

"John Smith"

Desicates to the search for truth.

Christianity's Greatest Controversy - Prelude to Genocide ISBN 0-9752300-1-8

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In the closing decade of the 16th Century, an enterprising Dutch scholar named Callidius sent the Catholic Church apparatus reeling in dire panic. Foreboding news had reached them. Somebody was trying to publish and circulate a book that drew a clear distinction between Magi and devil-worshipers. Someone was about to break the silence.

Motivated by a desire to rectify a perceived legal travesty in his day, Callidius boldly advocated that the death penalty due to maelific witches ought not fall upon certain Magi. These particular Magi were, more properly, white witches, many of whom were also devout Christians. As a result of the inquisitorial process they were being improperly branded as dark or 'satanic' witches, and sentenced accordingly. By his estimation the Inquisition was out of control.

What was even more troubling, is that Callidius managed to ferry his writings to Cologne, to be run through the print presses ... destined for mass circulation. Sensing the grave urgency of the situation they apprehended the author, and interdicted his work before it could ever be made public. Still they could not rest easy. Some remained deeply concerned that copies had somehow vanished out into the urban sprawl. In 1593 AD, after his subsequent arrest and imprisonment, Callidius was hauled before the courts, and there renounced his detested articles. In the main, onlookers were oblivious to the magnitude of what was being ideologically buried that day.

Who could have guessed that another 411 years would have to elapse, before the general thrust of Callidius' repressed book can finally be made known to a lay readership. My latest work, which follows on from the *True History of Wizards and Witches*, tears the lid from an enigmatic historical sepulcher, to reveal what is arguably the most willfully-abandoned era of European and Islamic history. Over all, the plot line bests that of any fantasy novel, all the more so because the following events actually took place. Witness a time quite alien to ours; an age of kings and wizards, when a dying religion found refuge in Europe.

Christianity's Greatest Controversy - Prelude to Genocide should ideally be read in conjunction with the True History of Wizards and Witches, the latter permitting a more three-dimensional understanding of Europe's pre-Christian heritage and legacy. In this book the enquiring reader views an unusual, normally-invisible version of history detailing the meanderings of persecuted nations and faiths.



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atroSuction

Two thousand years ago a brown-haired, blue-eyed¹ child was born of royal Jewish stock, who came to change the face of the world in untold ways. Rarely in history do single individuals affect not only centuries of human experience, but millennia. Jesus of Nazareth, the Virgin-born, was one such person, who, we are told, was God, and at the same time a man of flesh and blood. In this book, we will examine the formation of the Christian Church, the 'Mystical Body of Christ', tracing it from its earliest years, through to the Middle Ages.

According to the teachings of the Church, initially gathered and formalized at the First Holy Council of Nicaea (325 AD), Christianity is a monotheistic religion based on a belief in 'the Holy Trinity', one God consisting of three indivisible persons - The Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Every year, around the winter solstice, Christians all over the world gather to celebrate Christmas, the birth of Jesus Christ, God the Son in flesh. As they assemble for Christmas mass, most will notice the nativity scenes so characteristic of the festive season. Bored children often feel drawn to investigate the small statues which, in some small way, remind them of the toys they've just received from Santa Claus. They see sheep, a cow and a donkey, not to mention St Mary and St Joseph. They behold their saviour as a baby, laying in a common crib, over straw. To one side stand Jewish shepherds and the other an entourage of eastern kings with expensive presents for the prophesied Messiah. Very early copies of the Bible refer to the kings as Magi, the spiritual lords of the Orient. Generally these priests of the old Iranian religious order were held to be divine and incarnate archangels, possessing miraculous spiritual powers, and an impressive command of medicine and the sciences. The event itself was known throughout the early Church as the Epiphany (from the Greek *Epiphaneia*: brightness, manifestation).

Inside the grand imperial cathedral of Cologne, in Germany, one will be in the presence of what is alleged to be the mortal remains of these same Three Wise Kings. At other esteemed European cathedrals Christmas parishioners have the added bonus of staring up at gargoyles and weird engravings. Collectively these things point to an alternative Church history, one no longer to be discussed.

Children attending Sunday school will no doubt have been taught the significance of Mary, Joseph, baby Jesus, and the shepherds. But the meaning of last remaining elements of the scene, the Magi, remain obscure to them. They are, to be more precise, deliberately passed over in silence. Roughly 700-1,000 years ago, after a period of papal reform, the Magi became a topic of disdainful reflection, and the key subjects of medieval censors keen to rid

the so-called nativity texts of their presence. This almost-extinct species of ancient and medieval literature referred to the 'lost years' of Jesus, and placed the Messiah in very unusual places; Egypt, India and Mesopotamia. All the fuss is hardly surprising, particularly considering that the Magi were wise men, wizards.

As youngsters look into the faces of the Three Wise Kings none will perceive in them Christianity's greatest controversy. In this book, the sequel to the *True History of Wizards and Witches*, you will explore the possible importance of this delegation of wizards at the birth of Christ. To achieve this you must be taken on a journey back some 2,000 years, to a celestial observatory somewhere inside the Persian Empire. Later you will venture to Europe in the grip of genocidal fervour, with Christian wizards being burned to death across the face of the continent ...

It is night time and magus astronomers are busy adjusting a Greek-designed fixed astrolabe, examining certain constellations. Meanwhile other Magi are busy scanning the heavens for portends from the divine being Ahura Mazda. The desert air is chilly, so they rug up, and rub their hands to keep warm. A shrill shout is heard, as a nervously-excited astronomer points to a quadrant of the heavens, drawing his colleagues' attention to what he has observed. An unknown star has suddenly appeared, perhaps a comet. Intrigued astronomers look heavenward in awe, their straining eyes intently fixed on the event. All concur; stellar phenomenon of this kind represents the descent of khvarenah, an archangel bearing heavenly glory, signifying the birth of a divine prodigy. The sages consults the astrological almanacs and prognosticatory texts of the ancient fathers, their pages faintly lit by a torch, and flapping somewhat in the breeze. The verdict is beyond question; a great king is almost born. Since it is around the winter solstice it can only mean the birth of a Sun, a Sun-king. 'Who is this king that Ahura Mazda should light the sky in such a way?' Foreboding tones reply 'judging by its appearance a king who is in great danger'. They note its westward movement. Exhilarated by the star's importance, the astrologers enter into consultation with their monarch, who advises that a delegation be sent to this Lord whose earthly incarnation was imminent. Heading a small diplomatic retinue, the magus-kings, Lords Gaspar, Melchior and Belthazzar^{1b} are dispatched in haste, bearing gifts and greetings, some on camels, others on swift white chargers. Some say another nine Magi accompanied them. They follow it far, over many lands, until at last they see it enter the land of the Jews. They ponder over how they will find the boy among Jerusalem's many houses and workshops. Perhaps the locals would know, and since most Jews spoke Aramaic they had but to ask. Everywhere they enquired:

'Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him'.2

News travelled fast that the Magi were in Jerusalem seeking out a Jewish king, and this greatly troubled the authorities. If such a thing were true the chief priests and scribes of the Jewish temple would surely know. So King Herod summoned them into his presence, enquiring where this birth might eventuate. They replied;

'In Bethlehem of Judea: for thus it is written by the prophet, And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, art not the least among the princes of Judah: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel'.³

His worst suspicions confirmed, Herod summoned the Magi and sought a private consultation with them, hoping to ascertain what significance they attached to the star. At the conclusion of the brief meeting, the Roman puppet Herod told them to seek this 'king' in Judea, but bade them return to his palace with news of the potential regal interloper with legitimate claim to his throne.

When they (the Magi) heard the king (Herod), they departed; and, lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy'.

'And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshiped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh'. 4

As they chatted with the mother, adoring the swaddled new-born before them, they learned that this was a virgin birth. They stared at each other in wonder. In Magian prophecy such a detail could only reveal the baby king's status as a divine saviour prophet. As these ostentatious proceedings unfolded, humble Jewish shepherds looked on quietly in the background, having made their way to the birthplace as well.

'And being warned by God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they (the Magi) departed into their own country (Persia) another way'.⁵

Joseph too experienced a prophetic dream from God, advising him to escape to post-Ptolemaic Egypt. And so they left in haste, rushing the baby Jesus to safety until the death of Herod.

On that one starlit night Jews and pagan kings shared the cramped confines of the stable, looking down into the innocent face of Jesus Christ. Little could any of them know what marvels would occur through him in the years to follow. And so it all began, the unprecedented global worship of one born to woman.

The ancient Jewish writings spoke of a Messiah (literally 'The Anointed One', and by inference a king, priest and prophet) who would one day appear and save them from the

predations of their enemies. He was to be of King David's line. Many aspiring candidates surfaced throughout Jewish history to claim that title, usually with disastrous consequences for their followers. At the time of his ministry, the Sanhedrin typecast Jesus as a magician and false-messiah who duped swathes of Jerusalem into believing that he was God, in an attempt to rip apart Judea. But in reading the accounts of Josephus (a Jewish traditionalist who sided with the Roman invasion force) concerning the siege of Jerusalem, it does not appear that Christianity had achieved any major successes among the Jews. Christ received only a cursory, though favorable mention. By and large mainstream Jewry simply ignored Christ. After all he had gone on a moral crusade throughout the holy city. He had overturned the tables of money lenders in the temple precincts, castigated the Rabbis as sons of perdition, teaching that the ten commandments were merely a sketchy outline of a more perfect law of goodness. He even prophesied the utter demolition of Solomon's temple, and slaughter such as they could never imagine (more than a million Jews are said to have died in the rebellion). Be that as it may, Josephus' writings suggest that isolated segments of Jerusalem's populace, maybe several thousand strong, saw Jesus as a divine being.6

From the very earliest pool of Jewish converts came the Judaeo-Christian Church of Nazareth, the Nazarenes. The sect maintained that Gentiles (Hebrew: *goyim* meaning heathens', 'locust') had to become Jews through circumcision before they could become Christians, an ideology found condemned in the New Testament. Following a formal council of the Apostles (held c. 49 AD in Jerusalem), members of this Church faction (whose original church building has been excavated by archaeologists in the Middle East)' either withdrew back into mainstream Jewish or Christian religions or stayed with their own Judaeo-Christian community. Considered heretics by the wider Catholic (ie; Universal) Church, the cult suffered isolation and is thought to have died out over centuries.

