to the pagan sun kings, and hence were the ultimate foes of the great demon, the light which melted away the darkness.

So much for the prophesied activities of Antichrist. How did these events materialise in this world? There are instances where black witches admitted they were participating in the foundation of the Antichrist's universal kingdom.⁴⁹² They were key players in his plan to bring the world out of order, an order enforced by the king's laws. Some of them, perhaps the worst of them, would be kings and queens in the infernal kingdom, once the appointed time arrived.⁴⁹²

It was expected by witches and Christians alike, that the world would truly be inverted with the coming of Antichrist, and with it everything we knew and understood would be turned on its head.⁴⁹³ People fully expected that their heads would be planted in the earth, their feet in the sky.⁴⁹³ The earth would become heaven, and heaven hell. All religion would be abandoned, material existence would be our paradise.⁴⁹³

In the early 1600's Jean Boucher was one of many to note in writing the rites of the dark witches.⁴⁹⁴ Their rituals were usually, but not always, performed naked.⁴⁹⁴ When celebrating their unholy feasts the officiating celebrant hung upside down.⁴⁹⁴ They were very intent on aping what normally happened during white ritualism, so much so that they are alleged to have ensured that their arms, while fully outstretched, were the precise distance from the ground, had the celebrant been standing in the upright position.⁴⁹⁵ Unlike the white Magian or Christian host, theirs was black.⁴⁹⁵ If they were really angry at the time they might go that extra mile, mistreating and abusing their ritual equipment.⁴⁹⁶ And so ceremonial irregularities were the order of the day, or rather disorder of the day, a small but key element to unlock the ancient chaos once more.⁴⁹⁷ At these very low masses of contrariety, their blasphemous head witches and warlocks, the grand masters of disorder, delivered their chilling sermons. The need to rob, tell lies, revel in our lusts, to bring burdens on others, to murder if you can, or indeed should, to turn your back on God, or even the gods, and to look after yourself at the expense of everyone else.⁴⁹⁷

In casual prayer they might bend over backward, kicking their legs up in the air, or somersault, so that, for that brief moment, they were truly upside down.⁴⁹⁷ At other times they prayed to the demons, their eyes peering down upon the ground, their hands reaching out to the timeless evils beneath them.⁴⁹⁷ With trepidation they made their way towards the demons who attended, normally walking backward, or else sideways.⁴⁹⁸

THE ANTICHRIST TENDED
BY INFERNAL WITCHES
AND WARLOCKS

INVERTED RITUALISM

As with the long list of pretender Messiahs, there may have been false Antichrists, owing to the lies the demons were supposed to give in their locutions. One of the most atrocious cases encountered was that of Gaufridy.⁴⁹⁹ In 1611 Dominican inquisitors had cause to investigate and burn a Catholic priest from Marseilles, in relation to incidents at a convent situated in Aix-en-Provence.⁵⁰⁰ By the testimony of a nun, Gaufridy had been seducing them, and bringing them over into his devilish ceremonies.⁵⁰¹ Now laterally connected with this case was another convent of Brigidines at Lille, France.⁵⁰¹ Particular nuns at that convent had engaged in the same sort of ceremonies at Aix, but were far more engrossed in it, able child killers, and could recount the ritual order they observed.⁵⁰¹ What was even more disturbing, the statements they separately tendered to the Dominicans, about such things as their twisted canticles, corroborated statements made by at least two others.⁵⁰¹ Clearly they had shared in ceremonies of the most infernal kind. More startling was the claim that they had seen the birth of the Antichrist, who was born to a female Jew. Gaufridy and the witch nuns were his guardians.

THE TRIAL OF
GAUFRIDY IN AIX-EN-
PROVENCE

While Christ had his nativity at Christmas, the winter solstice, the Antichrist was said to have come into the world on the Summer solstice, but in the year 1613 AD.⁵⁰² They assured the inquisitors that the people would truly embrace him.⁵⁰² What were at that time considered secular and religious crimes would be countenanced and blessed by the people of the future.⁵⁰² Evil would become good, and good evil. They stressed the point that they, as infernal witches, had been present to see Antichrist's birth, and this was seen as a parody of the white Magi's journey to see the new-born Christ in Bethlehem.⁵⁰²

ALLEGEDLY BORN
DURING THE SUMMER
SOLSTICE

Having been castigated by a king's secular tribunals, or by the Holy Inquisition, dark witches and warlocks were sentenced to death. But before that, God knows, the white Magi tried to wipe out the wicked ones, the devil's own children. And as they waited near their well-fuelled pyres the remorseless convicts issued unimaginable curses upon the onlookers, plagues and every misfortune, even as they burned. Still others remained. There was much work to be done, to prepare for their master's coming.

On a lighter and more innocent level, peculiar medieval and Renaissance social events conformed to the principles of inversion; the carnivals of misrule,⁵⁰³ the Saturnalias,⁵⁰³ where attendees donned the masks of witches, concealing their real selves, and men cross-dressed. Indeed dressing in male clothing was taken as a sign that Joan of Arc had abjured her recantation. And so she was burned as a relapsed witch. So the many dualistic legends, folk beliefs and cult activities of the Middle Ages can be seen for what they really were. They were drawn from Magian scripture and eschatology, shaped by Christian scripture. Both Magians and Christians alike spoke of the wicked one's coming. Meanwhile the Byzantines took every care in eradicating the alleged perfidies of Luciferian black witches, Bogomils and Paulicians. All were high on their hit list.

CARNIVALS OF MISRULE

As early as the 4th Century AD, the apostolic, Nicaean Creed served to teach successive generations of parishioners that *there only ever was one Son*. But among the absolute dualist heretics, this was a teaching to be hotly contested. Dissecting the apostolic profession of faith line by line, one discovers that it served to clarify certain misconceptions the faithful may have had about the nature of Jesus and the Apostolic Church. It advertised points of distinction between Apostolic Christianity and the many high profile mystery religions of their day, including those that mingled Jesus in an overtly dualistic system of belief.

1. Both the Father and Jesus were light.
2. The phrase *'Maker of heaven and earth'* disenfranchised whatever gnostic dualist heretics postulated the earth was in some way the realm and creation of the devil or demi-urge. According to Apostolic Christianity the Father was the Cosmocrator, and he alone.
3. Both Jesus and the Father were God.
4. Jesus was the only son of the Father; there was no other. This simple sentence served to disassociate the apostolic Church from Mithraism, Zurvanism, pagan gnosticism and many of the Eastern Mysteries. So, at least according to the Church and Apostolic Creed, neither Satan nor the Antichrist were Jesus's brother.
5. He came down from heaven, was made flesh, and sacrificed himself. This line served to distance the Church from Manichaeism, which, along with gnosticism, did not profess a belief in the crucifixion or incarnation of Christ.

6. 'Begotten not made' was an anti-Arian Christian clause.
7. Jesus will come again to us in great glory, not walking the earth in a mortal body. Only when he does it will be to impart a judgement on us all.
8. There was an afterlife that the faithful would share in.
9. 'We believe in one holy Catholic and Apostolic Church' was a blunt declaration of allegiance to the apostolic teachings, as opposed to the many species of Christianity that had formed a symbiotic relationship with the eastern mysteries.

In summary, the Nicene Creed is a time capsule of ancient refutations against heresies, much of which is no longer understood by the average believer, who recites it parrot fashion each Sunday at Church.

Brotherhoods of 'heresy'

Apart from the not-so-discrete Manichaeans and Paulician sects (which will be covered in a short while), heretical groups were highly secretive organisations, most reticent about their creed until the confidence of an aspiring convert was assured. Considering the repressive measures pitted against them, it could hardly have been otherwise. In the Christian era, contact between heretics was made possible by means of special passwords or handshakes, which allowed networks to openly flourish under a veil of greatest secrecy. Because so little was absolutely known about them by the Church authorities, they were often referred to by the blanket term 'Manichaeans',⁵⁰⁴ as distinct from the heresy of that name. Heretics were regarded as pernicious and mischievous due to the nature of their societies and teachings, which helped demolish apostolic teaching. Their perceived penchant for subversion, their distortion of biblical texts and their clandestine distribution of pseudo-gospels and apocrypha amongst infant Christian communities was lethal to the apostolicity of the Church.

During the Inquisitions city parishes were better policed, and mostly rendered 'heretic-free' as time went by, through awareness of heretical methods and tenets, though rural communities were especially vulnerable, proselytised by these 'wandering preachers', often with startling effectiveness.

Throughout this book I have identified Magian-Christians as the most prodigious of the 'heretics' present among early Christian and medieval Christian communities. As years passed they, and diverse spiritually picaresque societies, settled in far flung regions, sometimes in lands barely visited by missionaries, and sometimes in the Holy Sees of the Christian world. These we will now explore.

The Marcionites

MARCIONITES

MARCION, THE
PROGENITOR OF AN
ENDURING TRADITION OF
DUALISTIC CHRISTIAN
HERESY

In *The History of the Church*, Eusebius' quotations of early Christian Church texts mention the wolf-men. These accounts put the two-legged wolves in the area of Pontus (Turkey) and the steppes as early as 300 AD, if not earlier. In Eusebius' scant references to the 'Pontic wolves', the themes of gnostic heresy, mass-apostasy and remarkable miraculous powers surface. Amongst them, no doubt, was the Marcionite heresy, a resilient 2nd Century unorthodoxy overwhelmingly attacked by just about every major Christian writer of the time. The cult was begun by Marcion, a small time shipping magnate and son of the then bishop of Sinope, in Anatolia (Turkey). He was excommunicated before a special synod of Roman bishops in July 144 AD in retaliation for his active opposition to the Church.⁵⁰⁵

Marcion chose to re-interpret the Bible, in a way that differed from apostolic teaching. For him, the *Old Testament*, and the mosaic law which Jesus had spiritually liberated us from, was evil and no longer to be obeyed by true Christians. Every Gospel and apostolic treatise fell into disuse besides Paul's writings and Luke's Gospel. These were the only texts, he said, which showed the relevance of Christ's coming. He felt it had nothing whatsoever to do with the coming of a Jewish Messiah, but a world messiah. He brought dualism into the fray by suggesting that Christ's Father was utterly divorced from Yaweh, who was evil and utterly demonic, and a creator of a corrupt and blemished universe. Therefore, he charged the entire Church with propagating the teachings of inept apostles and the falsification of holy books. St Polycarp, (made bishop of Smyrna by St John, the author of the 4th Gospel), refers to him as the 'first born of Satan',⁵⁰⁶ presumably meaning he was only one of a number of false teachers (*pseudoapostolos*) destined to lead Christ's flock astray. From this we might gather that dualism was

ST POLYCARP CALLED
HIM THE FIRST BORN OF
SATAN

regarded by many in the earliest generations of Churchmen (Polycarp was born only one generation after Christ, and personally ordained by St John) as unspeakable lies, the detestable Persian poison, whose only antidote was the sound and authentic teachings of the Church proper. Moreover, Polycarp stressed the importance of not exchanging words with such people, since in doing so, there was every risk of being infected by their life-threatening heresy. Al-Nadim stated that many Marcionites were still present among the Christian communities of Islamic Khorezm and Baghdad during his day, and what is more their religious texts were still available. One of them was called *Antithesis*. They therefore thrived in regions formerly populated by Magians, Chaldeans and most likely the Magian Christians. Al-Nadim did not know where he could get copies though, because they were ‘concealed among the Christians’.⁵⁰⁷ One Marcionite doctrine allegedly maintained that while God was ruler of the kingdom of Light and the Devil the Lord of Darkness, Jesus was said to be the ruler of the earth, that third place wherein light and dark, good and evil mixed. Marcionites did not believe in consuming animal fats or alcohol.

MARCIONITES EXISTED
AMONG THE CHRISTIAN
COMMUNITIES IN
BAGHDAD AND
KHOREZM

There was a sub-sect of the Marcionites, a splinter group which the Muslims called *Al Mahaniyah*. Its doctrines were hardly known and so avoided entering the historical record.

The Massalians

As a point of origin for the Massalian sect we need look no further than Northern Mesopotamia and Armenia,⁵⁰⁸ where they were known and feared as early as the 400’s AD. It is generally believed most of them faded away in the Middle East somewhere during the 600’s AD, but their presence was noted in the Balkans after the year 1,000 AD, leaving one to conclude they had migrated there, having slotted in among the Paulicians.⁵⁰⁸

THE MASSALIAN
HERETICS

The Balkan Massalians of the early Middle Ages were supposedly closely associated with the Bogomils, and also went by the name Euchites, or Enthusiasts. Their sect espoused the same ‘dark and evil Trinity’ (as the Inquisitors regarded it) as the Bogomils, yet often allowed the open worship of Satan in order to placate him and stave off evil. These were so to speak crisis sacrifices, of a sort not unknown in heathen districts. But in an intriguing liturgical twist they felt sorry for the Devil, perceiving in him the biblical ‘prodigal son’, who squandered his share of his father’s inheritance on wine and prostitutes, but who would one day be warmly accepted back by his father. Using (NT) *Matthew 21: 28-32* and *Luke 15: 11-32* as validation for their doctrine, they claimed that Satan was the Father’s beloved, because he honestly admitted he was evil. One sub-sect of the Massalians worshiped Satan singly in ‘thanksgiving’ for all of the earthly riches and hedonistic pleasures they received on earth. Licentiousness of every species was supposedly practiced in their veneration of the worldly prince.⁵⁰⁹

TEACHINGS ABOUT
SATAN, THE PRODIGAL
SON

In these details I perceive the strong influence of Yezidis beliefs, which, in the *Mashaf Resh* follow along this line. It states that Jesus was flung into the dungeon abyss for disagreeing with god, while the fallen angel Melek Ta’uz was redeemed through his contrition, and ascended to heaven. And so Christ remained entombed there in a sorrowful state until “He remembered Melek Ta’us. He then sought his aid ... When Melek Ta’us heard this, he descended from heaven to earth quicker than the twinkling of an eye, removed the stone from the top of the den, and said to Jesus, “Come up, behold I have brought thee out”. They both went up to heaven. When the great God saw Jesus, he said to him, “Oh Jesus, who brought thee out of the den? Who brought thee here without my permission? Jesus answered and said, “Melek Ta’us brought me out of the den and up here”. Then god said, “Had it been another, I would have punished him, but Melek Ta’us is much beloved by me: remain here for the sake of my honour”. So Jesus remained in heaven”.^{509a} The preacher added “Notice that those who are without do not like Melek Ta’us. Know ye that in the resurrection he will not like them either, and he will not interceded for them. But as for us, he will put us all in a tray, carry us upon his head, and take us into heaven”.^{509a}

ASPECTS OF THEIR
THEOLOGY RESEMBLE
YEZIDIS TEACHINGS

Elements of text found in the *Mashaf Resh* appear very old, such as “The people are to give the *kochaks* (priests) money to fight the Roman army, and thus save the Yezidis sect from the wrath of the man of the year (probably the Byzantine Emperor)”.^{509b} This is probably a reference to Byzantine military exploits against the eastern ‘devil-worshippers’, which are due for discussion a little later in this book. There is however some suggestion of Islamic tinkering with the book’s content in several places.

From a Christian perspective the medieval Massalians were regarded as the progenitors of what is today commonly referred to as Satanism, the Church of the ‘mystical body of Satan’.

Through baptism, asceticism and spiritual baptism, the Massalian expelled a demon said to be attached to each

THEY EXORCISED
THEMSELVES OF THEIR
BIRTH-DEMON, AND
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AFTER THAT THEY
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THEY WERE GUARDIANS
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LITERATURE

THE COUNCIL OF TRENT
CENSURED ANY SORT OF
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THERE WOULD BE NO
REDEMPTION FOR THE
EVIL ONE

person's soul from the time of their birth. This done the devotee was said to be cleansed enough for the Holy Spirit to enter the adept's body. Once this occurred, the person received a wondrous vision of God and was considered to be 'saved'. Thence they could live life in a totally uninhibited way, without need for restraint of any kind. According to the Orthodox writer Michael Psellus their rites included infernal rituals, drunkenness, orgies, gluttony and other 'serious sins', and these were said to be commonplace amongst them. Gross-indulgence in orgiastic carnal incest and black magic⁵¹⁰ were just some of the charges levelled at the Massalians, extreme behaviour by anyone except Zurvanites, heathen Chaldeans and dark Magian devotees.

So Massalians seem to have worshiped the devil (with prayers in the form of blasphemies), and in the case of their Bogomil affiliates, we hear they did this to give the devil his dues and *to stop evil from happening*. This preoccupation with fealty to misunderstood demonic forces singled them out for special attention by Inquisitors. Massalians claimed that through their spiritual purgation they had become 'Children of God' and not 'Children of the World'. Besides these things, not much else was known about the Massalians.

The full wealth of Byzantine gnostic tradition and texts were kept alive by the Massalians, who acted as gnosticism's *avente garde* custodians, ensuring that their creeds remained 'a living faith' for some time.⁵¹¹ In unison with the Bogomils, the Massalians proved to be masters of monastic infiltration and by the 1300's had for a time usurped positions within the Orthodox communes of Mt Athos, until discovered.⁵¹²

Further evidence for my assertion that pagan Russian priests were key founders of the Bogomils, and somehow deeply related to these gnostic Massalian Euchites, lies in the fact that each Massalian initiate underwent a deification process, *eventually becoming a living-God*.⁵¹³ We also find demonolatry of the sort known to the Slavs elsewhere, rituals which themselves conform to the creed of the Zurvanites and black Magi, first mentioned in the Magian texts.

A belief in Satan's potential redemption is still formally held by the Orthodox churches, though according to their teachings (which were derived from Gregory of Nyssa and Isaac the Syrian), this is because of the overwhelming mercy of God, who until the end of time can muster enough pity to forgive the many depravities of the 'Evil One', and reconcile the choirs of fallen angels to himself, if only they will come to their senses, confess and repent.⁵¹⁴ According to this formula Satan might conceivably find peace through the love of God, though he might equally perish in the eternal fires, if he so chose.⁵¹⁴ This appears outwardly seeded with Massalianism, however it is fundamentally different. The redemption of Satan was a pivotal belief of the medieval Balkan Massalian satanists, who expected that their master would one day be forgiven and reunited with God, becoming thereafter God's favoured son. According to their brand of Massalianism, the day Satan comes walking down that road begging his father's forgiveness, just like any sinner, is the day that his faithful son (Christ) would become despondent and envious in his self-righteousness indignation at the sinner's change of heart. But unlike the Orthodox tradition, the Massalian Zurvanitic interpretation of the parable of the prodigal son symbolised the ultimate victory of Gods evil son, over his good and faithful son not by storming heaven, but by mending his ways.

Catholic doctrine on the matter of Satan's fate is that *he will be struck down and consumed forever more*. Thus would disappear the evil one for all time, unrepentant to the last, as he always had been. During the 16th Century Council of Trent, the Catholic Church declared the hope of salvation was barred to Satan, and that he was destined for perpetual annihilation at the hand of the living God (as mentioned in the *Book of Revelation*). By virtue of the edict issued at Trent, to admit contrary to this was heretical. Any talk of prayers for the salvation of demons, as mentioned by Isaac the Syrian was simply not on! Catholic doctrine clearly follows the line put forward in the *Book of Revelation*, that right up until the ingathering for the Last Judgement, Satan the irredeemable, the cunning opponent of God, will still be about his work, laying waste to the fold.

The Paulicians

In speaking of Prester John, and his eastern kingdoms, one is looking at large enclaves of converted Magians, including Armenia and Anatolia. They continued to inhabit the orient throughout most of the first millennium of Christ until the early medieval period. A certain portion of the Magian Christians were later referred to as Paulicians.

During the 8th and 10th Centuries AD their centre for missionary operations had moved out of the East, and was sited in Bulgaria. Most numerous in the East, Paulician families lived under the protection of the Arabs.⁵¹⁵ Prior to this they were found in Byzantium, though some remained in Armenia and the Anatolian provinces, especially in Cappadocia. By the 10th Century, the Paulician heresy, though only a few hundred years old, was just about eradicated from Anatolia. The fortunes of their faith took a turn for the worse during that period, following their eastern uprisings against the Byzantine State, which saw about 100,000 of them executed in Asia Minor; mainly crucified.⁵¹⁶ In the 10th Century a further 200,000 of their brethren were forcibly re-settled in the Byzantine city of Philippopolis,⁵¹⁷ in the Balkans, thus creating what was the greatest bastion of Magian-Christian heresy in all of Europe, sporting practitioners or ritual demonolatry. From there they fought an intense guerrilla war against the emperor, with their armed bands causing maximum possible mayhem. Byzantium's slaughter of so many of their believers kindled vengeance in later generations of young Paulicians. They displayed fearsome skills on the battlefield when confronting apostolic Christian forces, and served as shock troops on the side of Islam during the Crusades.⁵¹⁸ By the 9th Century, Paulicians living under Arab rule in colonies near the Euphrates, and those sheltering in Armenia, began to link up with the Balkan Paulicians, thus galvanising their solidarity. Since the Caucasian Paulicians were heavily involved with the Muslims, it is just possible they acted as agents for the Arabs.

Whilst other heretics conducted their affairs in secrecy, the Paulicians, like the Manichaeans, preferred to preach and worship openly. In the 11th Century, Emperor Alexius I Comnenus completed, for the most part, their guaranteed conversion or extermination, thus killing off the Paulician heresy for all time. Even so, pockets of them were able to hole up in fortresses deep inside Bulgaria, where they weathered the storm until eventually converted to Roman Catholicism some time during the 1600's.⁵¹⁹ Whereas Paulician sectarians inside Bosnia were absorbed into the wider Muslim community.⁵¹⁹

Paulicianism's beginnings

The Paulician movement, by some accounts, first began in the See of Antioch, via the ministrations of Bishop Paul of Samosata, 'an unspeakable evil' which saw bishops from all over the Christian world converge on that 'malignant diocese', to stamp it out once and for all.⁴²⁰ It never worked! The Catholic Church's view opposes this Armenian line, instead attributing the foundation of the Paulicians to a Manichaean by the name of Paul, son of Kallinike, and his brother John.⁴²¹

The independent Armenian Church branded them *Arewordik* (meaning the 'Children of the Sun'),⁴²² and was none too impressed with them either, with John IV, their leader and keen heresiographer, denouncing the Paulician heretics for worshipping the Good Sun, the devil and idols, for sleeping with their mothers and relatives, for practicing cannibalism, and the exposure of their dead, which were laid out on rooftops to feed the buzzards⁴²⁴ (a funerary method echoed in the roof top *astodans* of parched Sassania and Khorezm). So far these details appear unmistakably Magian. Its only when you hear of their night gatherings, that things take a turn for the worse. They were supposed to have roasted a baby (born from a mass orgy) over a fire, reducing it to 'the holiest' ash.⁴²³ The initiates then ate the charred remains.⁴²³ This, I believe, is what distinguishes them from ordinary Magian-Christians, who took no part in the dark arts. Presumably this was a form of anti-eucharist, akin to the ancient heathen Chaldean August rite.

If this is a truthful telling of their activities, then it is evidence that the Paulician priests also included dark Magi of the blackened habit, who had been hard at work, diligently nurturing yet another impiety, the highest form of accolade they could give to Satan, their master, 'the deceiver'. If we compare this information with the work of Margaret Murray, in her anthropological studies of the witches across many countries, we can perceive in this Paulician rite an exact description of a medieval black sabbath.