As hateful as the Rabbis and temple priests may have been of Christ, it is noteworthy that they did not proceed to claim that his many miracles were a sham or non-event, but all too real. The list was considerable. Curing incurables, transmuting physical substances, walking on water, controlling the elements, expelling demons and, most importantly, resurrecting the dead, one of whom passed away days previously. Instead, according to a long-standing Jewish tradition, Christ went into Egypt and there learned the arts of the magicians, with which he then proceeded to deceive the people and trample the vineyard of Israel.

He was, by their estimation, a magus, a wizard. From that time Christians were regarded as *Minim*, the heretical servants of Balaam. Accordingly, Jesus' name was struck from the *Talmud* forever, and only in unexpurgated versions, which existed until 1645 AD, appeared as 'Na-Notzri', 'The Fool', 'The Hung', 'That Man', 'the so and so', 'He whom we may not name', 'Absolom', 'Ben Stada' and 'Ben Pandera'. The strongest attacks against Christ appear in the *Toldoth Jeshu*, a treatise formed from Jewish apocryphal legends and sayings

concerning Jesus.

If Jewish attempts to identify Jesus with the royal Magi are to be hypothetically believed, Jesus must have come to Jerusalem not merely as a reformer of contemporary Judaic religious inadequacies and malpractice, but to confront prevailing rabbinical notions about the divine being, centring on the worship of their tribal God Yaweh, their name for the supreme being.

And there is certainly evidence, not only for this, but a very ancient connection with the Far-East. You see the biblical patriarch Abraham (who had a special rapport with the Most High God) once lived in Harran, the prestigious holy city of the Chaldean wizards, the priests of ancient Ur in Mesopotamia (Iraq). Acting on spiritual locutions from the Most High, Abraham migrated, with his family, to Canaanite districts, then into Egypt to weather a famine in the former parts. Abraham then returned to find the promised land. It was there that Abraham first met King Melchizidek (literally the 'King of Righteousness'), who ruled at Salem (the old name for Jerusalem). Nothing further is mentioned of the king at that point. Later, in the book of Joshua, Jerusalem is said to be ruled by the Amorite King Adonizedek (possibly a descendant of Melchizidek). As with Abraham, the Amorites originated in Mesopotamia, but had resolved to colonize the geographical area of modern Israel. The inward easterly migration of Israelites to such an agriculturally marginal zone inevitably brought war to the Amorites. After a great battle Adonizedek was hanged by Joshua, along with another four Amorite monarchs. It goes on to say 'As for the Jebusites the inhabitants of Jerusalem (presumably a sub-division of the Amorites), the children of Judah could not drive them out: but the Jebusites dwell with the children of Judah at Jerusalem unto this day'. Moving on to the second book of Samuel the Jebusites had regained control of Jerusalem. David recaptured the city and ordered the mass-killing of Jebusites. After this a temple was built for the God of Israel at Jerusalem, remaining forever more, the primary holy site of the Jewish people. Gone was the tented tabernacle. Now the home of the Israelitish God was immortalized and glorified in stone.

One could be forgiven for thinking that the Jebusites were entirely liquidated had it not been for the *New Testament*. The book of *Hebrews 5-7* explains that Jesus was proclaimed by the Most High God to be a priest 'after the order of Melchizidek', presumably a reference to the ritual order once practiced by the priest-king Melchizidek, and therefore the Amorites, and by extension some kind of eastern tradition. It goes on to say that Jesus came to re-teach the Jewish Levitical high priests, the 'first principles of the oracles (ie; ancient prophecies) of God'.

'If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchizidek, and not be called after the order of Aaron'.

Jesus was from the tribe of Judah, a people unmentioned by Moses with respect to the priesthood. Being, as it were, drawn from the rubrics of Melchizidek, Jesus' priestly order belonged to a pre-existing nation, a pre-Mosaic nation then dwelling in Jerusalem, and not to Aaron's temple high-priesthood. As a priest-king, Melchizidek's office and power continued beyond death; and so everlasting.

Christ fulminated against the Levitical priesthood in inflamed sermons, as graphically portrayed in the *New Testament*. Shortly before prophesying the desolation of Solomon's temple, Jesus launched his most vilifying salvo.

Wherefore ye (the Rabbis) be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets (ie; those who performed miracles, and heard spiritual messages from the Most High). Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers. Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?' 9

Jesus foresaw a continuation of this mutual animosity between the two camps. Speaking of His future missionaries Jesus said to the priests 'Wherefore behold, I_

send unto you <u>prophets</u>, and <u>wise men</u>, and <u>scribes</u>, and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in <u>your</u> synagogues, and persecute them from city to city'. ¹⁰

We have long been taught that Yaweh, the God of Israel, is the one God, all-powerful, all-knowing. But he is also an enigma. Judaism was, to a certain extent divided over the origin of misfortune, sickness, aging and death. As compassionate and loving as Yaweh could be, the 'jealous God' would severely punish and ultimately destroy his flawed creations as repayment for their sins against him, or the deification of any spirit, person, image or object. So the Jewish godhead, as told by the Sadduccees, consists of a single unified force, the divinity Yaweh. The Jewish Pharisaic sect adored and feared this same deity, but professed that God created a multitude of angels and demons (angels who willfully fell from grace through disobedience) beneath him. In an administrative sense Yaweh accomplished the work of governing the world by sending angels deputized to carry out a variety of functions assigned to them. Demons, the fallen choirs of rebel angels, were paradoxically still under his control, gaining power over mankind only with Yaweh's permission, or by direct command, bringing pestilence and harm.

YAWEH

ANGELS

DEMONS (FALLEN ANGELS)

Chaldean wizards saw their high God as similar to Yaweh in nature, their creed having developed in Mesopotamia, the birthplace of Abraham. Chaldeanism varied from Judaism in that the Supreme God (ie; the Most High God) created many things seen and unseen,

possessing either good, evil or mixed natures. These were not simply creations but particular autonomous aspects of the deity that demanded ritual interaction to tap into their enormous powers, as bestowed upon them by the Great Power. The planets, the primary lieutenants of the Great Power, personified certain positive and negative potencies and areas of responsibility, and were lauded as gods in their own right. Due to the vagaries of their movements the planets dispensed mixed fortune and could not always be relied upon to shower everyone alike with good fortune. Under the shunned theurgic art of sorcery Agathodaemon might be ritually invoked to 'terrify' the celestial divinities into granting pleasing outcomes. In a later time these Mesopotamian heavenly gods, lords over the zodiac, were found housed in Rome's great Pantheon temple.

The Great Power, the Most High God¹¹

Agathodaemon

Jupiter (Baal) Venus (Belit) Saturn (Cronus)
Sun (Helios) Moon (Sin) Mars (Ares)
Mercury (Nebo)

Beneath them lay a plethora of celestial gods, devils, angels and daemones.

In the *True History of Wizards and Witches* I detailed the various schools of sorcery and magic. Here I expound the more evolved theological theories of the ancient philosophers as a backdrop to understanding the Christian Magi.

In the main Magi had a totally different concept of the universe. The cosmos had *two* competing forces; one a benign creator (*Ahura Mazda*, the wise lord), from whence came holiness, light and goodness, plus physical and spiritual creation, miracles and prophecies. His eternal enemy was not a God, but more properly an anti-God. It was, in form, an existent non-existence, the source of non-belief and unrestrained materialism. This demon of malice, deception, and mayhem is but is not. The destruction of the living world wasn't, strictly speaking, the product of sin alone (as expounded in the Bible). Much rather it was the machinations of this co-eternal destroyer who, owing to his twisted nature, desired to exterminate sinless birds, flowers, trees and plants as surely as any human being. The downfall of religion and faith were his key goals, by demolishing spirituality.

Here one finds an essential point of difference between Jewish, Chaldean and primeval dualistic Magian cosmology. While the Holy Spirit and angels emanated from the luminous High God *Ahura Mazda*, the Spirit of Evil actually had no relationship to the divine being beyond perpetual antagonism. Far from being created by God, the unholy spirit was utterly alien to him, of unknown origin, merely sharing the same time and space, constantly brooding, feuding and clashing with the Lord. Such then is the essential theory of dualism.

This early notion of supernatural bi-polar forces can be shown as follows, with the Holy Spirit emanating from Ahura Mazda, the Persian name for the God of all things good.

AHURA MAZDA (SUPREME GOD)

SPENTA MAINYU

Also called the Holy Spirit,

begetter of Asha ('the Truth')

ANGRA MAINYU

Also called The Spirit of Wickedness,¹²

begetter of Druj ('Lies')

The Medean Magi dispensed with the teaching of the twin spirits and, for a time, turned primitive Zoroastrianism into a religion where creation and destruction were bi-products of a war between two separate polarized, equally powerful and utterly antithetical *deities*. Angra Mainyu (The Unholy Spirit) became deified, boldly personified as God's crafty opponent Ahriman, Lord of Hell.