Writing in the 9th Century the famous Muslim scholar Al-Masudi specifically stated that Paulicians held the beliefs of both Magianism and Christianity,⁴²⁵ a sort of twin belief in Christianity and Magian paganism. When we tally this with John of Ojun's detailed commentary on the dualistic customs of the Paulicians, we can be fairly certain that the Paulicians were very much more than Christian dissenters with different views to the Church,⁴²⁶ these were

MASS CRUCIFIXIONS

200,000 RELOCATED TO THE BALKANS

THEY FOUGHT AGAINST APOSTOLIC CHRISTIAN TROOPS

THEY FOUGHT ALONGSIDE THE MUSLIMS DURING THE CRUSADES

SOME FEEL IT BEGAN IN ANTIOCH

THEY ALLEGEDLY WORSHIPED CHRIST AND THE DEVIL SIMULTANEOUSLY

THEY PRACTICED EXCARNATION

AL-MASUDI SPECIFICALLY STATES THAT THEY WERE MAGIAN-CHRISTIANS

HE SAID THEY LEFT ISLAMIC COUNTRIES TO LIVE IN BYZANTIUM

Christianised Magians, some of whom were black witches and warlocks. Yet the brand of Magianism described could only have been of the absolute dualistic variety, which, amongst some elements accommodated the infernal arts, and homage to Christ's chief protagonist the Antichrist. In short it was not drawn from traditional Zoroastrianism. Masudi adds they no longer lived in Islamic lands, but had relocated inside the Byzantine frontier, in Anatolia (ie; Turkey).⁴²⁵

BYZANTINE FORCES
EXTERMINATE 100,000

A great deal of damage was done to the Paulician cause during the Byzantine campaigning of 843 AD, resulting in a devastating loss of life.⁴²⁷ A figure of 100,000 dead⁴²⁷ was fielded by a Byzantine writer, but this remains historically unverifiable since, to the best of my knowledge nobody has thought to undertake archeological excavations in Cappadocia, in the location where the massacres are recorded to have taken place. A death toll of this magnitude dwarfs current educated estimates concerning the number of persons executed for witchcraft in Europe, nor has it generated a similar amount of interest, perhaps because the all-important 'gender issues' are not involved.

PAULICIAN REGIONS OF
ANATOLIA INVADED
WITH THE AIM OF WIPING
THEM OUT

The year 872 AD saw a sizeable Byzantine invasion force led into Paulician districts by Christocheir. Toiling to the utmost with sanguine resolve, he set about dealing death to the remaining heretics.⁴²⁸ The overwhelming speed and efficacy of the campaign suffered a final impedance. It could not be fully consummated without a full attack on Edessa,⁴²⁸ a point suggesting a substantial Paulician presence in that city, which housed the so-called '*School of the Persians*'.⁴²⁹

ONE OF THEIR APOSTLES
WAS CALLED "THE
JOKER"

Paulicians usually adopted names cited in St Paul's writings, but by the late 9th Century AD, the greatest Paulician apostles were known by Russo-slavic names like Shutil and Subotin, perhaps betraying high-level Russian or Bulgar participation in Paulicianism, even before 900 AD! Meaning 'the Joker'⁴³⁰ and 'Child of the Sabbath', these names equate with the Russian words *Shutit'* ('to play a trick or joke'), *Subbota* ('Saturday' - derived from the word Sabbath) or *Subbotnik* ('unpaid charity work, performed in a group'). To this list we can add the name Sergius, their supreme doctrinal heresiarch. This suggests Balkan Paulicians were members of the Sergite Paulician sub-sect. During Al-Masudi's time, the Paulicians were led by a patriarch known as Corbeas, who died in the year 863 AD.⁴³¹

ROBBER-MONKS

The name of the Paulician apostle 'the Joker' may be related to the habit of undercover heretics playing pranks within the monastic communes. Their mischievous behaviour included outrageous asceticism, tempting the brothers and nuns to rebel and break their fasts and vows, despoiling food, disrupting work details and Mass, or using potions to make monks sleep through night prayer sessions. Luring others to fall from grace was their primary aim. In all it smacks of old-school 'Luciferianism'.

ROBBING THEIR HOSTS

Their methods may not have been exclusively confined to the grounds of the monasteries. The Church had always known that some people were not cut out for tonsured life. Even during the 3rd and 4th Centuries the number of monks taking to their heels reached endemic proportions.⁴³² In the 11th and 12th Centuries AD, absconders trod the highways and by-ways of Eastern and Western Europe, evading militia and local clergy however possible.⁴³² If apprehended, they were returned to their orders for chastisement.⁴³² Regarded by the authorities as little more than '*Pharisees*', these 'debauched' fugitives allegedly reveled in crime, using their habits to fraudulently gain entry to roadside houses.⁴³² Having sought alms, and besotted the inhabitants with prayerful gesture, the artful deceivers were invited in, fed, and supplied with wine.⁴³² After pretending to sleep, they would wait until the thick of night and burgle their unsuspecting hosts, making off with whatever caught their eye.⁴³² Relic thefts were another specialty, as well as Church break-ins,⁴³³ and for this reason it was standard practice to keep churches under lock and key when not in use. While hungry monks (who in any case should have been billeted with their order) might have recourse to theft when starving, it was this prevailing beggar-monk-petty thief syndrome that did irreparable damage to the reputation of the Church and the monastic vocation in particular. Just the same, who could know how little or how great the activities of the monastic infiltrators were, who had been active from the earliest years of the Church.

ROBBING CHURCHES

THEIR JOKES

Shutil might be related to customary Bulgarian religious witticism, and would therefore have been an element of their paganism. The jesting of the Bulgars (the *yoka*, which is related to the English *joke*),⁴³⁴ or as I believe pagan

pantomimes, were banned by the Church after their conversion. Nor were Bulgars to carry battle-amulets, follow superstitious customs regarding good and bad days, or do war dances. That the Eastern Slavs observed similar habits is proven by early Russian church attacks on the devilish games, performances and plays of the heathens.

Bearing in mind the customs of the Paulicians, the Magi-Paulician connection is far from fanciful. Cappadocia was a 'spiritual home' not only of the Magi, but of every conceivable kind of heresy, especially Paulicianism. Moreover it was there that large numbers of Zurvanites lived, during the age when the Christian apostles first evangelised the area.⁴³⁵ Considering this, the case for Paulicians being Christianised Zurvanite dualists is especially strong. As you may recall King Chosroes I saw it as his sacred duty to annihilate Edessa forever. This may have been due to a considerable Magian Christian presence in that city, a sinkhole from which the twin-believers launched proselytising missions, both ways, into Persia and Orthodox Christian Byzantium. How far west the Paulicians reached is unclear. Interestingly, medieval Icelandic laws governing priestly matters state that non-Latin-speaking clerics were not to be given disbursements for performing Church services there, 'whether they are Armenian or Russian'.⁴³⁶ It is rather difficult to assess the motivation for, and the implications of this law, mainly because it is uncouched in the accusations of heresy so familiar elsewhere. Evidently Armenian and Russian Christian priests were disembarking in distant Iceland to perform religious services. Obviously there was nothing prohibiting them from doing so, apart from this law which served to starve them of funding, thereby minimising a proliferation of transient Russian and Armenian missionary priests on the island. During the 12th Century Catholic clergy would probably have seen Russian Orthodox priests as heretics, and Armenians definitely so. Thus eastern 'heretics' were coming to Iceland unopposed, presumably to visit Icelandic Norsemen with eastern affiliations, if not ancestry. Some of these Armenians might have been dualistic Paulicians, but this is pure speculation. One overwhelming conclusion provided in this article, is that Iceland was extremely tolerant of foreign belief systems.

The Manichaeans

Since the early 3rd Century AD, the 'Religion of Light', begun by Mani, proved to be an extremely durable heresy, with a widespread following and eminently successful missionaries, who promoted this religion throughout Europe, North Africa and all the East.

What sort of a man was Mani? We know that he belonged to the Magian priestly caste,⁴³⁷ and grew up in Chaldea.⁴³⁷ There he undertook his duties as a Magian sage,⁴³⁷ and became knowledgeable in the sciences, including the construction of terrestrial globes.⁴³⁷ Thereafter he converted to Christianity, received the sacrament of holy orders, and served as a Christian priest until defrocked and excommunicated.⁴³⁷ As he went about his work he donned a scintillating blue mitre, robe, and carried a staff.⁴³⁷

The young Mani was said to be very wise, and at last learned of his mission to spread a new gnostic religion to the world. Through the agency of his tutelary angel Tawm (who spoke directly to him) Mani set about composing the books of enlightenment which contained the core teachings imparted to him from above.⁴³⁸ These he illuminated with religious drawings, just as he would later do his temples.⁴³⁸ Once he had grown old and brave enough to begin his mission, he managed to gain an audience with the unusually liberal-minded Emperor Shapur to explain the principles of divine light, but in typically white Magian fashion, Shapur wanted to slay him then and there as a heretic.⁴³⁸ However as fortune had it, the emperor's attitude changed, and his meeting with him was propitious. From that time Mani gained powerful Persian royal backing for his cause.

From its very earliest days, the religion of Mani succeeded in gaining large numbers of conversions throughout Europe, North Africa, Asia Minor, China and Central Asia, mainly due to its powerful amalgamation of religious theories from major world religions.⁴³⁹ Manichaeism was a popular religious movement built from elements of Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, Christianity and Judaism, using the myths, legends, lifestyle and beliefs devised by Mani. Accordingly, Manichaeism drastically gnawed away at these other faiths, a fact which, from its earliest beginnings, drew it into direct conflict with the religious authorities of these various creeds (and Ancient Rome), and guaranteed that Manichees would be systematically exterminated as time went by. They devised missionary texts, to implement their conversion efforts. Those written by Mani himself were:⁴⁴⁰

MANICHAISM, THE RELIGION OF LIGHT

MANI, THE FOUNDER OF MANICHAISM WAS A BLOOD MAGUS

MANI WAS TOLD MANY ASPECTS OF THE NEW RELIGION BY AN ANGEL

MANICHAISM GAINED MANY CONVERTS IN EUROPE, AFRICA AND ASIA

MANICHEE TEXTS

<i>The Living Gospel</i>	<i>Treasure of Life</i>	<i>Treatise</i>	
<i>Book of Mysteries</i>	<i>Shapuraqan</i>	<i>Psalms and Prayers</i>	<i>The Book of Giants</i>
<i>Historia Arcana</i>			

Other Manichaeian titles scribed by various authors after the 2nd Century AD were,⁴⁴⁰

<i>Immundissimi Manichaei</i>	<i>Letters of Mani</i>	<i>Coptic psalms</i>
<i>Mysteries of Mani</i>	<i>Pragmateia</i>	<i>Manichaeian myth</i>
<i>The Gospel of Life</i>	<i>Adam, child of demons and his salvation</i>	
<i>Hymn cycles</i>	<i>Mani, apostle of Jesus Christ</i>	

THEY WERE CONSTANTLY REPRESSED BY OTHER RELIGIONS

Since there was a great deal of popular support for the teachings of Mani, the fortunes of Manichaeism rested almost exclusively on the amount of repression wielded against it by successive Zoroastrian, Christian and Muslim regimes. The Zoroastrian priesthood regarded the Manichees as heretics, not apostates, which is a sure sign that it deviated from Zoroastrianism only to a *minor, yet unacceptable degree*. As it turns out, the biggest cause for concern was their ability to create political subterfuge, a wish to destabilise worldly authorities, especially the kings. During the last days of the Sassanian Empire, Zoroastrian society had collapsed to the point where it only consisted of autonomous areas under the control of certain Iranian princes, who were the cement holding their faith together. But, just when the Magian people were at their weakest, the Manichaeans endeavoured to undermine the people's support for Zoroastrian Orthodoxy, and thus corroded the resistance of struggling Zoroastrian princes at ground level.⁴⁴¹

MANICHEES HELPED BRING DOWN MAGIAN SOCIETY THROUGH THEIR INFIGHTING

MANICHEES GAINED FAVOUR WITH THE CENTRAL ASIAN TURKS

As the Zoroastrian Emperor Bahram afflicted the Manichees with persecutions and capital punishment, many ventured eastward across the river Oxus and found a degree of support among the Turkic Khans. The Manichees' greatest coup was the conversion of the Uighurs, a Turkic race from Central Asia. This allowed for the formation of the First Uighur Empire, which was overthrown by the Kirghiz Turks in 843 AD, and later re-established in a region of China, near Tibet.⁴⁴² Both of these Empires served as spring boards for the penetration of their religion into China. Banished from the Western world, Manichaeism found sanctuary in the East, where it received a favourable reception, surviving at least until the 1600's AD. It is noteworthy that oriental Manichees had representation within the various subversive lotus groups then active throughout Imperial China.⁴⁴²

MANY CROSSED THE RIVER OXUS INTO THE TURKIC HEARTLANDS

IN 762 AD THE UIGHUR KHAGAN CONVERTED TO MANICHAISM

With the dispersion and depletion of Turkic power, the Uighur dynasty rose to prominence and scraped together an empire west of the Altai mountains, which was to last between 744 and 840 AD.⁴⁴³ Its strength lay in its close interaction with the Chinese in matters of commerce, and the use of Sogdian administrators who oversaw much of the trade and taxation which kept the Empire afloat.⁴⁴⁴

HE TRIED TO IMPOSE IT ON HIS SOCIETY

It was in the year 762 AD that the Uighur Khagan I-ti-chien resolved to become a Manichee, following his seizure of Lo-yang.⁴⁴⁵ Forthwith, the Kaghan gathered a trusty band of Sogdian Manichees, and embarked upon a mission to convert his many subjects.⁴⁴⁵ This he achieved in a very short period by apportioning his populace into self-governing 10-person Manichee cadre groups.⁴⁴⁵ This had the effect of bringing the faith to the very lowest rungs of Uighur society. As happens with any spontaneous conversion polemic, there was dissension among various societal groups.⁴⁴⁵ Little co-operation could be expected from the nobility, or the far-travelling Turkic nomads who rejected many aspects of Manichee asceticism.⁴⁴⁵ Sporadic schismatic anti-Manichee revolts materialised which blasted holes in the Uighur trade and governmental infra-structure.⁴⁴⁵

It took until 795 AD for the Manichaeans to establish any credible presence among the high-born Uighur families.⁴⁴⁶ Though the harnessing of the aristocracy had the effect of helping legitimise its appeal, it still could not enjoy full hegemony in the eclectic religious forum of Central Asia.⁴⁴⁶ There the Elect vied with Buddhist and Nestorian Christian preachers for the attention of the masses.⁴⁴⁶ As a consequence of this Uighur society became polarised between the countryfolk who adhered to a traditional Mongol shamanic lifestyle, and highly literate Manichaeian mercantile groups and city-dwellers.⁴⁴⁷ Out in the sparsely populated grasslands and deserts of Middle-Asia hybridised variants of the Manichee creed no doubt gained footing, as elders and wise-women passed on their muddled, under-educated beliefs to their descendants.⁴⁴⁷ Such heterodoxies may have been formal

enough. As with any newly born child, it is often hard to see whether it resembles the mother or father more closely. So too it is with heresy, or religious hybridisation.

The Roman Catholic Carpini mission recorded in their travel log, the presence of a certain group of pagans (as the Fransiscans called them) in China, who also happened to worship Jesus.

'Although they are heathens, (they) have an Old and New Testament, together with their own way of writing, many lives of the Fathers, hermits, and buildings like churches in which they say prayers at the appointed time. They allege also that they have certain special saints of their own. They worship one God, and believe in Our Lord Jesus Christ and in life eternal'.⁴⁴⁸

Their clean-shaven adepts thought well of western Christians generally, and were prolific alms-givers. But they differed from traditional Christians in that they didn't believe in the idea of baptism. Technically no known religion or heresy fits the above description in its entirety. Some details may be incorrect, or poorly understood by the Fransiscans, thus resulting in an improper reporting of the facts. If we assume that the details are a faithful record of this religion, then the source of such a creed could be as follows:

Nestorians The most likely explanation is that these folk were Nestorians, albeit ones who had been infected at some stage by the Manichaeian heresy of renouncing baptism with water.

Manichees Manichees could agreeably conform to this description, but references to the Old Testament render such an identification impossible. That is unless they were followers of an heretical form of Manichaeism, which had by that stage begun using the *Torah*. Such an eventuality seems slight, especially when you consider that Yaweh was considered demonic, though nonetheless possible in a truly dualistic world.

Buddhists The Fransiscans might have encountered Buddhist monks, monasteries and literature. The only thing is, they must have forgone an immense body of Buddhist literature in favour of the OT and NT, plus renounced many aspects of traditional Buddhism.

Magian Christians The likelihood of them being Magian Christians is reduced if the Old Testament mentioned is the *Torah*, and not Magian pre-Christian scripture. Refusing to baptise the faithful (in a river) could be part of such a faith, but only if the Magian influence was an ancient one.

The peace-loving nature of Manichaeism proved to be the Uighur Empires undoing, for it resulted in a de-facto demilitarisation which only encouraged attacks by the multifarious Kirghiz warbands that savaged the Uighurs, in unison with Mongol associates.⁴⁴⁹ The year 840 AD saw the total collapse of their state, and a diaspora that took disenfranchised Uighurs of every social group into China, and westwards too.⁴⁴⁹

It comes as some surprise to learn that Manichaeism was extant in Africa during the 8th Century AD, many hundreds of years after its supposed eradication there. As it happens, Manichees were finding their way into Germany at that time, from unspecified locations in Africa, or so Pope Gregory claimed. The pope warned St Boniface in no uncertain terms *'under no circumstances should he accept Africans who dare to apply for admission to ecclesiastical orders, because some of them are Manichaeans'*.⁴⁵⁰ Africans in this case might mean negroes (of the sort later depicted in Bosch's manichee-style paintings), but might also relate to the ancestors of Germanic Vandals and Goths, who once settled in North Africa.

Once they had gained Imperial favour in 9th Century China, Manichees began returning to Baghdad, Samarkand, Khorezm and other places, which aroused feverishly anti-Manichee sentiments among Muslims there. The potential for Islamic reprisals against Manichee immigrants was quelled by a threat from their powerful Manichaeian ally in the East, the Chinese Emperor. He declared his intention to obliterate every Muslim in the area if they harmed even a single Manichee. Even so, in the 9th Century AD, Islamic theologians undertook the systematic persecution of the Manichees, which still had a lot of grass roots support in Arabia.⁴⁵¹ Manichees must always have been numerous there, for after Mani's death, the Manichees were led by his successor (the *Archegos*), a supreme religious monarch, whose seat of power was in Babylon. According to a long-standing tradition the Archegos had no degree of authority if he did not reign from his seat in Babylon (in reality Ctesiphon, ie; Ecbatana, the Medean

THE CARPINI MISSION

ASIAN CHRISTIANS
ENCOUNTERED DURING
THE FRANSISCAN
MISSION

THEY DID NOT BELIEVE
IN BAPTISM

MANICHAEAN
PACIFICISM SAW THEM
FALL PREY TO THEIR
OLD ENEMIES THE
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ST BONIFACE WARNED
AGAINST ORDAINING
AFRICAN MANICHEES

IN THE 9TH CENTURY
AD THEY UNDERTOOK
HEIGHTENED
MISSIONARY ACTIVITY

MUSLIM REPRESSION

A SCHISM AMONG THE
ARAB MANICHEES

ONE LEADER WAS
BUZURMIHR

DURING THE 10TH
CENTURY THE
MANICHEES TOOK TO THE
ROAD, MOVING OUT OF
ARABIA

MANICHAISM WAS
RELATIVELY EASY TO
SUPPRESS AND ERADICATE

THE WORLD AS A
CREATION OF THE GREAT
DEMON AHRIMAN

THE EARTH WAS THE
SCALP OF THE KUNI
DEMON

TEACHINGS ABOUT THE
PRIMAL MAN, AND HIS
RESCUE

THE BIRTH OF MANKIND

capital). For this reason Manichees tended to congregate in that region.⁴⁵²

Nevertheless this doctrinal point later gave rise to a schism between mainstream Manichaeism and a group which 9th-10th Century AD Arabs called the *Dinawariyah*, which was led by a dissenting member of the Elect named Mihr.⁴⁵³ These schismatics moved their headquarters away from Babylon to the Amu Darya river.⁴⁵³ Other leaders such as Buzurmihr and Yazdanbakht created further chinks in Manichaean unity with the result that the Manichees became split into the *Al-Mihriyah* and *Al-Miklasiyah* factions.⁴⁵³

Come the 10th Century AD and the Zoroastrian uprisings of 930 AD, large numbers of Arabian Manichees took to the roads to take their message of the illusory crucifixion, and Christ, the saviour serpent to the masses.⁴⁵⁴ Any potential resurgence was very short-lived though, as Muslim authorities of the Abbassid Caliphate suppressed the putsch and started hunting down Manichees, from the lowest to the highest.⁴⁵⁴ They left no stone unturned. As a consequence of this the number of Manichees had thinned so drastically that by the 10th Century AD there were hardly any of them left in Arabia.⁴⁵⁵

Their principle belief that the world was evil proved counterproductive to their cause. A standard non-procreationist doctrine emerged from this, effectively banning the Elect from breeding, and certainly curtailing any sustainable birthrate among the hearers. In effect sodomy and oral sex were not unlawful, since pregnancy could not result. So if an authority wished to exterminate their religion, all one had to do was wipe out the Elect. And this is exactly what the Inquisitors tried to do. Once the Elect were gone, the rites of Mani could not be carried out, souls could not be liberated, Manichaeism could no longer spread by missionary endeavour, nor could it be passed down to descendants, who would have been unlawfully born in any case. If one were thorough enough a Manichaean civilisation could be deconstructed over the space of a few years.

The Manichaean world view

Manichaeans saw the entire world as a demonic abomination created by Ahriman (the Prince of Demons), a place where both light and darkness mingled. Ahriman's second-in-charge was Kuni who made war against Ahura Mazda and swallowed all the light emanating from the Omnipotent one, just as black holes consume entire star systems. This was one of the most traumatic and cataclysmic moments in the life of all spiritual existence.