AHURA MAZDA

The White God, the Good God, the Creator

AHRIMAN (ALSO CALLED AHARMAN)

The Black God, the Evil God, the Destroyer

With the 'Spirit of Wickedness' elevated to the status of Prince Infernal, certain Magi gave him the rights of a God, with an entitlement to equal if not exclusive worship. Some, cleaving to both powers, felt it proper to bestow sacrifices upon both deities. They became the servants of two masters.

Next came the Zurvanite doctrine¹¹ which spoke of a single God above these. The sunny *Ahura Mazda* and infernal *Ahriman* were themselves created powers; fellow siblings born from an androgynous father-mother named *Zurvan*, the God of time. Zurvan's status was analogous to that of the Most High, the God above all other gods. This novel Magian trinity was condemned by influential wise men in its day, yet it snowballed into a popular religious mass-movement. It must have been a very ancient teaching, similar to the Chaldean godhead, and denounced by Zoroaster himself, in the following extract of Magian scripture.

'And, from the statement of Zarathustra, about the shouting of the demon Aresh (a demon of lies and heresy) to mankind, thus: 'Ahura Mazda and Ahriman have been two brothers in one womb, and out of them the archangel liked that which is evil, through what occurs when the understanders of it have mentioned the worship of the demons and this, that, after it, you should present cattle to the planetary bodies and the demons'. 15

In this scheme, allegedly devised by the demon Aresh, the Supreme Being also gave birth to the dark power, allowing evil and misfortune to thrive in juxtaposition with the good. This act effectively made him the author and architect of both evil and goodness. Note well the

favoured status of the evil brother in Zurvanism, epitomized by death's triumphant extinguishing of life, which though cherished is all too tenuously brief.

ZURVAN, THE MOST HIGH

Ahura Mazda	AHRIMAN
The White God	The Black God
The Good son (the Good Sun)	The Evil son
The Creator	The Destroyer
King of the Heavens	Prince of the Underworld

Zurvanism underwent a further metamorphosis, emerging as Mithraic religion, which began in Iran and later found untold adulation in Ancient Rome, but not before incorporating facets of Chaldean and Greek pagan Gnosticism. Under Mithraism Zurvan, the Time God of the Magian astronomers, acquired the name Kronos, Sol Invictus became the Latin name for the Sun God, while Mithra and Ahriman retained their Iranian titles intact. Mithra the Mediator, the in-between-one, was the guardian of the Bridge of the Separator which led to heaven, and soul escorter. Sandwiched betwixt sun and devil stood this Mithras, God's Warrior, who punished all liars, and fought as champion for the Good Sun.

Whether in the physical or spiritual world, each of the two contending powers possessed its own kingdom, since in varied traditions, both powers had the nature of a creator. Each kingdom was born from its own respective father, each dimly reflected in the other. In the material world the two kingdoms collided *ad eternam*.

Kingdom of Light	Kingdom of Darkness
Angels	Demons
Good Genii	Evil Djinn
High priests	Warlocks
Dogs and otters	Wolves and sea serpents
Horses, cattle	Insects, spiders, locusts
Sheep	Goats
Wheat and grain crops	Weeds, briars and thistles
Judges and doctors	Criminals and murderers

Mithraism's Zurvanite genesis is obvious in the following description of the Roman Mithraic godhead:

KRONOS

SOL INVICTUS	MITHRA	DEUS ARIMANIOS
The White God	The Mediator,	The Black God
The Good God	Champion of	The Evil God
The Creator	the Good Sun,	The Destroyer
The Invincible Sun	and justice	The Demon Ahriman

Comparing the Jewish, Chaldean, early Zoroastrian, Zurvanite, and Mithraic godheads, one model stands out as uniquely different in-so-far as monotheism is concerned. It diverges from the others once one asks the question 'Is the supreme being, the creator, my destroyer, either directly or indirectly'. The answer, in the case of early Zoroastrianism is a resounding 'No!'. Never an intended part of the cosmos, destruction and evil found their source and strength in the free-wheeling evil nemesis, who was himself a miscreator, of all things wrong, of all creatures bad, of a wretched flock. Its very existence would be terminated in an apocalyptic spiritual war, with Judgement Day its crowning glory.

There are enough Zoroastrian and classical Roman sources to help us visualize that devil worship was far from a whimsical psychosis devised by the Church for mind control, but rites aimed at a spiteful spectrum of infernal deities, well known in Babylon and the Orient, which complemented and magnified their dualistic perception of the cosmos. These spiritual cancers had been transported to many and varied geographical locations in the West by autonomous black Magi, or by those who served in the subterranean hideouts, caves and temples of the Roman Mithraic legionaries and piratical Cilicians. One Roman, the highly respected, though atheistic natural scientist Pliny the Elder, had the following to say;

'Frail, toiling men, mindful of their own weakness, have separated these deities into groups in order to worship them piecemeal - each person worshiping the deity he most needs. Thus different races have different names for the same deities, and we find innumerable gods in the same races. Even the Gods of the lower world, together with diseases and many kinds of plagues are listed in groups in our fearful anxiety to appease them. For this reason there is a Temple of Fever, on the Palatine, dedicated by the state, one of Bereavement, at the Temple of the Household Gods, and an Altar of Bad Luck, on the Esquiline. One could take this to mean that there are more heavenly beings than men, since individuals also make as many gods, by adopting Junos and Genii for themselves. Some nations have animals - even repulsive creatures - as gods, and many things more disgraceful to relate: they swear by rotten food and other such things....But the invention of adulterous acts between gods and goddesses themselves, as well as quarrels and hatred, and the invention of gods of theft and crime, surpasses all shamelessness'... 'They wait upon gods with foreign rituals, they wear their images on their

fingers (engraved magical gem rings); they pass sentence on the monsters they worship and invent food for them; they inflict dire tyrannies on themselves, resting only fitfully'.¹⁷

In other words Mithraism conformed to the grand precepts of absolute dualism, allowing ceremonies for the appearement of the good and evil gods.

The formative stages of Magian religious evolution (as shown in the *True History of Wizards and Witches*) are shown on the following time-line;

The state of the s	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·
2700 BC - 1,000 AD?	Aryan pagan Vedic traditions thrive, unwittingly preparing the foundations of Zoroastrianism
	preparing the foundations of Zoroastrianism
c. 618-573 BC?	The birth of Zoroastrianism. Devil-worship,
	idolatry and the old magus priesthood (the Karap
	wizards) were dethroned at this time.
c. 522 BC	Medean Magian religious influences penetrated
	the Zoroastrian priesthood.
482 BC	The old Zoroastrian fire-priests succeeded in
	dethroning the Aryan, Iranian and Babylonian idols and
	instituted the Zoroastrian calendar of feasts.
c.475 BC	Zoroastrianism suffered serious setbacks as the
	Medeans reinstate daeva-worship and build temples
	designed to house sacred fires and Daeva idols
c. 400-100 BC	A time of distinct hellenization under Greek occupation.
	The Magi and Greek pagan gnostics entered into a
	lengthy period of philosophical, scientific and religious collaboration.
c. 70AD-?	Mithraism gains ascendancy in Rome, Eastern
	and Western Europe.
c. 226 AD	King Ardashir standardized Zoroastrian ritualism and
	scripture; giving rise to Orthodox Zoroastrianism.
	Prolonged friction ensued between the Orthodox
	Zoroastrian priests and the magus wizards (which
	fostered the Zurvanite and Mazdakite heresies, plus devil
	worship) except for a period of religious tolerance under
	Emperor Shapur I.
	1 T

c.226-490AD	Sassanian authorities implemented and defended the new Zoroastrian Orthodox reforms against the many religious movements then present throughout the East. Emperor Bahram and his religious mentor Karter unleashed a reign of terror against Buddhism, Hinduism, Judaism, Christianity, and Manichaeism, as well as the Daeva and Drug worshipers, all of which were eliminated or driven out of the Sassanian Empire, leaving Zoroastrianism as the exalted state religion.
c. 273 AD+	The execution of Mani, followed by the repression and victimization of his devoted Manichees. Manichees fled eastwards from Sassania in droves, into Turkic realms.
a 220 AD	Ponoryal paragration and avagration of the Christians

c.339 AD Renewed persecution and execution of the Christians.c. 528 AD Reprisals against the communistic Mazdakite heretics.

On account of the great demon's crushing retribution against Ahura Mazda's creations and devoted followers, the Magi saw the God of Israel as essentially demonic. His outlandish behaviour, and seemingly destructive and vindictive nature was hardly divine, matching that of the great demon, as these excerpts from Magian scripture testify. In the beginning there was only darkness. That the God of Israel uttered 'Let there be light' (to give rise to the light amid the darkness in which he lived) was, they believed, a sure sign that he was in reality a demon, even more so because he paused to consider the light that he had made, stating 'it was good'. Light was therefore a novelty to him at the moment of its creation ... he was simply mesmerized. According to the Magi, the Torah was full of 'iniquity and demonism', little more than 'twaddle'. 18

The Magian refutation text begins with a summary of Jehovah's attributes

'I am the Lord, seeking vengeance and retaliating vengeance, and I retaliate vengeance sevenfold upon the children, and one does not forget my original vengeance'. ¹⁸ It goes on to say; 'His charger, also, is the drying wind, and from the motion of his feet is the arising of a whirlwind of dust. When he walks the arising of fire is behind him'. ¹⁸

Condemning his behaviour yet further, we hear 'he slew six hundred thousand men, besides women and young children, out of the Israelites in the wilderness; only two men escaped'. 18

As if that wasn't enough, 'he casts distressed worshipers who are reverent, listening to commands, and pure in action, together with others who are sinners, into eternal hell'. 19

The Magians were scathing of Jehovah's seething hatred of their religion:

'the sacred being (Jehovah), at the day of the resurrection, gives the sun and moon, together with others who are sinners, to hell for the reason that there are people who have offered homage to them'. 19

His justice did not appear modelled on any reasonable standard of fairness; 'though Adam committed sin, the curse which was inflicted by Him (the Lord) reaches unlawfully over people of every kind at various periods'.²⁰

In summation the author of the Magian text Sikand-Gumanik Vigar states:

'Now if he be a sacred being of whom these are signs and tokens, that implies that truth is far from him, forgiveness strange to him, and knowledge is not bestowed upon him. Because this itself is the fiend who is <u>leader of the hell</u> which is the den of the gloomy race, <u>whom the devilish defiled ones and evil people glorify by the name of the Lord</u>, and offer him homage.²¹

In effect devotees of Yaweh were typecast as demon-worshipers. The Magi, like the Jews, also expected the coming of a Messiah, a final saviour. His primary function was to destroy the apparent victory of the Evil One through his power to resurrect everything from the eternal annihilation visited on creation by the devil. At the hand of the provident Redeemer, Death lost its horror for all time.