The material world was formed in such a way as to mirror the divine and heavenly realms in almost every detail, but instead the radiant light and goodness of the majestic Ahura Mazda was thrust into bodies, tombs of flesh. From the demon's skin was created the sky, from his bones, the mountains. The forests and plants were the hairs which sprouted from the scalp of the Kuni demon. Everything, every creature in the world, was demon-made; four-legged animals were four legged demons, two-legged animals were two-legged demons etc.⁴⁵⁶

The entrapment of humanity came to pass when the Archon of Darkness bludgeoned the Primal Man (who was a manifestation of the human spirit), and cast him down into the very lowest extremities of the darkness, where he lay bewildered and pondering his fate in execrable suffering, fear, and loneliness. But as he languished there the Primal Man hollowed in grief to the Living Spirit in the upper limits of the celestial sphere, petitioning him to come to his rescue. And at that came the voice of the Unknowable Father promising to come and loosen him from the imprisonment of the blackened archons. Down into the depths of the lower spheres the Father sent his five heroic warrior sons, who descended fully armoured, to make war on the archons, and who also served to hold back the portended eschatological destruction of the cosmos by divine fire.⁴⁵⁷

Thereafter humankind was created in the form of Adam and Eve, and Cain and Abel. From that point their creation story exploded into a star-spangled gnostic extravaganza. It happened like this according to the Manichaean doctrines outlined in the writings of Al-Nadim. Various divine archons had sex with each other, thus conceiving Adam.⁴⁵⁸ Once he was born Eve arose from a second sexual encounter between the archons.⁴⁵⁸ Thereafter Jesus came and shut up the archons so that they could not cause any more trouble, and he set about schooling Adam about the importance of celibacy.⁴⁵⁸ After a further successful attempt the imprisoned archontic power impregnated Eve with a child called Cain, who was also called the Red Man.⁴⁵⁸ Once born, Cain sired Abel by his mother, plus gained another two daughters as a result of a further union with his mother, and later bedded

them also.⁴⁵⁸ The gross sexual impropriety continued. An angel known as Al-Sind molested one of Cain's daughters by Eve, and once the child of that union had been born he did not recognise it as his and wanted it slain.⁴⁵⁸ Taking pity on the newborn, Adam made off with the babe to protect it.⁴⁵⁸ He fed it with lotus milk and fruit, but later fled to the garden-like Paradise of Light once he discovered that Al-Sind was out to kill him for raising the child.⁴⁵⁸

Heaven contained many trees, walls, gates and towers, whereas Hell was a foreboding primordial subterranean region choked with bracken, cavernous chasms and vents 'of violence' which spewed smoke from ever lower depths.⁴⁵⁸ There fetid water tainted the landscape.⁴⁵⁸

In the heavens were the Mazendaran demons, who swallowed all the light radiating from the two great luminaries, the sun and the moon.⁴⁵⁸ Periodically the Glorious ones (the Lords of the Zodiac), attempted to spring the incarcerated light from these Mazdendaran jails, by bringing the virginal daughters of Time (which were associated with the zodiac) before these aerie demons.⁴⁵⁸ Upon seeing the ravishing maidens, the demons spontaneously ejaculated, and their seed fell down inside the earth in the form of light particles, which gave birth to flora.⁴⁵⁸ This entrapped light climbed up out of the soil in the form of trees, cereal crops and bushes.⁴⁵⁸ From that moment on, all life on the face of the planet was skillfully nurtured and maintained by Ahriman, who desired that countless forms of life should spring forth in abundance.⁴⁵⁸ Paradoxically, while Ahriman was the creator of the material world (not the spiritual), he was also the agent of its destruction, through the dispensing of manifold afflictions. The demon, so to speak, readily giveth and taketh away according to his whim. The Manichees perceived that existence in this world was but temporary, a house of cards blown down piece by piece each time something died. Their proof of this was that, once dead, the same living object disappeared from the earth for all eternity, never to grow again.⁴⁵⁹

The Elect saw it as their duty to undo the harm of creation by liberating the imprisoned light.⁴⁶⁰ Once light was freed, in a typically Magian way it re-ascended into the heights of space to the Sun and the Moon, and thereafter made its way towards heaven on a Pillar of Praise.⁴⁶⁰ There it mixed with the highest light forms and was subjected to a kind of purgatorial burn-off which further refined the escaping light by eating away whatever darkness was still mixed with it.⁴⁶⁰

Manichees also believed in the Great Architect, one name for the Great Power of the Greek philosophers, maker of the physical and metaphysical world. The Great Architect was the builder of the next world, the creator of the new heaven and earth, the place of repose for all existence rescued from the primal darkness.⁴⁶¹

Their philosophical emphasis was on the corrupt nature of the physical universe, the differing principles of extremes and their eternal battle with each other. The Manichees worshiped Jesus, the serpent of salvation; who encouraged mankind to dispel the evils of the world by becoming spiritually perfect. They claimed that Jesus didn't assume a physical body, but a mystical one, and hence did not come here in a tomb of flesh, but spiritually. To them, the crucifixion was a preposterous lie. By Manichaean accounts, Mani, their founder, was Christ's successor, who claimed to be the personification of the Holy Spirit, the 'helper' Jesus promised to send to his followers. He portrayed himself and his teachings as the final evolutionary stage in the missions of a series of prophets, such as Buddha, Zoroaster and Christ. For this reason Mani took for himself twelve apostles in imitation of Christ, and wrote seven gospel-like works.

In his commentary on the Manichees, Al-Nadim recorded that Mani claimed the Jewish prophets of old were 'demon-inspired', not the least of which was Jesus Christ, whom he termed Satan himself.⁴⁶⁰ This claim is difficult to resolve logically; if Mani was sent by Jesus, and Jesus was Satan, does it then follow that Mani was a minion of Satan? It is likely that this detail was incorrectly gathered and noted by Al-Nadim, or otherwise spawned by baseless, anti-Manichee rumour-mongering.

Mani was eventually flayed and decapitated by Karter, the most influential high priest of the Zoroastrian Magi.

Manichaean dress and ritualism

Very few details are recorded of Manichaean ritualism, but one might envisage that it was very elaborate, with great pomp and ceremony. Incense, hymns, music and a feast of fruit were the predominant features.

The Listeners or Auditors met on a day separate to the Elect, the former on Sundays, the latter on Mondays. Their service consisted of singing hymns and fellowship. Few indeed had any contact with the Manichee bishops and the

HOW THE LIGHT WAS TRAPPED BY THE DEMONS

AHRIMAN WAS BOTH CREATOR AND DESTROYER

THE ELECT WERE TASKED WITH LIBERATING THE IMPRISONED LIGHT PARTICLES AND SOULS

THE MATERIAL WORLD WAS SEEN AS IN A FALLEN STATE

MANICHEES REGARDED THE JEWISH PROPHETS AS DEMON-INSPIRED

THEY MET ON SUNDAYS AND MONDAYS

ONE BECAME AN ELECT
AFTER THE PERFORMANCE
OF THE *CONSOLAMENTUM*
RITE

larger circle of Elect, in their region, perhaps as a safety measure. Each group of Manichees would expect to be administered by their own member of the Elect, a sort of parish priest if you like.

AFTER THIS THE ELECT
HAD TO LIVE IN A
PERFECT STATE

The ultimate Manichaeian rite was a ceremony which transformed a hearer into a member of the Elect. This was the long awaited moment of every Manichee's life, taking the novice from being a prisoner of the world, to a liberated soul, no longer bound by the shackles of death. But this was not a ritual to be taken lightly, for it could only ever be performed once. Having received this Manichaeian sacrament, the Elect was not permitted to kill anything, nor were they to perform a whole array of tabooed acts, such as having heterosexual intercourse (because of the ever-present danger of pregnancy).

THEY COULD NOT DRINK
WINE OR HAVE SEX THAT
WOULD LEAD TO THE
CREATION OF A CHILD

Only the most stoic of individuals dared undergo the rite in their earlier years, for the office of the Elect demanded a life of utter austerity. So demanding was this lifestyle that the ordinary Listener shuddered at the thought of not being able to meet the proper commitments of the office, even despite the fact that becoming an Elect meant sure salvation. For this very reason, most Listeners would only undergo the rite on their death-bed. If however the person recovered from their life-threatening malaise, they were left with the unhappy prospect that they may inevitably fall back into the damnable ways of the world. If a consecrated Elect felt himself lapsing, invariably they went on a hunger strike, thereby ending their life, and therefore any chance of lapsing altogether. This suicidal death-rite was known as the *endura*.⁴⁶¹

SOME SUICIDED ON THEIR
DEATH BED, BY STARVING
THEMSELVES TO DEATH

It was particularly important that the Elect never lapse, for whomsoever they had consoled or liberated would be dragged down with them, in their fall.⁴⁶² For this reason we might guess that they were watched by their followers like hawks.

IN THE 4TH CENTURY A
MANICHAEAN
COMMUNITY EXISTED IN
ROME

In the apostolic Christian text *De Moribus Manichaeorum*, penned by the ex-Manichee St Augustine, in the year 388 AD, as a refutation of the Manichaeian way of life, we see the intense scrutiny the Elect lived under.⁴⁶³ Apparently the Manichaeian bishops in Rome liked to blend into the local scenery to escape the keen gaze of their underlings, but the efforts of one extremely zealous and wealthy convert there made life hard for them.⁴⁶³ All the bishops were gathered together at one and the same safe-house, so that they could be well cared for, and their every move monitored.⁴⁶³ After only a while living there it was discovered that none of them were capable of living up to the rigid ascetic standards prescribed by Mani. In the end they cracked under the strain.⁴⁶³

MANICHEE ELECT WORE
WHITE ROBES AND MITRES

As one of the Elect, a Manichaeian wore robes of pure white, with a tall white bonnet, which had a chin strap, and two ribbons trailing down the back (similar to those of the Magi). At the front of the robe was a white panel breastplate of embroidered cloth, bordered perhaps in squares of red, and with other insignia.⁴⁶⁴

The fruit feast

ANGELS PROTECTED THE
ASCENDING SOULS OF
THE ELECT

To explain the importance of Manichaeian feasts, one has to gain an understanding of their religious views. At the moment of death the corpses of the Elect disintegrated and fell back into the gloom of the underworld, while their souls separated from the flesh, which had become corrupted.⁴⁶⁵ Once in the ether the souls of the Elect were greeted by angelic guides who rallied to their aid fending off any demons that came to pounce on the soul.⁴⁶⁵

THEY TRIED THEIR BEST
TO HELP THE LISTENERS

The souls of those who were simply hearers were merely guarded from the demons by the angelic essences.⁴⁶⁵ While they might have rendered pious aid to the elect, their actions were still incapable of lifting them up to paradise in the Garden of Light.⁴⁶⁵ From that time their soul remained in limbo in this world until one day liberated by an Elect.⁴⁶⁵

LISTENERS COULD ONLY
ENTER HEAVEN IF THEY
WERE REINCARNATED AS
A PIECE OF FRUIT, AND
THIS FRUIT WAS EATEN BY
THE ELECT

These Listeners (who had not received the *consolamentum* ceremony) were doomed to be reincarnated as a piece of fruit until rescued by one of the Elect.⁴⁶⁵ Since light was originally swallowed by the demons, in their mind it was only fitting that liberation, and re-unification of the soul with the divine light, could only be accomplished once their light particles (contained in the fruit) were swallowed by a being of light, namely the Elect. The ceremonial consumption of Listeners' souls may have given rise to rumours of ritual cannibalism.

MANICHEES HAD RITUAL
FRUIT FEASTS

Whenever the Manichaeian communal fruit feasts took place the Listeners gathered in their local place of worship, normally a building with walls elaborately decorated in asiatic geometric and floral symbols.⁴⁶⁵ From Manichaeian illuminated manuscripts we know that carpets were laid out on the floor in several sections, with the

Listeners on one side of the room and the Elect on the other. In the middle of the room two of the highest ranking elect (one male and one female), sat on thrones. In front of them were two tables, one which held a platter of bread buns, and the other which supported a large bowl of fruit. The melons were piled at the bottom and the lighter fruits placed on top of them. This mound of fruit was crowned by grapes.⁴⁶⁶

The fruit feast was central to Manichaean ritual. Augustine tells us their holy foods consisted of those edibles which were receptacles for light particles (ie; light and souls that needed liberation). One could assess the relative holiness of a given foodstuff using three separate criteria, taste, aroma and colour. Augustine comically mocks them about pork fat, saying that by their own standards it should be very holy, but is banned.⁴⁶⁷

To release the light particles, prior to consuming them, the Elect rolled the fruit about, and this had the effect of releasing the rays of light.⁴⁶⁸ The most popular fare consisted of pears, apples, melons, cucumbers, cabbage and mushrooms. Golden grains like wheat could have their light liberated in the form of beer, or where the grain was milled, mixed and baked, in the form of cakes and biscuits.⁴⁶⁹

Certain inhabitants of the pre-Islamic Volga Bulgar region were said to have written in Manichaean script,⁴⁷⁰ and this seems indicative of a Manichee presence there. During the 10th Century these devotees were flushed out Arabia by reprisals against them,⁴⁷¹ no doubt causing a fair number to relocate into Russia, along with Magians and other committed pagans. It is probably for this reason that the Russian and Polish words for 'fruit' or 'a water melon' are *arbutz* and *harbutz*.⁴⁷² These were derived from the Persian *garbutza* ('melon') via the Kipchaq, Turkish and Crimean Tatar words of similar form. In the Ukrainian *garbutz* means 'a pumpkin'.⁴⁷³ This seems to indicate that a diverse range of fruits and vegetables were imported into Russia and Poland by the various Asiatic immigrants, a number of which also happened to be Manichees. Melons were certain to have been on the menu, *baklazhan*⁴⁷⁴ also, the Slavic word for 'egg-plant' (of Arab/Persian origin).

One Russian word for a garden *bashtan* came from the Turkic/Persian *bostan*. In an eastern religious context this word might have applied to holy groves, or perhaps even Manichaean orchards.⁴⁷⁵

Listeners normally did all the work for the Elect, who had to be supplied with food, clothing and all their other earthly needs, and who did little more than eat, pray, chant and meditate for the freeing of light particles, which were trapped during the fall of the physical world. Because the Elect were prohibited from killing any living thing, they ate only fruit, which did not require the uprooting or destruction of any plant. Contrary to root crops like carrots and parsnips (which were full of darkness), the fruits which hung from fruit-tree branches were believed to be repositories for large quantities of light particles.⁴⁷⁶

Daily Listeners gathered a lavish feast for the Elect to dine on. Before any one of these feasts, Listener servants walked about the orchards, picking their fruit (the reincarnated souls of dead listeners) by the basketful; apples, pears, and other fruits, but more especially grapes and melons. These were then presented to the Elect.⁴⁷⁷ With the commencement of the ceremony, the Elect scoffed down cakes, flowers, fruit juices, beans, mead, cereal grains, beer, mushrooms, filling their distended bellies to bursting point.⁴⁷⁸ In Rome some of the things they ate were regarded as 'rare and foreign vegetables',⁴⁷⁹ indicating that the Manichees had their own supply sources for Asiatic vegetables. Hopefully the fruity souls of one's loved ones would be eaten during the Elect's daily ritual feast, for it was stated that Listeners were continually reborn as pieces of fruit until one day devoured by a member of the Elect.⁴⁷⁹ Once eaten, the soul was emancipated from the moribund world into a perfect body, and thus extricated from the entrapment of darkness, through the Elect's body, a gateway to the spiritual realm of best existence.⁴⁷⁹

The Magi reserved harsh condemnation for Manichees, speaking of 'the fiend, the broken-down Manih, and the destruction of the wicked who were listening to him'.⁴⁸⁰ He tried to kill the world of righteousness, and proclaimed that the Creator and Destroyer were one and the same. Magi further described his doctrines as 'that excretion', which is 'a perpetual effusion', 'and they who stirred up the effusion afterwards think it theirs, and that which is a perfect ceremonial of the demons occurs'.⁴⁸⁰ Manichaeism, though partially borrowing from Magianism, was seen as devil-worship in one of its finest forms. Their stance on them closely resembled that of medieval Christian clerics.

The predictable execution of Mani by the Zoroastrian religious hierarchy, and his passion were enacted annually during their month-long *Bema* solemnities,⁴⁸¹ which for Manichees was their version of the Christian Paschal sacrifice

THEY ATE CAKES, BUNS, MELONS, AND APPLES, AMONGST OTHER SWEET FOODS

THE FRUIT FEAST WAS CRUCIAL TO THEIR RELIGION

THEY ROLLED FRUIT ALONG THE FLOOR

INHABITANTS OF VOLGA BULGARIA USED MANICHEE SCRIPT

THE RUSSIAN WORD FOR A MELON HAS AN ASIATIC ORIGIN

LISTENERS COLLECTED FOOD FOR THE ELECT

DURING A FRUIT FEAST THE ELECT STUFFED THEMSELVES TO BURSTING POINT

THE MORE THEY ATE THE MORE SOULS THEY SAVED

THE MANICHEES HELD A CEREMONY CALLED THE BEMA

THE ELECT HAD THEIR
OWN WARRIOR
GUARDIANS

of Christ crucified. Little is known of the ceremony's format, mostly because the most important of their ceremonies were held behind closed doors. Again, it probably centred around a meal of fruit.

Only a person who was capable of abstaining from sexual intercourse, wine and meat was able to join the esteemed ranks of the elect,⁴⁸² though hearers who wished for a higher level of involvement with the cult could serve the Elect as personal servants, or warrior Guardians.⁴⁸² The Elect were forbidden to kill under any circumstances, whether trees, flies, ants or people. It was a major point of difference with the Magi. As the Turks themselves noted, this level of pacificism rendered them vulnerable to attackers. To guard them from the threat of slaughter (which they were so often exposed to) a specific class of listeners known as the Guardians was instituted, whose duty it was to defend the Elect from all aggressors. Even in the French Neo-Manichean colonies of Languedoc and Montsegur, we find evidence of the Guardians, whose heraldic devices very much resembled the Manichee cross (ie; a Maltese cross), but with three pearls at the end of each arm of the cross.

Every day at dawn, a Manichee had to wake from slumber and, after having washed himself, lay prostrate on the ground before the rising sun as prayers were uttered.⁴⁸² Like the Magi, the Manichees had other prayer sessions scheduled for various times of the day, in accordance with the position of the sun.⁴⁸² Their elaborate calendar of fasts was dictated by the position of the sun throughout pre-defined stations in the Zodiac. Inevitably Manichees were engrossed in the science of astrology, perhaps not just to perform ceremonial calendrical calculations, but for the formulation of predictions also. Mani's commandments⁴⁸² were as follows:

SUN WORSHIP AT
VARIOUS POINTS
THROUGHOUT THE DAY

MANI'S COMMANDMENTS

- | | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Do not steal | 2. Do not lie | 3. Do not kill |
| 4. Do not be greedy | 5. Do not be an idolator | 6. Do not fornicate |
| 7. Do not be indecisive | 8. Do not be slothful | 9. Do not perform magic |
| | in matters religious | |

Neo-Manichees

The Bogomils

IT WAS AS THOUGH THE
BOGOMILS INSTANTLY
MATERIALIZED AROUND
THE YEAR 1,000 AD

The faith of the Bogomils (literally 'The beloved of God') was particularly prolific in Bulgaria and Macedonia at the turn of the first millennium, though they could also be found in Bosnia, Serbia, Albania, Asia Minor (10th C.), Byzantium (10th C.), Italy, France and Germany (12th C.). The standard tools of their trade were preachers armed with the Bogomil catechetical texts *Liber Secretum*, *Vision of Isaiah*, and the *Legend of the Cross*, amongst others.⁴⁸³ So effective were the wandering Bogomil priests, that in the nearest reaches of Byzantium's eastern Anatolian provinces, whole cities were converted to their heresy.⁴⁸⁴

THEY BELIEVED IN A
TRINITY

They appeared as if from nowhere, yet from the outset Bogomilism already possessed a fully structured priesthood, closely resembling that of the Manichees. Evidently such an organisation could only have come about in heathen lands, already steeped in Magian and Manichee dualistic traditions, places like Russia and the Urals. The essential teachings of priest Bogomil (the alleged founder of the sect) were encapsulated within a Bogomilian version of dualism, described by inquisitors as an 'unholy trinity'.⁴⁸⁵ It was comprised of God, the 'unknown father in heaven' and his two sons, Jesus and the Devil, both of whom were entitled to at least some worship. Satan (or more precisely *Satanael* or *Satanail*, the Hebrew terms)⁴⁸⁶ was the 'hard-done-by son' in need of some real understanding. This devil was the creator of everything that we see, the entire material world.⁴⁸⁶ According to the Russian *Hypation manuscript* of 986 AD, Satanail was 'the adversary', the 'enemy of God'. The Bogomil heretical godhead has a significant parallel, namely the Rus' pagan triumvirate of Svarog, Belobog (Dazhbog or Khors) and Chernobog, perhaps indicating that the cult began in Slavia, and was known in Rus'.⁴⁸⁷

SATANAIL WAS THE BAD
SON; HE MADE THE
MATERIAL WORLD

WE FIND DUALISTIC
CHRISTIAN TEACHINGS IN
PONTUS AS EARLY AS THE
3RD CENTURY AD

THEY WERE SAID TO
WORSHIP THE ANTICHRIST

This Unholy Trinity (which was totally different from the Christian Holy Trinity) was devised by individuals attempting to integrate the existence of the independently-acting evil principle into their belief system, and the son of the same, the absence of which deprived them of a full and complete understanding of the cosmos. It might conceivably have begun in Pontus as early as the 3rd Century AD, as the following passage from Eusebius intimates;

*'Others like the Captain himself, Marcion introduced 2 sources (dualism), these included Potitus and Basilicus, who followed the Pontic wolf and failing, as he had done, to find an answer to the problem of evil, took the easy way out and announced 2 sources (dualism) boldly and without proof. Others of them again plunged into still worse error and posited not merely 2 but 3 natures (an Unholy Trinity).'*⁴⁸⁸

One frank admission made before a Byzantine heresiographer revealed that the Bogomils displayed fealty and devotion towards the Antichrist,⁴⁸⁹ whom they regarded as their spiritual father, and creator of the world. If this comment was not in reality a gloss included by the inquisitor (who the detained suspects had earlier tried to convert!), then we might be looking at evidence that the Bogomil movement was the creation of black or grey sorcerers who had migrated into the Balkans from Rus', and who subscribed to a form of dualism that incorporated the dark side, complete with demoniacal devotions.

The first stage of becoming a Bogomil (meaning 'beloved of God') was the *Baptisma*, where Christians belonging to the apostolic Church were *re-baptised to rid them of the Holy Spirit imparted upon them by the Church*, in order to prepare them for higher levels of knowledge and initiation. During this ceremony, the teachings of St Paul, certain Gospel readings and psalms were recited, whilst an *edited Bible* was placed on the candidate's head.⁴⁹⁰

A period of rudimentary tuition and extreme regimes of asceticism were experienced by the novice until the grandest initiation phase was undertaken. In the elevation to the *perfectus* level (the perfect ones), a mock sacrament of holy orders took place, whereby the bible and the presiding *perfectus'* hands were placed on the initiate's head as the spirit was called down. Having received this Spirit, (the inquisitor Zigabenus called it the 'Seal of the Devil'),⁴⁹¹ the member of the Elect was then able to enter the final, highest grade of initiation.

The Bogomils enacted heathen ceremonies akin to those performed by the ancient Greeks, or at least that is how the Byzantines described them.⁴⁹² Hellenic ritualism is presumably a reference to bread buns, the pouring of libations and cattle sacrifice. Bogomil rituals also concerned the performance of spells and alleged *daemone*-worship.⁴⁹³ Other Balkan carvings, depicting a pair of riders facing each other, imply these deities were Mithraic rather than Greek. However the inclusion of *fleur-de-llys* and swastikas on their stecci carvings,⁴⁹⁴ I would guess, points to a Far-Eastern origin for the cult, a Magian origin, taught by Magian Zurvanites powerfully present in Bulgaria, and in pagan Rus' also.

Of all the Christian heretics under the sky, none were as successful, crafty or skilled at waging war against the cross as the Bogomils. Their elaborate missionary activities saw them gain the confidence of traditional Christians. They used sly ploys to effect this; the veneration of icons, saints and even the construction of churches, which were intended to be seen as public signs of their orthodoxy.⁴⁹⁵

There is some evidence for the veneration of bogus saints and icons, but in the following instances it is difficult to say which specific group of dualists was responsible. Under dualism, just as there was a Virgin in heaven above, there *had to be* a corresponding defiled Whore in the dark half of creation below, an inverted, topsy-turvy reflection of that which was above in heaven. From Magian scripture we know that such a whore was Geh, the harlot who acted as the devil's advisor in certain matters. Since the dark side of existence was very important in the lives of the black families, it makes you wonder whether the pagan heretics ever rendered Ahriman and the Whore into religious icons. In relation to this there seem to be distinct parallels with this Pure Mother/White Son and Filthy Mother/Black Son of the heretics, and a series of icons found in various Christian parishes in Poland, a land where Zurvanite pagans once lived.