Whereas those beholden to a more Jewish monotheistic model saw the Magi as blasphemers, and retaliated with taunts of their own. During the Middle Ages it seems the radiant *Ahura Mazda* was dubbed Lucifer, the demon of the false light.

Having compared Magian and Jewish conceptions of the divine being, we can now proceed to tackle the history of Europe's conversion from paganism to Christianity, armed with the most important tool of all, a basic understanding of several similar, and in once case radically different, monotheistic models.

Spars - He pirate dark

A traditional portragal of the Ohureh's first gears

With the bodily ascension of Christ to heaven after his crucifixion, ²² Jesus' apostles, greatly gifted by the Holy Spirit, dispersed to preach the Gospel in the East, in Asia Minor (formerly Anatolia and now called Turkey) the cradle of Christianity. Some apostolic preachers were to evangelize the Jews, with the remainder tasked with converting the pagan 'gentiles', who covered the remainder of the earth, as the sea engulfs the beach.

The first missions took place in Asia Minor primarily (Ss Peter, Paul, John and most of the apostles), then Greece, the lower Balkans, the whole of the Middle East, Egypt and Africa (St Mark), the North (St Andrew), also spreading to Rome in the West (St's Peter and Paul), and even as far away as the Caucuses and India (St's Thomas and Bartholomew). Then came a series of deadly reversals. Disturbing reports emerged concerning this new sect of the Christians, who conducted their ceremonies behind closed doors. Christian priests saw these affairs as arising from a persecution devised by the devil himself, to thwart the spread of Jesus' Gospel. 'The demon who hates the good, sworn enemy of truth and inveterate foe of man's salvation, turned ... against the church'. To this extent the Demon used 'impostors as ... ministers of destruction ... cloaking themselves with the same name as our religion, should ... bring to the abyss of destruction every believer they could entrap'. Their brand of Christianity allegedly required their preachers to 'teach that the vilest things must be done' for admission to 'these "mysteries" or rather abominations', and 'rendering to them all the due performance of unspeakable rites'.

The pagans were a very pious lot, deeming it imperative that local and state gods receive their proper dues, so as not to offend them. Families and the Empire only stood to gain. In Asia Minor's far-eastern provinces a Christian preacher, Polycarp of Smyrna, was harangued as 'the destroyer of our gods, who teaches ... people not to sacrifice or even worship'. 24 Consequently

Polycarp was executed by the Roman authorities at the behest of a conglomerate of pagans and Jews, affronted by what they saw as sacrilegious doctrines, 'the Jews as usual joining in with more enthusiasm than anyone'. 24

Allegedly Christians were beholden to 'a sham spirit' babbling 'crazily, inopportunely, and wildly'. In defense of the nascent faith Christians condemned some maverick sectarians among them for 'prophesying in a way that conflicted with the practice of the Church'. Pursuant to an enquiry about these eastern prophets Catholic authorities 'pronounced them profane and ejected the heresy'. Such were the early beginnings of the apostasy, which followed on from the dire schism between the apostolic hierarchy and implacable Judaeo-Christian converts.

Then there were tales of their orgies, cannibalism, and incest within one's own immediate family. Roman pagans were truly incensed at what they were hearing. It had all the tell-tale signs of the dark art, the condemned system of demonolatry long banned under Roman law. From within and without it seemed the faith was being eaten away by a spiritual necrosis of *pseudoadelphos* (false brethren), *pseudoapostolos* (false apostles) and *pseudoprophetes* (false prophets). As a consequence of these sordid happenings early Christians suffered persecution under Nero and his successors, which continued unabated for 200 years, when Christian-hunting was halted by Emperor Marcus Trajan.

St John was the last of the apostles to pass from this world, and with his passing came a realization that Christ had not yet returned, as was alluded to in the Lord's sermons. As a consequence of this the world's bishops had to formally arrange themselves into an earthly Church capable of taking the Gospel into the future and keeping watch over the flock until such time as He did return.

In the wake of Christ's execution, it appears there were no formal plans to speedily compile a single volume of holy writings, but instead do most of the preaching face to face, via the agency of apostolicly empowered preachers. However, the demi-Christian ministrations of gnostic heretics over the next 60 years demanded the compilation of a complete holy book, in the form of the *New Testament* (NT). Nowadays it consists of four separate Gospels (stories of Christ's life) and some 23 letters entitled to the Christians of ancient times (mostly from St Paul). Amounting to 27 different versions of apostolic writing in loose circulation, plus the Clementine Epistles, few people probably even knew the sum total of authentic documentation, or indeed if there were others that had been destroyed during the persecutions. The penning of these highly significant apostolic memoirs began as early as 27 years after the death of Christ and lasted until about 100-120 AD. Bearing in mind the almost haphazard formation of the *New Testament* and its release during a later rather than earlier period, the Christian Bible hardly seems to be the product of a focused and specially commissioned team of authors, intending to place the absolute and undivided focus of the religion into the holy books alone, such as is the case with the *Qur'an*. The mere

fact that they had to be compiled into a book by bishops of the early Church²⁶ further illustrates this. Indeed Christ, who was literate enough in Hebrew to read to the Rabbis in the temple could have written a handful of Gospels Himself.²⁷ And yet He never did. He saw the people face to face, just like the apostles who He sent out into the world after him. Moreover, Christ had sufficient literate followers to enable at least a small band of scribes to attend His public meetings, and record His every word. St Paul had his own scribe. St Mark the Evangelist was St Peter's writing clerk. Later, Origen (a pre-eminent theologian from the See of Alexandria, and a professional Christian scholar of the 4th Century) used scribes during his orations. Teams of shorthand clerks were on hand to record his speeches and lectures verbatim, churning out volumes of theological discourse. When they did write, it was in Ancient Greek, signifying their mission to heathenry.

Most importantly, the writings of the *New Testament* were only to include the writings of the apostles. For example the prime accounts of the games in which the Christians were fed to the lions are found in the *History of the Church* by Eusebius, bishop of Caesarea (in the See of Jerusalem), though these same events are not specifically mentioned in the *Bible*. This serves to show that the *Bible* was first and foremost a compilation dating only to the apostolic era, a time capsule of the first Christian generation. The writings of Church figureheads from succeeding generations automatically fell under the umbrella of apocrypha, not due to any admission that they were flawed works, but simply that they were not written by one of the apostles or their learned assistants such as the evangelists.

In assembling the current *Bible*, bishops were faced with an unruly assemblage of purported Christian books and letters, in circulation throughout the Christian world. Upon closer examination it was found that many were totally unacceptable to the faith. These they termed false gospels. Spurious texts were condemned and excluded from the Canon, where clear evidence of 'heresy' was shown.²⁶ In analysing these texts the Church Fathers based their decisions on Church writings extant during the 3rd Century and inherited personal knowledge that a given work received credence in apostolic times. In his *History of the Church*,²⁶ Eusebius covered at length the vetting process used by the Church fathers, which books passed their scrutiny, and which flunked miserably. The acceptable writings in turn became the Old and *New Testaments*, which are in use until this day, with great reverence.

In many places that were evangelized, parishes sprang up. Later, these became centers of religious power (Sees), the greatest being (in order of seniority at the time) Rome, Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem. The See of Rome was established first, and its bishop, a linear successor of St Peter (later, in the 6th Century AD to be renamed as the pope) became the senior bishop of the Universal Church, jointly ruled by his peers, the blessed patriarchs of the other Sees. In their unity, the faith of the apostles solidified, going from strength to strength.

In 311 AD bitter political and military dissension tore asunder the beleaguered Roman Empire. This came to a head on Milvian bridge upon the Tiber river. There, in 312 AD, the Mithrasian Caesar Constantine did battle with Maxentius for control of the capital, and the ideological dominance of Christianity.28 With Constantine's victory came power and prestige, which he used to good effect. As a consequence he ended the persecution and martyrdom of Christians throughout the empire. In the years that followed Constantine brokered a power-sharing arrangement with Licinius, but later turned on him. Licinius' execution in 326 AD effectively made Constantine Emperor. The year 330 AD saw the Emperor establish a new city, far from the Italian mainland. It was named Constantinople, in honor of its founder, and was to be regarded as the New Rome, the capital of his eastern Roman Empire. His ambitious construction project was intended to be an earthly mirror of 'the Lord's heavenly realm', with the magnificent Hagia Sofia Basilica, and monuments to the apostles on the top of the hill, overshadowing the entire city. It was grand, well protected, and located on the Bosphorus Strait at the nexus of crucial and highly profitable east-west trade routes. This new city, the headquarters of the Patriarchate of Constantinople, was elevated to the status of the second most important See and would eventually became a rallying point for the eastern Patriarchates in a world fast becoming Muslim. The freshness of this Hellenistic-Latin renaissance succeeded in eclipsing a declining Rome in the west, both militarily and culturally. Such was the birth of Byzantium.

Councils or synods of bishops (impossible to conduct for the first 300 years of the Church's history for security reasons) were held annually to try and standardize articles of ritual and doctrine, which had begun to diversify on account of the considerable distances separating parishes. Bishops from bishoprics throughout Christian lands converged on some pre-arranged place for extensive discussions about the nature of the faith and the progress of evangelization missions occurring in many and varied places. Goths, Armenians and Georgians all embraced Christianity during the 2nd and 3rd Centuries AD. One to two hundred years later the Church breached the walls of paganism in Britain and Gaul. As you will later see, many of the Germanic nations, the Saxons and Goths in particular, had a staunch adherence to Arian Christian traditions.

Forth-Century historical records relating to the first synodal decrees of Nicaea on the nature of God, described an almost unanimous understanding throughout the four original Holy Sees, that God was made of one Holy Trinity. The controversial non-trinitarian views of Arius were widely condemned at this synod and received the endorsement of only two bishops (one of which was Eusebius, though he later recanted this 'heresy') throughout the episcopal college.

This congenial ecumenical solidarity was shattered in a very short time. The first split of the Church came at the 4th Ecumenical Council at Chalcedon, in the year 451 AD, over the

degree of Christ's humanity, and from the 5th Century, the churches in Armenia, Ethiopia, Egypt and Syria peeled away from the others. These five Churches were cut off by the forces of Islam over the following centuries; contact between the varied Churches becoming almost non-existent.

Never was there a more profound commonality of belief than that which existed between the eastern churches (which prided themselves on not changing anything), and Rome in the West, which was tirelessly innovative. Though the Church was one, a plethora of legitimate individual regional customs often became a source of constant mistrust. So, the forest became obscured by the trees. Even as early as the year 158 AD some particularly divisive issues arose between East and West, such as when Easter was supposed to be celebrated, how baptisms should be carried out, and so forth. Since the eastern churches espoused doctrines and rites inherited from a number of apostles (especially St John), they could not accept Roman rulings that contradicted their inheritance. According to Eusebius although Victor, the bishop of Rome knew that his See's customs where inherited from St's Peter and Paul, he did not consider excommunicating all of the Asian churches over the issue, since they were only observing the customs of the Church fathers in that part of the world.²⁹

So much for what is conventionally known. 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, the druids, and the 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 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.

The eastern situation — That 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 on 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.²⁹

And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born? Parthians, and Medes (ie; Magians), and Elamites (Persians), and the dwellers in Mesopotamia (Chaldeans), and in Judaea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus and Asia. Phyrgia, 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'.²⁹

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 Anatolia⁵ 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 sunworshiping Magian learned from childhood. To them the Gospel proclaimed the arrival of *Snaosha*, 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.³¹ 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 the 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'.³²

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.³¹ 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.³¹ 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'.31

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 there. He also conducted missionary forays into Egypt.

We hear of Christ's similar level of popularity in Phyrgia; a spontaneous eruption of Christianity.³³ 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.³³ 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'.³⁴

Anyway, the apostles absorbed vast multitudes of these 'pagans' in that first hundred years, and the Magi were none too happy about it. 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, a place that was destroyed by Roman troops campaigning against the Persians. 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.

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 Phyrgian Christian city of Orcistus attempted to provoke Roman military intervention in the area because it was being down-trodden by a nearby urban center around the year 324 AD, which is guessed to have been Zoroastrian. Whereas for the same period barely three Middle-Eastern settlements had turned Christian. 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 rumored 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. 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. 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. The situation was much the same in North Africa.

After the persecution of the Aryan Persian Church, the faith fell into disarray. No longer were there books, preachers or meeting places. 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. An early 6th Century AD missionary named Symeon the Mountaineer wandered across the Euphrates. 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. These were Christians bereft of any form of pastoral guidance, with the direct result being a form of Christianity little better than superstition. 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. And there were a lot of them. These monuments were crafted by the descendants of Greeks who colonized the area after Alexander the Great's time, and continued to do so.

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. 40 One can only guess what 'heresies' emerged from the wing of a Parthian Buddhist temple, 40 where it was reported that forlorn Christian believers gathered, far indeed from the spiritual tuition of Rome, Jerusalem, Antioch and Alexandria. 40

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 Suwa*). 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-worshipers) 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).41 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.42

Prester John and the Christian Magi

In the *True History of Wizards and Witches* 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, 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-worshipers, 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 that there are elements of truth behind the so-called myth, mainly because it has been told and retold by so many different races.⁴³

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 and the Balkans.

Reference to Prester John's migration was not just a village whisper in medieval Germany and Slavonia, but contained in letters which were 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.⁴⁴ In this correspondence we discover 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.⁴⁵

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. 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. 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. 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 sympathizers 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. 48 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.⁴⁹

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 supposedly retreated to the northern reaches of Sassania, and established their own princedom.⁴⁹

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 state. Far to the south, in North Africa, General Heraclius began the Byzantine counterattack.

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 reorganized in Constantinople following the emperor's demise.

It may be that Bahram Chobin sympathizers 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 organize a meeting via courier between Prester John and himself.⁵⁰ 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.⁵¹

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. A Jewish scholar named 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. ⁵²

- 1. Firstly after the debacle on the Tigris, Prester John took his people northward from the region of Iraq into areas so cold that the rivers froze over. This is probably a reference to Russia or Silver Bulgaria, around 639 AD.⁵¹
- 2. Secondly Prester John had subjugated a Jewish kingdom in the east, which could have been none other than the Khazarian Jewish Empire. Khazaria converted to Judaism only in the 8th Century AD, and rapidly developed a military power base which enabled 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, which saw the Khazars taken into the bondage of Russian suzerainty, existing only as a satellite state of the pagan Slavs. Though stripped bare of its former prestige, the Russes still permitted the Jewish Khagans to rule over Khazaria. The Jews had thus been reduced to the status of a slave nation under the heathen Slavs.

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 nonaggression treaty.

- 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. 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'.
- 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.⁵⁶

Unusual beasts inhabited his lands. Fauna included Indian, Asiatic and polar species, as well as mythical creatures like griffons (Russian: *griffin*), cyclopses (Russian: *mavpa-tsiklopy*), satyrs (Russian: *chugaister*), centaurs (as shown on the walls and columns of pagan Slavic

temples), giants (Russian: *velikany*), horned men (Vikings?) and phoenixes (Russian: *zhar ptitsi*). Many of these beasts were said to live in pagan Rus', but obviously pagan 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.

- 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.⁵⁷ The spring of the 'water of life' occurs as a theme in Russian mythology also.⁵⁸
- 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). Collectively these ethnic groups were reviled as members of the monster nations, the so-called legions of Gog and Magog. As I showed in the *True History of Wizards and Witches*, Aryan priests akin to the Hindu Brahmin were operating in pagan and indeed medieval Rus', and what is more they had relinquished much of their authority to 'Prester John'.
- 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. 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.
- 8. Prester John had a magical mirror through which he could see everything happening in his vassal states.⁶² The pagan Russian priests possessed books concerning divination and presumably clairvoyance by means of mirrors.⁶³
- 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. This is probably a reference to crystal balls or, as you may have read in the *True History of Wizards and Witches*, 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. 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 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 Christianized magus-king of like wonders. During a second series of western campaigns the numerically superior Mongols were routed from the battlefield by Prester John⁶⁵ 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 cavalrymen 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.

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. 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. 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.

With the disintegration of what was once a vast and quite civilized 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-worshipers 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 defense from outside the Christian sphere. In return for their sworn allegiance to the Muslim authorities, the Khalif 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 East⁶⁸ 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 judaized 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 Wagian Graosha?

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 Immortalizer'. 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 *Snosha* (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). 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 flocked to 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 ecclessia*) to hold their Church services. ⁷⁰ Later, once Christianity gained the endorsement and support of the Roman State, larger congregational buildings could finally materialize. 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. ⁷⁰

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* ⁷¹ (ie, the Sun Christ, or the anointed Sun of God). Clearly the mere fact that it had been built over meant that it might 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.⁷² 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* ⁷³ (whose statue was raised in Old Kiev before the conversion), who was also known as *Khres* (perhaps a corruption of

the Greek Khristos, meaning Christ, but most likely Keresa, 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 centerd 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.[™] 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 Caucuses 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 Christianization, 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. 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. 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. 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.⁷⁷

In the True History of Wizards and Witches 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. 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 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 (who lived 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 Islamicization 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. 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. ⁸⁰ The artisan has him looking every bit like a vanquishing Aryan warrior, menacingly brandishing his axe, sword and spear against his father's enemies. 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'.81

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. Such a Jesus is perceptible in the Russian word *chertogon*, which means 'the baby Jesus', but literally translates as 'the devil chaser'. 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'.⁸⁴

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.⁸⁴

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. **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. **

In the good religion of Ahura Mazda, *Snaosha'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'.

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

'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, fleeter than our horses, swifter than the winds, more rapid than the rain; yea, fleeter 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.' 58

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 Constantine's Vatican Basilica, *Khors* and the saviour *Snaosha*, the mighty solar battlelord, 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'.⁸⁹

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

'Sraosha the mighty, both armed with shielding armor, and a warrior strong of hand, skullcleaver 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'.⁹¹

At Clonfert in Ireland there was a medieval church dedicated to 'The Lord Mighty in Battle', 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. 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.*⁹³ 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;

'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'.93

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.⁹⁴

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'. The same thing transpired in England, though there the word was *dryhten*. 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.