Apparently there are a number of icons in Eastern Europe which significantly differ from standard Church iconographical standards, which, I might add, were very, very stringent indeed in their requirements for the depiction of saints, martyrs, Christ and Our Lady. These protocols required them to be shown in silver framing, radiant colours, gold leafing, pearls, inlaid gems, to give them a fittingly glorious appearance. The dubious icons in question are the so-called 'Black Madonnas', a series of religious paintings in which the Virgin Mary and her son, Jesus, are depicted as being as black as the ace of spades, instead of radiant white. Clearly, even by Church

THE BLACK MAGI
BELIEVED IN DESIGNING
HERESIES

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BAPTISED, A VERY UN-
MANICHAEAN
TEACHING

IN THE BEGINNING
THEY WERE ASCETICAL

FINALLY A SPIRIT CAME
UPON THEM

INQUISITORS CALLED IT
THE SEAL OF THE DEVIL

BOGOMILS BUILT THEIR
OWN CHURCHES

THE VIRGIN'S
DOPPLEGANGER WAS A
WHORE

THE BLACK MADONNA

PAINTED IN BLACK

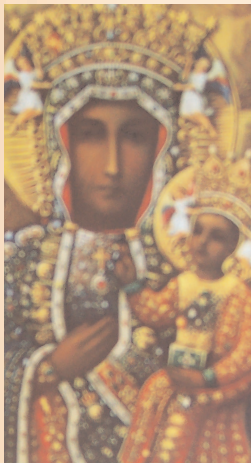
SHE HAS A CHILD, BUT IS
IT JESUS?

standards, something is amiss here. Let's examine the facts and search for plausible reasons for the blackening.

1. Almost all icons of antiquity were executed with paints made from a base of albumen (egg white), tinted with various pigments, powdered gems and gold dust. Frequently the image was painted over a board made from layers of wood veneering. As the icon aged, the albumen began to naturally darken, and blacken due to the accumulation of a murky film left by candle and lamp smoke, which built up over centuries. Thus, today's museum curators and art-dealers gauge the age and authenticity of any genuine icon by its degree of blackening and discolouration.

2. Perhaps these icons were painted or carved by Zurvanite/ Christian 'dvoeveriye' dualist heretics a thousand years ago, who had originally been worshipping the black Madonna, not as the Virgin Mary, but the Great Whore, the unholy goddess of black witchcraft and vexation. According to one source, a number of 'black Madonnas' came into Europe via the Middle East, which dated back to Roman and even Phoenician times. Thus these black mother images are believed to be of eastern origin, and pre-date Christianity by a considerable amount of time. The ancient Aryan Hittite insignia of the double-headed eagle, so profoundly linked with European royalty, also appears to be associated with the image of the black madonna. A golden two-headed eagle can be found on the hem of the Madonna in the famous Eastern European icon 'Our Lady of Czestochowa'.

DOUBLE SAINTS



In this icon you will note the angels holding her crown are white in appearance. Bearing this in mind it's hard to explain why the mother and son are so dark.

3. Some black madonnas might be icons defaced during the Byzantine iconoclastic controversy. Having said that, images were normally destroyed in these incidents. So blacking out images with paint is unlikely to have been your typical iconoclast's weapon of choice.

4. Another option is that they were heretical icons slotted into the local Church by heretics, allowing it to receive the veneration of parishioners, blissfully unaware of the icon's nature, or something that was blatantly venerated by heretical dualist Christians since the earliest years of the Church. Pranks such as sprinkling 'black relics' among the Christian community's 'authentic' ones was apparently a common Bogomil ploy.

Certain renditions of the Madonna were *actually executed in black paint, black stone or ebony*.⁴⁹⁶ Considering the level of Magianism found in Europe, particularly in the Christian sphere, these icons are plausible depictions of Geh, the Great Whore (dressed in her scarlet finery), holding Ahriman (Satan), 'an innocent little boy', and in no way a depiction of Christ and the Virgin Mary. Some postulate that the black Madonnas represented the Earth Mother, but if so, why was she never depicted surrounded by crops, sucklings, and herd beasts, but instead frequently shown with a starry moonlit night in the background, carrying a single child in her arms? You be the judge!

From a modern perspective each of the black Madonnas deserve to be examined in their own right, to determine the cause of the blackening in each case. Only in this way will controversy surrounding them be settled, once and for all.

I will now present a comparatively isolated case of a saint whose complete mortal remains are to be found in more than one location. It certainly seems that unknown persons had successfully installed the body of a bogus saint in addition to that of the real. How might such a thing transpire, and could it be connected with the perfidious intrigues of practicing dark heretics? The case of St Canice is particularly illustrative of the issue. In Ireland there was famous saint by the name of Canice. Now upon her death there was a major dispute between the citizens of Aghaboe and Kilkenny concerning the ownership of her mortal remains, which, as with all saints, would no doubt provide miraculous cures, intercessions and so forth.⁴⁹⁷ Both parties were so adamant in their claims, that it developed into a fight to the death.⁴⁹⁷ In the aftermath of the battle it proved impossible to identify Canice's body, because two coffins lay among the debris strewn on the field of conflict, and neither could be opened.⁴⁹⁷ Consequently both factions returned home, a coffin a piece.⁴⁹⁷ One St Canice now became two St Canices. It seems wild beyond belief that people willing to feud over her remains didn't even know what she looked like. Or was there an imposter who had duped the inhabitants of Aghaboe and Kilkenny into believing that she was Canice, giving rise to the feud? Here we find the most plausible reason for the phenomenon of double or even triple saints.

THE CASE OF ST CANICE
IN IRELAND

In cases like this, what motives would an imposter have? Did it start as a joke that got out of hand? Was it a totally unrelated corpse, that of someone who posed as the saint in their daily life, and was officially proclaimed as such after the person's death, by clerics who did not adequately know the true saint?

At the end of it all we are left with a real dilemma. Do you discontinue public access to both remains, knowing that one of them is the real saint, or do you allow public access to continue knowing that one is false? The fact remains; one group of people gathered about the remains of a charlatan, or someone mistakenly identified as a given saint. A tightening of canonisation procedures, including desiderata such as a detailed analysis of the candidate's life, ever aimed to avoid a repeat of fiascos like this.

For the pseudo-monk and the demonic prefecture (as the inquisitors regarded them), no river was too wide, nor mountain too high in their quest to invent new and even more ingenious ruses to destroy the Church and its teachings. Their most notable achievement was the deepest possible penetration of the Byzantine Church, in just about every province you care to name; barely a diocese was left untouched.⁴⁹⁸ The level of damage done to the Orthodox ecclesiastical mechanism, by their infiltrators, was said to have been so extensive that they constituted a virtual subterranean component to the Church of the east, that, in the view of Euthemius, was quickly enveloping and swallowing the newly ordained into their web of godlessness.⁴⁹⁹

The Orthodox monk Niphon, proved to be an committed advocate of Bogomilism, a travesty against his religion for which he was tried, defrocked and thrown into jail.⁵⁰⁰ Even as Michael II ruled the Byzantine Empire, his supposedly trustworthy Patriarch Cosmas II emancipated the anathematised Niphon, and was regularly seen in company with him, even inside the patriarch's chief residence.⁵⁰¹ Perhaps he was only trying to win Niphon back for Christ, but it all looked rather suspect. Inevitably Cosmas lost his high office by virtue of his heretical affiliations.⁵⁰¹ In short, the Bogomils had proven themselves capable intriguers and proselytisers.⁵⁰¹ Who else could have swayed the minds of the leading Orthodox figures in the land, if not learned and highly skilled orators? The dynamic spread of Bogomilism was formally reported in the writings of Theodore, the Antiochan patriarch some time after the year 1185.⁵⁰² According to him the whole region was fairly embalmed by this heresy. The chief remedy they sought was to immolate the key proponents of their unorthodoxy,⁵⁰² and the total expurgation of their written works,⁵⁰² which, it was guessed, would slay their teachings.

The Bogomil anti-pope

Stoyanov deals with the surprise emergence of heresy in medieval Europe, including 'The Antipope',⁵⁰³ a figure that can ultimately be traced back to a pagan pontiff of the Bulgar Magi. This so-called 'Father of heresies' was the driving force behind the intense barrage of heretical missionary activity venturing forth from the Balkans. He himself was deemed the ultimate adversary of Rome and Byzantium. It was not long before Pope Urban declared the Balkans the most spiritually forlorn place on the face of God's earth.⁵⁰⁴

The Bogomil pseudo-pope was rumoured to have his throne in Bulgaria, the nerve-centre of all heresy. This anonymous arch-heresiarch acted as the grand mediator between all heretical sects and plotted the stratagems needed to catalyse the downfall of the Church, especially via monastic infiltration. Even in the 10th Century he was laying the groundwork for the wholesale export of Manichaean heresy to western Europe via Arab-occupied Sicily. Bogomil preachers, now well-primed for their western peregrinations, departed the safe company of their spiritually profligate potentates in Bulgaria.

The role of these ministers in the wider penetration of dualistic heresy into greater Europe can be seen by tracing the passage of one Bogomil treatise, the *Liber Secretum*. It was originally written in Bulgaria, then sent to the heretical Cathar parish of Concorezzo in the North of Italy, which in turn influenced their brethren in Desenzano, Lombardy and French Languedoc.⁵⁰⁵ *Liber Secretum* proved too controversial for many absolute dualists, provoking a damaging internal schism. By the early 11th Century they were beginning to secretly plant Catharism in Flanders, Northern Italy and certain parts of the Frankish kingdom. Through obscure Orthodox accounts of two-way religious discourse between the Bulgars and Franks, come hints that east-west heretical liaisons already existed in the period just prior to the coming of the new millennium. And so it came to pass that the newly-coined French word for heretics was *Bulgares*,⁵⁰⁶ showing once again that (Magian) Bulgars and heresy were like candles on a cake.

THEY BEGAN TO SATURATE THE BYZANTINE MONASTIC SYSTEM

THEY APPEARED TO BE IN COLLUSION WITH THE BYZANTINE PATRIARCH COSMAS II

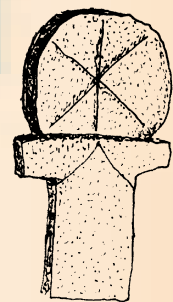


Fig 19. 1. Bogomil cross, Languedoc, France.



Fig 19. 2. Bogomil cross, Bosnia.

The Bogomils enter Europe

Anecdotal historical evidence alludes to doctrinal discourse between a small group of Franks (Germans and French) and the Bogomils. This was confirmed by the arrival of Frankish pilgrims in Bulgaria in the 10th Century AD, an event which pre-dated the entire French Cathar movement, and a datable thread in an heretical alliance which soon flailed Europe.⁵⁰⁷ A number of grave-markers (engraved with *pentagrams* and *roses*) can be found in Europe and the Balkans, religious images normally ascribed to Bogomils, *so there appears to be a physical connection between the Balkans and the West as well.* The same could be said for the artificial cranial deformations found in Languedoc.⁵⁰⁸ It was a known Bulgar practice, caused by the constrictive tightening of turbans and head bindings.⁵⁰⁸

As early as the mid-1100's, Bogomils ejected from the Balkans by the Byzantine and later Bulgarian anti-heresy crusades were pouring across the borders of the German Holy Roman Empire at a steady rate.⁵⁰⁹ But would they be strangers in a foreign land? Far from it! The wearisome travellers were well greeted by the German people upon their arrival, who virtually saw them as long lost heroes. Were they? Was this the glorious home-coming of the Magi to Germany, after an enforced absence first brought about by Charlemagne? By Church accounts, the people's love for them was so great that their activities could not in any way be halted by the Church authorities.⁵¹⁰ It is unlikely these figures received such a rapturous welcome if they were part of some obscure Bulgarian cult. Instead they were religious figures honoured by the masses, even before they had arrived in the Holy Roman Empire. Either Bogomilism was already endemic in Germany by the 12th Century (which is doubtful), or the Bogomils were in actual fact Magian-Christians infected by quasi-Manichaeism ideas, entering Germany from both the Balkans and Slavic east. Many Bogomil missionaries were involved in mercantile pursuits abroad, and in Germany these figures tended to congregate around Cologne,⁵¹¹ the future home of the relics of the Three Wise Kings, destined to lay in the grand imperial cathedral. In Germany heresy tended to centre around Cologne, Strasburg and Havelberg.^{511a}

The notes of Roman and Byzantine inquisitors investigating detained Bogomil agitators revealed confusing sources for the heresy which remained the subject of constant deliberation; namely, Massalianism, Paulicianism, Zurvanism, Manichaeism and magical gnosticism, with Paulicianism and Manichaeism being the least influential of all the sects involved.⁵¹² Rampant low-key *devil worship of the Chaldean variety*⁵¹³ was employed by Bogomils, an activity without too much difficulty tied to Massalians, Slavic dualistic *Volkhvry* and Russian Chaldeans (otherwise known as *kolduny*). Chaldean devil worship was discussed in the *True History of Wizards and Witches*, and as you may recall it required the use of God's name while in a state of spiritual grace and perfection to effect the bullying of *daemones*.