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'. 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' (see the *True History of Wizards and Witches*).

For Scandinavians 'Sunday', the Christian Sabbath, was termed *drottinsdagr*. '6 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.

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

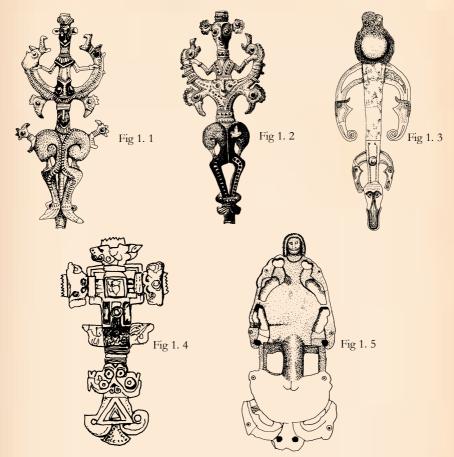
their own personal retinue of warriors, *drott* ('the king's retinue'). Clearly the Germanic and Anglo-Saxon churches were at variance with Roman Catholic practice, promoting textual changes whose true significance was camouflaged by an innocent change of words. Though we can be in no way certain that their choice of words was accidental or foolhardy. The Germanic nations were beginning to slip from Rome's grasp. 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. A mighty wise man of this ancient pre-Christian tradition had, it would seem, accurately foretold the coming of Jesus Christ. Like Murphy, I believe this to be a concealed reference to Zoroaster's stanzas on *Snaosha*. 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.

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. 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 ornament¹⁰⁰ (fig 1.5, 1.3, 1.4), which bear a crude resemblance to effigies found in Magian Luristan, Bronze Age Iran (fig 1.1, 1.2). The Luristan objects (one of which was a chariot ornament) are believed to depict *Snaosha*, the pagan Messiah. ¹⁰¹ 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 *Snaosha*-worship in all four places.



Their faith probably exhibited aspects Christian heliolatry. ¹⁰² 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. ¹⁰³ 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. ¹⁰³ 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. 104

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. ¹⁰⁵ 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. ¹⁰⁵ 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', 105 that is; in the direction of sunrise.

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.

Iranian scripture talks of the Mazda-worshipers being mocked concerning the supposed arrival of their *Snaosha*; 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'. 106

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?' 107

Like *Snaosha*, 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 *Snaosha* 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 <u>The Word of God</u>.

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 <u>angel standing in the sun</u>; 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 <u>supper of the great God</u>; 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 fulfiled: and after that he must be loosed a little season'. 108

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'. 109

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 *Smosha* 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'.¹¹⁰

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.

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'. 111

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. 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) 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.

Pre-eminent in the hearts of Zoroastrians and Christians alike was a glorious Virgin. ¹¹⁶ In both religions she would 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. Detractors of Christianity thought it vital to condemn the virgin birth. Jews saw Mary as a hussey with an illegitimate child. ¹¹³

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.

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 <u>even *Adonai*</u> are conspicuous by their absence in the *New Testament*, replaced by the Aramaic word 'Father', *Abba*. ¹¹⁴ Certainly Jesus never uses *adonai*. 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.

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'). 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'. 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 walvam fires were holy blazes with a millennial pedigree. Yet apparently, in some regions fire may have had an analogous meaning 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. Nestled amongst the ruins of this monastic settlement was the 'Church of Fire', he house or shelter of an eternal flame which continued burning there until it was desecrated by a Scotsman. 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. 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. 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. 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'*. 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. 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'. 121

The trespasser boasted of this misdeed to all and sundry, with unhinged demeanor. 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. ¹²¹ In a further incident, another man unsuccessfully tried to vault the perimeter hedge, but suffered permanent deformity to the limb which violated the boundary. ¹²¹ 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. ¹²² 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. 123 The flame was generated using a flint and steel blessed by a Norse bishop named Rodgeir (Roger?). 123 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. 123 Judging by the number of ecclesiastical condemnations of dice sortilege reformist popes were none too happy about these divining customs.

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.

Despite this, Magian-style fire-worship was not part of apostolic Catholic tradition, at least not in centers 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 that 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). 124 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.¹²⁴ 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. ¹²⁴ A bishop present amid the congregation of politikers interjected saying, 'What is there divine about fire, that it should be worshiped?' 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)'.124 At the mere sight of their bloodied bishop the Christians fell upon the Zoroastrians, killing them outright.124 The saints

The first Christians gathered the remains of their slain brothers and sisters and thereafter held their 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.

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 indispensible 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 the *True History of Wizards and Witches*.

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.

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*. ¹²⁵

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 (fraxashis). 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 fraxashi saints of the Magi, as described in the Book of Bundahishn. Take the riders shown on a panel from Russia's 12th Century AD Mikhailev cathedral (fig 2);¹²⁶ 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 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 defense. 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, they were forced to decamp from the scene. 127 It is highly probable that the Saxons so feared these horsemen because they were viewed as white *fraxushis*, 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 *fraxushi* earnestly fought to defend a Catholic Church that did not formally endorse the ways

of the Magi, or the Christianized 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 ¹²⁸ in Western Europe, most likely showing that many pagans had difficulty distinguishing between the divine heathen saints (fravashis) and the 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 which had been there from ages past.

We hear tell of the pagan-Christian saints even in the 6th Century AD; demonized by the new order.¹²⁹ 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'. 129 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 mesmerized and flocked to him. His devotees amounted to some 3,000 in number.¹²⁹ Having witnessed his amazing feats the masses lavished him with expensive gifts and precious coins, whereafter he beckoned them to worship him.¹²⁹ They did so willingly. Next he set off with his worshipers 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.¹²⁹ This he accomplished 'So fell and died this Christ, more worthy to be called an Antichrist'. 29 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'. 129 But things did not die down. During the same period the Catholic cleric Gregory confesses that;

'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. ¹³⁰

Quasi-pagan imagery¹³¹ 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 center 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 leafed 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.¹³²

Prossing the veil of Seath - 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.

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 Orthodoxy, 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. ¹³¹ 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'.¹³³

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 had to bargain their way through check points of demonic wardens who weighed the soul at each location.¹³⁴ 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 imparter of righteousness, 'the two legs of creation', ¹³⁵ the means by which all creation was to be renewed and cleansed from the pollution and destruction of the anti-God. 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'. 136

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*.

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 *Immortalizer*'. Having partaken of it, 'the *Immortalizer*' 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.'.137

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.¹³⁸

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 horrifying three-day punishment.

Dssuaries

These days burial is the predominant means of disposing of Christian remains, a custom borrowed from Judaism. In fact, one can detect a fixation with the notion of a 'good Christian burial'. What is not widely known nowadays is that there was a second means of funeral rite, sanctioned by the Church in various regions during the Middle Ages, and at the same time viciously attacked by other elements of the clergy. This method entailed the exposure of the corpse, often to carrion birds, seemingly after the manner of the Magi. But Christians were not alone in this. Russian archaeologists have unearthed clay boxes in Central Asia, once used by Zoroastrians as receptacles for the defleshed bones of their kin once they had been unearthed from the *dakhmas* (death houses). Many of these boxes were decorated by personalized imagery. Of considerable interest is the existence of bone boxes etched with Jewish and (presumably Nestorian) Christian insignia and illustrations. ¹³⁹ It would appear that Jews and Christians had adopted local Magian funerary customs whilst living in Central Asia, or had continued to use rites once practiced by their forefathers before their conversion to Christianity or Judaism. In Jerusalem, at the time of Jesus, Jews also used bone boxes and ossuaries. ¹⁴⁰

Excarnation, the defleshing of bones, as opposed to burial in the earth, is perceptible among the Jews before, during and after the life of Christ. It must have been a continuation of an extremely ancient practice known to the Israelites since the 7th Century BC. At Ketef Hinnom one finds stone sepulchers within which the bodies of Jewish kings and nobles

were placed until the flesh had rotted away. Having fully decomposed the skeleton was collected up and stored in a niche or dropped down into a common ossuary for the bones of the elite. There one also found what I would term quasi-magical plaques, inscribed with passages from the *Old Testament*. ¹⁴¹

There was probably a very ancient connection between these same Jewish nobles and the Persian royal houses, which might account for the presence of a similar royal funeral custom in both regions. Despite fundamental differences between Magian and Jewish perceptions about the nature of God, the very building of the temple at Jerusalem took place by order of Persia's three greatest kings, Cyrus, Darius and Artaxerxes, after the deliverance of the Jewish nation from Babylonian captivity. This interaction may have carried far into the future. 142

In my opinion, a bone box now housed in a Canadian museum may prove to be one of the most controversial relics of the primitive Christian age. It sports an Aramaic inscription stating it held the remains of James, brother of Jesus, the son of Joseph. As it stands the empty box is presently believed to have contained the skeleton of St James. What is especially curious is that it was not written in Hebrew, but Aramaic, the language Jesus himself spoke on a daily basis, a lingua franca from the Mesopotamian and Iranian region. It seems that Jesus and his family had an aversion to the use of Hebrew characters, such as those found at Ketef Hinnom. Having said that, the object has met with misfortune. Firstly it was smashed, and now some are claiming the inscription's a fake, mostly because it was procured on the black market, or due to concerns about the nature of the ancient patina found within the chiselled indentations.

Nothing is more certain in life than death. That sombre Neanderthals and Cro-Magnons interred the bodies of fallen kinfolk covered in ochre and flower petals, illustrates that living beings have ever wondered where their kin depart to when they die. One minute they were alive, the next minute gasping for air, the next lifeless. They may previously have been exuberant, heroic or industrious, but with death came motionlessness. Never again would the bright light of life flicker in their fast glazing eyes, never a rosy hue in their pallid cheeks. So how do we say our good-byes? How do we respectfully see them off, and mourn their loss? How do we dispose of their inert remains? Methods for sending our dead into the after life are as much a manifestation of religious ideology, as they are a matter of personal or family preference.