Bearing in mind these factors, the Bogomils almost without question owe much of their beginnings to a mass arrival of dissident Black Bulgar, Magyar or Rus' *Volkhvry* Magi and Chaldeans. These newcomers brought their quasi-Zurvanite beliefs, dualistic-magic and hierarchy into the movement almost intact. In support of this, Zaehner, a major authority on Zoroastrianism is convinced of a Magian Zurvanite genesis for the Bogomil heresy.⁵¹⁴ This seems highly likely. However, in the Bogomils one can also perceive genuine Chaldean influences, ancient Chaldeanism of the sort once found in Mesopotamia or the back woods of Russia.

The Bogomils mutated from a pagan into a nominally Christian heresy somewhere towards the end of the 10th Century AD. A *Volkhvry* document discovered in an Albanian heathen monastery possessed an unusual Magian-style chronology, roughly synchronised with the Christian calendar.⁵¹⁵ At face value Balkan heathens were 1,000 years into the period of renovation brought by *Sraosha*, the pagan Messiah. As Constantinople and Rome progressively converted Eastern and Western Europe, the various Chaldeans, Manichees and Magians, whether Christian or not, found themselves squeezed into smaller parcels of land. Whereas previously they found sharing the same breathing space a little unbearable, their new situation forced a level of interaction normally avoided in prior times. From this came a sharing of ideas. From varied sources, Christian priests learned that the Slavic and Bulgar Magi had dissolved away into nothingness, only to form the Rotu, a clandestine brotherhood that served as a pagan occult university.⁵¹⁶ The oath-sworn candidates themselves constituted that invisible institution, and their supposed aim was to keep alive the miracles of the occult, divination, necromancy and mediumship for future

THEY PRACTICED
CHALDEAN MAGIC

CHALDEAN MAGIC
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THEY APPEAR TO HAVE
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10TH CENTURY

RUSSIA CONVERTED IN
THE 10TH CENTURY

generations.

And due to their great diligence and zeal in the dissemination of the Bogomil creed, they had a full heretical empire to their credit, stretching from the Balkans to the farthest reaches of the Holy Roman Empire and the English Channel. Their many successes were, at every stage, under-pinned by an ability to re-organise and amalgamate heretics from diverse philosophical backgrounds into one coherent unit. The beliefs of the once illustrious gnostics, and heretical bulwarks such as the Marcionites probably suffered extinction through ignoble anonymity; their individuality, and waning vibrancy ultimately consumed by the sheer focus, ingenuity and determination of the Bogomil elite.

For the Byzantine inquisitor Zigabenus', his confrontation with the Bogomils was akin to being face to face with the Devil's ritually invested priesthood, who, by their own admission, were 'Magi'.⁵¹⁷ Theologically, his comments are not as evangelically fundamentalist as they first seem to the modern reader, especially if he had been in any way dealing with black Magi and quasi-heathen Chaldeans.

For the Bogomils the arrival of the 11th-12th Centuries AD brought a time of reckoning, and so they dug in their heels, taking the fight to the core of the Church, *surrounding her from within*. Bogomils successfully penetrated monasteries in the East (especially in Anatolia), and the orthodox monasteries of Mt Athos. Due to the offbeat activities happening there, one could easily suspect Bavaria's Benedictine monasteries (Salzburg and Reichenau) as well.⁵¹⁸

The Bogomil brotherhood doubled as a finishing school, wherein heretical brethren learned all that was necessary to live among Byzantium and Rome clergy free of detection. Not long afterwards (in the 12th Century), western Christendom experienced outbreaks of simony and concubinage in certain parishes, as frenzied magical activities (including necromancy), and advanced stereoscopic star maps⁵¹⁹ were found among errant clergy. In the East, the monastic brothers at Chios were found performing what were described as Mithraic magical rites, whilst in the Benedictine brotherhoods, equally bizarre occult performances bore all the hallmarks of Bogomil or Magian infiltrators.⁵¹⁸ Heads rolled ... literally!

As with the Manichees, it was crucial that Listeners live in close proximity to the *Perfecti*, who were their only means of mystically entering into heaven. It was almost a fate worse than death to die without the *consolamentum*. Consequently, some have theorised that Bogomils formed whole communities within gnostic dioceses, each thought to faithfully mimic apostolic diocesan boundaries.⁵²⁰ So remarkably resilient were they that the cult only began to fold under the Ottoman Turkic annexation of the Balkans. Unconfirmed reports suggest that isolated neo-Manichaeon splinter groups were still extant in the Balkans in the 1600-1700's.⁵²¹

The heretical hierarchies

Church officers

The four original Apostolic Sees commonly taught that Christ invested the power of the Apostles upon selected members of his Church by means of the Holy Spirit,⁵²² leaving a priesthood consisting of apostles (bishops) and presbyters (priests), and the minor office bearers of deacons, readers, ushers and exorcists. It seems to have been a priesthood formed by God's Spirit rather than a purely Magian or Rabbinical bloodline, and this if nothing else was a major departure from pagan religious thought, and yet they had very many similarities with these other priests.

By analysing the hierarchical structure of the various medieval heretical movements it is possible to discern a series of *organised religions* which sprang from a synthesis of the Magian, Manichaeon and pagan gnostic priesthoods.

BOGOMILS	MARCIONITES	PAULICIANS	GNOSTICS	MANICHEES
Anti-pope	Bishops	Apostles	<i>Perfecti</i>	Archegos
Apostles	Priests	Priests	Listeners	Magistri apostles
Perfecti	Deacons	Deacons		Bishops
Listeners				Elect
				Listeners

BOGOMIL TEACHINGS
STRETCHED FROM
TURKEY THROUGH TO
THE ENGLISH CHANNEL

THE BYZANTINE
INQUISITORS CALLED
FELT THEY WERE THE
DEVIL'S PRIESTHOOD

ISOLATED GROUPS OF
BOGOMILS ARE
THOUGHT TO HAVE
EXISTED IN THE
BALKANS UNTIL THE
18TH CENTURY

Their battle with the Church

With such a sizeable influx of dualist heretics entering Byzantium and the Balkans in the 8th-10th Centuries AD, it is only natural their mere existence provoked a severe backlash. For the Church, heresy was a crime worse than homicide, the mass-murder of souls. It was to be purged from the face of the earth, by repeated and vigorous polemical re-evangelisation missions in the first instance, or physical force in the face of continued intransigence. As sworn enemies, the Church and heretics waged war against each other, seizing their opponents by the throat with a tenacity barely imaginable. Both eastern and western Europe was scorched by this hidden war (mainly aimed at the Elect and Magi), which touched many families, and affected generations.

Byzantine and Roman inquisitorial authorities from this period, right throughout the Middle Ages were convinced that heresy and the occult went hand in glove.⁵²³ Everywhere the same recurring theme of devil-worship and fortune-telling seemed to crop up.⁵²³ These perceptions later shaped and nurtured the so-called 'stereotype' of the witch and her (and his) craft. In some cases, occultism probably only constituted a minor co-existent element, or fringe undercurrent within heretical communes, rather than a professed dogma. Bearing in mind the Magian and Chaldean philosophical/religious foundations of the Bogomils, and their apparent charter for the destruction of the Church, it really is not all that surprising that evidence of a magic-heresy linkage began surfacing. This was a primary reason for the Church's overkill in their handling of heresy, for it was now inexorably married to the 'co-evil' of sorcery.

In the pope's '*Pressing Danger*' letter of 1434 AD, he specified various archetypal witches frequently found consorting with devil-worshipping heretics. These included '*Christian and Jewish magicians*' (ie; Jewish Magi and Magian Christians).⁵²⁴ Those scholars who cleave to a belief in the learned origins of witchcraft insist that the cited comment is vacuous, utterly baseless. Instead all blame for the witch persecutions rests squarely on the sort of religious jingoism found in papal encyclicals of this kind. Bogus traditions circulated in medieval demonological texts are touted as an equally great culprit. However, excavations at Novgorod Russia have proved beyond all doubt, and for all time, what witch trials have specified all along, the factual existence of practicing witch-Christians. For it was there, in layers dating to the 13th Century AD that they chanced upon demi-Christian spell scrolls, with Christian prayers written backwards, in cyrillic mirror writing.⁵²⁵ Certain Novgoroders were etching topsy-turvy Christian prayers in their spells, a distinctly Chaldean practice. The precept behind this style of sorcery belongs to the due order and rites of the devil, '*as it is above, so shall it be below*' ... so shall it be backwards. So to pray to the devil, or more particularly to the Antichrist, one said anti-prayers, a deviant reflection of the prayers offered to his enemy Jesus. From Stuart Clark's book, *Thinking With Demons*, we already know that many early modern tractates on diabolism simply encompassed European folk magical traditions on ritual inversion. On the other hand, many centuries previously, we heard of *ergi* in Scandinavia, a class of pagan rite using perversion and 'upsidedownness'. A considerable number of *zmeiovik* (serpent) medallions were also found at Novgorod,⁵²⁶ showing Christian imagery on one side and the face of a medusa-like fiend on the other. Some had been confiscated, and were thus excavated from the house of a Christian priest. Others were loose finds around the city. Elsewhere in Europe we discover the 'Black Pater Noster',⁵²⁷ the black 'Our Father', in connection with maelific witches. Even today the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* contains the strongest possible condemnation of prayer-magic, damning it as a gross violation of God's first commandment.

Heretics loathed the Church for several reasons, not the least of which was its denial of their right to preach dualism and alternative biblical interpretations. On more than one occasion heretics confessed to the inquisitors that Christendom was practicing an improper form of the faith, and that they alone held to the true tradition.⁵²⁸ Some claimed apostolic successorship, others to the contrary.⁵²⁹ The latter heretics championed a form of Christianity that formed under peculiar circumstances, such as those described in Chapter I. By their reckoning Rome and Byzantium had got it all wrong. The Neo-Manichees, being of Manichaean origin could not see a scriptural basis for the sacraments, and like Marcion, accused the Church of leading the people astray with unsound teachings, useless works and rituals. Since the Church was very much involved in the protection of creation, and maintaining the world order, Manichaeans lambasted it as 'Babylon the Great Whore', which stood in

INQUISITORS ASSOCIATED
HERESY WITH THE
OCCULT

THE POPE SPOKE OF
CHRISTIAN AND JEWISH
MAGICIANS

HE ALSO WARNED OF
MALEVOLENT
WITCHCRAFT

PHYSICAL EVIDENCE OF
RITUAL INVERSION

HERETICS BELIEVED THE
BIBLE WAS FILLED WITH
DUALISTIC PASSAGES

CHURCH AND STATE
WERE FUSED ENTITIES

THE THEOLOGICAL
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SPILLED OVER INTO
BLOODSHED