The later Aryan Iranians, for example, practiced cremation, which leaves behind few, if any, archeological remains. In antiquity other funerary customs created monuments to the dead varying from clay urns to constructions as magnificent as pyramids. You will now be provided with information about the unusual funeral rites of the Magi, as an aid to understanding certain Christian and Jewish rites for the dead.

Wagian exearnation traditions

And so death came upon the holy, in the form of the blighted death-demon Nasus;

Zarathustra asked Ahura Mazda: 'O Ahura Mazda, most beneficent Spirit, Maker of the material world, thou Holy One!

When a man dies, at what moment does the Drug Nasus rush upon him?

Ahura Mazda answered: 'Directly after death, as soon as the soul has left the body, O

Spitama Zarathustra! the Drug Nasu comes and rushes upon him, from the regions of the north, in the shape of a raging fly, with knees and tail sticking out, all stained with stains and like unto the foulest Khafstras (Khrafstras were evil creatures made by the devil)'

On him she stays until the dog has seen the corpse or eaten it up, or until the flesh-eating birds have taken flight towards it. When the dog has seen it or eaten it up, or when the flesh-eating birds have taken flight towards it, then the Drug Nasus rushes away to the regions of the north in the shape of a raging fly, with knees and tail sticking out, all stained with stains, and like unto the foulest Khafstras'.

O Maker of the material world, thou Holy One! If a man has been killed by a dog, or by a wolf, or by witchcraft, or by the artifices of hatred, or by falling down a precipice, or by the law, or by a murderer, or by the noose, how long after death does the Drug Nasus come and rush upon the dead?

Ahura Mazda answered: 'At the next watch after death, the Drug Nasus comes and rushes upon the dead, from the regions of the north...' 143

With such a frightening nemesis at work, special care was required when handling and disposing of a corpse. The treatment of the mortal remains of 'white' and 'black' Magian families differed. The manner in which the bodies of the unholy were treated was of little consequence to the white Magi. Their demise was regarded as a dearest blessing on the world.

'O Maker of the material world, thou Holy One! If the dead one be a wicked, two-footed ruffian, an ungodly Ashemaogha (heretic), how many of the creatures of the good spirit does he directly defile, how many does he indirectly defile in dying?

Ahura Mazda answered: 'No more than a frog does whose venom is dried up, and that has been dead more than a year. Whilst alive indeed, O Spitama Zarathustra! that wicked, two-legged ruffian, that ungodly Ashemaogha, directly defiles the creatures of the good spirit, and indirectly defiles them.'

Whilst alive he smites the water; whilst alive he blows out the fire; whilst alive he carries off the cow; whilst alive he smites the faithful man with a deadly blow, that parts the soul from the body; not so will he do when dead.

Whilst alive, indeed O Spitama Zarathustra! that wicked, two-legged ruffian, that ungodly Ashemaogha, never ceases depriving the faithful man of his food, of his clothing, of his house, of his bed, of his vessels: not so will he do when dead'. 45

The Magi decreed that it was unholy to dress the corpses of the faithful;

Whosoever throws any clothing on a dead body, even so much as a maid lets fall in spinning, is not a pious man whilst alive, nor shall he, when dead, have a place in the happy realm. He shall go away into the world of the fiends, into that dark world, made of darkness, the offspring of darkness. To that world, to the dismal realm, you are delivered by your own doings, by your own souls, O sinners!' 144

From the customs of the modern Parsees, exiled Zoroastrians now living in India, we can infer that it was later deemed permissible to dress the dead in their oldest clothing (which had been cleaned), but under no circumstances was good clothing to be used. ¹⁴⁵ The rationale for this custom is contained in *Vendidad*; for every thread used to weave a lavish corpse garment became transformed into a black serpent whilst lying buried in the underworld, or fed the appaling worms and parasites infesting the house of evil. ¹⁴⁵ Once whomever dressed the corpse in such a manner passed away and descended into the underworld, they were set upon not only by these snakes, but the deceased who they had unlawfully dressed in fine clothing. ¹⁴⁵ This soul tugged away at the hem of their sacred skirt (or shirt), castigating the new inmate for causing them to be consumed, as the clothing mutated into a suffocating blanket of ravenous pests. ¹⁴⁵

Only four days later, after the deceased's soul had arisen from the death ground and entered the celestial realms, would the relatives offer up more sumptuous clothing, which the dead would wear in the next world.

Magian doctrine demanded that the 'white' dead be laid down under a roofed place specially set aside, preferably in an *astodan* (a tower of the dead), where the holy dogs or buzzards lived, who scavenged and devoured the flesh of the body. So a day after a person passed away, their demon-defiled body was removed by *two or more* corpse bearers, never one, and taken to a place where the body was to be defleshed. The corpse-bearers were individuals given the unhappy task of handling anything dead, an act which defiled their physical and spiritual purity and required extensive purification rituals. They removed corpses from the place where they met their end, at home, in the field, or even where they fell in battle, and they cared for the remains until the completion of the funerary rites.

'then men shall properly convey the bones away to the bone-receptacle (astodano) which one is to elevate so from the ground, and over which a roof so stands, that in no way does the rain fall upon the dead matter, nor the water reach up to it therein, nor the damp make up to it therein, nor are the dog and fox able to go to it, and for the sake of light coming to it a hole is made therein.'146

The last segment of this scripture speaks of an opening, traditionally left in the eastern parts of the structure. It was through this aperture that light entered, liberally bathing the remains of the individual, especially around sunrise. As soul and body separated, subsequent to dissolution, the spirit of the deceased walked out through this gateway, towards reunification with the light of the sun.

Burning cadavers amounted to the execrable defilement of the holy fire, and burying them in dirt lay under similar anathemas. For in doing so, the death demon was planted in the bosom of holy earth. Therefore excarnation remained the most popular option for removing the dead from the world of the living,

'O Maker of the material world, thou Holy One! Whither shall we bring, here shall we lay the bodies of the dead, O Ahura Mazda?

Ahura Mazda answered: 'On the Highest summits, where they know there are always corpse-eating dogs and corpse-eating birds, O Holy Zarathustra!'

There shall the worshipers of Mazda fasten the corpse, by the feet and by the hair, with brass, stones, or lead, lest the corpse-eating dogs and the corpse-eating birds shall go and carry the bones to the water and to the trees.....

Ahura Mazda answered: The worshipers of Mazda shall erect a building out of the reach of the dog, of the fox, and of the wolf, and wherein rain-water cannot stay. Such a building shall they erect, if they can afford it, with stones, mortar, and earth; if they cannot afford it, they shall lay down the dead man on the ground, on his carpet and his pillow, clothed with the light of heaven, and beholding the sun'. ¹⁴⁷

'then the worshipers of Mazda shall lay down the dead (on the Dakhma) <u>his eyes towards</u> the sun'.¹⁴⁸

In cities or towns, excarnation was normally carried out in more formal surroundings, such as an *astodan* or *dakhma*, a large 'tower of silence' made of three concentric rooms, radiating out from a high, often round roofless central tower made of sun-dried bricks. In the outer ring rested the bodies of men, in the second women and in the third children. Periodically the bones of the deceased, once picked clean, were gathered up and piled in a

pit full of bones within the tower, or removed for cremation, storage or burial elsewhere. Bones flung into the well rotted away into nothingness.

'Medok-mah says that there should be a shelter (var) one should fasten above that place (an open grave plot), and it would make it dry below; one should place the corpse under that shelter, and they may take the shelter and bring it away'. 149

'For it is declared in the good religion that, when they conceal (ie; cover with dirt) a corpse beneath the ground, Spendarmad, the archangel, shudders; it is just as severe as a serpent or scorpion would be to any one in private sleep, and also just like that to the ground. When thou makest a corpse beneath the ground as it were apparent (so as to be visible), thou makest the ground liberated from that affliction'. ¹⁵⁰

Both of these excerpts from Magian scripture show the acceptability of placing a white Magian corpse in an open grave, whereas the full burial of the corpse (ie; filling the plot with soil) was regarded as very evil. According to this method, the open grave was covered by a temporary roofed shelter, which could later be removed if need be.

Since Magian scripture states that the type of *dakhma* used by individuals was relative to their financial means, most people were content with make-shift death houses rather than the more ostentatious stone variants. In small Magian settlements, the dead were often kept in a cabin of normal design (Zoroastrian: a *Zad-marg*; 'a death house').

Certainly they would have been cheaper than erecting something as lavish as the royal mausoleum of Koj-Krylgan-Kala in Khorezm which was built in 200-400 BC, a 42 metre diameter crenellated circular keep surrounded by an outer protective wall, complete with sentry towers, and a moat.¹⁵¹

There were no signs of human habitation within the keep, indicating that it was truly a fortress of the dead, and as is believed, a former cult center for the worship of kings long dead. ¹⁵¹ Only the protected open area sandwiched between the keep and the outer wall showed evidence that a small number of people lived there, and it has been suggested that this was a living area for the priests (Magi) and corpse-bearers who administered the site. ¹⁵¹

One might think that these kings would have been ready for just about anything once they arose from their graves to fight the demon-spawn during the apocalyptic final battle for heaven, together with archangel *Verethraghna* (the blow of victory). The roof of the tower was probably used as a death ground, upon which corpses were placed to be picked clean by vultures that perched in the battlements hemming the area. The presence of ash deposits has been interpreted by Russian archaeologists as signifying that a pyre was lit somewhere atop the keep, where the dead lay, or alternatively were the remains of the fire which eventually destroyed the place. If the fires did have a funerary application, then they were either used to sanctify the area by killing off the demons who loved to congregate in the

death grounds, or used to cremate the defleshed skeletal remains resulting from the excarnation process, or even used to cremate the corpses in their entirety, although this is extremely doubtful, considering Magian prohibitions.

Incidentally, artistic renditions of this adobe castle-mausoleum (based on archeological data) have it looking every bit like a medieval European stone castle complete with a circular tower,¹⁵¹ a variety of fortification that began to appear in Europe only during the Middle Ages. Yet it pre-dates the methods used by the medieval European castle architects and engineers by some one thousand years! Were the castle engineering methods that arose in the Middle Ages the product of independent invention, or were they transported there by eastern immigrants, men knowledgeable in stonecraft and ingenious engineering techniques? The question is difficult to answer. To do so requires an in depth comparative study which compares Central Asian castle construction methods, with those of the Middle Ages, in both Eastern and Western Europe. Unfortunately I do not have access to such information, if it does exist.

Subsequent excavations at Samarkand, Khorezm and similar heavily Magianized places in Central Asia, reveals that Magians frequently interred their dead in family vaults, stone lined cysts and sarcophagi. Mausoleum practices of this kind are not specifically mentioned in the Avestan and Pahlavi texts, though conceptually lawful when one considers the Magian clauses speaking of stone as a barrier to the seepage of death juices into the holy earth.

If it was winter, when heavy rain and snow was falling, and the carrion birds had flown south to escape the bitter cold, then the corpse was to be placed in a hole of a given depth, and the temporary grave roofed over and covered by ash, cow dung, bricks, stones and dry earth. After a month, or the melting of the snows, the body was to be removed and treated in the usual manner.¹⁵³ The Magi prescribed that a corpse should be weighed down with wood or heavy objects where the deceased had passed away during the winter. During this and other emergencies an alternative death rite could be performed. If birds and dogs had not put the death-demon to flight, then wood was scattered all around the corpse where it lay, and sprinkled with water.¹⁵⁴ After the lapse of one year in this state, the corpse no longer carried corruption and could be safely handled.¹⁵⁴ In older times the dead were interred in a plot for a spring and a summer, with sacred ash, dust dirt, bricks and clay piled on top of it for good measure. It was later removed by the corpse bearers and placed on a raised platform so that what was left on the bones could be eaten, or in some other similar manner, but within a *dakluma*.

Additional rites of purification and protection were performed to guard their mortal remains from the ghoulish demons that bickered over the bodies of the fallen. So to stave off the fell beings, a holy fire was sometimes lit close to the central bone collection pit.

When Magian family members wished to pray for their dead relatives they stood before the eastern opening of a *daklima*. It is a long-held custom still practiced among the Parsees of India.

Sooner or later the smell of an old death ground became unbearable. All that remained was to tidy them up, and cover them with a mound of earth.

'O maker of the material world, thou Holy One! How long after the corpse of a dead man has been laid down on a Dakhma, is the ground, wheron the Dakhma stands, itself again? Ahura Mazda answered: 'Not while the dust of the corpse, O Spitama Zarathustra! has mingled with the dust of the earth.

Urge every one in the material world, O Spitama Zarathustra! to pull down Dakhmas.'
He who should pull down Dakhmas, even so much thereof as the size of his own body, his sins in thought, word, and deed are remitted as they would be by a Patet (the rite of confession), his sins in thought, word, and deed are atoned for.

Not for his soul shall the two spirits wage war with one another; and when he enters the blissful world, the stars, the moon, and the sun shall rejoice in him; and I, Ahura Mazda, shall rejoice in him, saying: 'Hail, O man! thou who has just passed from the decaying world into the undecaying one!'.

'O maker of the material world, thou Holy One! Where are the fiends? Where are the worshipers of the fiends? What is the place whereon the troops of fiends rush together? What is the place whereon the troops of fiends come rushing along? What is the place whereon they rush together to kill their fifties and their hundreds, their hundreds and their thousands, their thousands and their tens of thousands, their tens of thousands and their myriads of myriads? Ahura Mazda answered: 'Those Dakhmas that are built upon the face of the earth, O Spitama Zarathustra! and whereon are laid the corpses of dead men, that is the place whereon the fiends are, that is the place wheron the troops of fiends rush together, that is the place whereon they rush together to kill fifties and their hundreds, their hundreds and their thousands, their thousands and their tens of thousands, their tens of thousands and their myriads of myriads'

On those Dakhmas, O Spitama Zarathustra!! those fiends (demonic flies and maggots) take food and void filth, eating up corpses in the same way as you, men, in the material world, eat cooked meat. It is, as it were, the smell of their feeding that you smell there, O men! Thus the fiends revel on there, until that stench is rooted in the Dakhmas. Thus from the Dakhmas arise the infection of diseases, itch, hot fever, humors, cold fever, rickets, and hair untimely white. There death has most power on man, from the hour when the sun is down'. ¹⁵⁴

According to Magian lore, bodies were placed in the *astodan* until the pit reached the point of being full, whereupon the site was back-filled with soil, and a new one built at another location. The bones either remained *in situ* within the *dakhma* beneath the wooden structure, or were collected up by one's kin and taken to a family burial plot. As the bodies fell apart, their vile juices ran down furrows into a central holding pit, where many bones could be found. Sometimes bones were placed into the central pit with other skeletal remains, and there disintegrated into nothingness. Ideally the deconstruction of a *dakhma* entailed removing the wooden shelter, though this might not have been done in most cases, except by the most pious. Whatever the case, *dakhmas*, whether temporary or of sturdier construction, were normally covered with dirt. This procedure left only a mound, sometimes covering post holes and a pit, sometimes covering an intact wooden structure. A deconstructed *astodan* therefore left fairly unobtrusive clues for archaeologists.

European Defleshing practices

De-fleshing was inevitably practiced in Rus' even though archeological evidence of it is not often or easily recognized, especially since some archaeologists have never even heard of excarnation. Understandably they would be hard pressed to observe the tell-tale signs of uncremated excarnated remains when they are encountered; missing body parts, disturbed skeletal orientations, the alignment of the skull, weathering, a lack of soil discoloration where bones are presumed to have rotted away, evidence of the actions of maggots, and decapitation. And even where excarnated remains are found, one cannot infer that they were the product of a Magian or Buddhist funerary rite unless they were found in the context of an excavated pit or burial mound.

Nevertheless heathen corpses were exposed in pagan Russia. A 10th Century incursion of the nomadic Pecheneg nations into Russia brought with it Orthodox Zoroastrians, folk given to excarnation funerary rites rather than burials and cremations, the latter being impermissible under Magian law. Yet even before the arrival of these Orthodox Zoroastrians, the Volkhvy and Bulgar priests, being Magi, must have been de-fleshed in accordance with ancient Medean law. No other method was sanctioned for the disposal of Magian corpses. As you are about to see, there seems to be archeological and linguistic evidence for Magian funerary rites in Russia.

Pre-Sassanian Magian and Persian funeral customs were fairly relaxed when compared with Zoroastrian Orthodox standards. Cremation was not yet punishable by death, and perhaps even the norm in a number of regions.^{154b} If the bulk of the Rus' Magian presence was formed by Zurvanite exiles of the 3rd-Century Zoroastrian reformation, then it is likely that burials and cremations were practiced by most people, while only zealots and Magi strictly adhered to the de-fleshing procedures contained in the Magian canon. Since the

Scythians were quite likely Magian, and yet freely buried their dead (embalmed in wax), we might think that burial was permissible where it came from a Scythian Magian source.

Excarnation rites are found a little further afield, in the wilds of southern Siberia and Central Asia. They required the dead to be placed on funerary biers mounted in trees, and the dangling of corpses from branches for up to a year, often encapsulated in a bag of oxhide, ¹⁵⁵ perhaps to limit the spillage of death-riddled body fluids, which could pollute the soil terribly. Out in the Taiga of northern Siberia and Russia tales of bodies being exposed to both the elements and beasts by placing them in trees (hanging or laid flat on stands wedged into the boughs) have persisted until only a couple of hundred years ago. ¹⁵⁶ In this part of the world excarnation is normally associated with the beliefs of the presumably Buddhist shamans, ¹⁵⁶ but as previously discussed in the *True History of Wizards and Witches*, shamanism had itself formed a symbiotic relationship with Magianism in some areas, especially in the Siberian and Ural regions.

Russes, Prussians and Balts are known to have placed bodies under a roof, to lay in state for an extended period. After having been exposed for as long as two years, whatever was left of the remains was cremated. To Cremators were fined large sums of money relative to the size of whatever charred bones were not fully consumed by the fire, and reduced to ash. So they were required to be diligent in their incineration of skeletal remains, and as a result this method of ultimate disposal leaves no archeological trace of exposition whatsoever. Nevertheless archeological evidence for intentional defleshing has been found in the Baltic, dating as far back as the Bronze Age, as are accounts of excarnated bones being burned after the corpse was exposed for a prolonged period. In fact some Baltic burial sites crudely resemble the circular, many-ringed dakhmas of Central Asia.

Death is the great leveller. All mankind, whether great or small, must face it. Death grounds were a relentless source of defilement. So in large cities it was deemed more hygienic and safe for the living, to build communal death repositories away from settlements, so limiting their unholy contamination.

To what extent death houses (astodans or dakhmas) were ever commonplace in pagan Rus' remains unknown, but the Ukrainian word dakh ('a roof'), is perhaps a relic of these structures. The same with the Old-High-German dah ('a roof'). [18]

Very often ancient Russian cemeteries consisted of mounds; mounds that may well be the remnants of disused *dakmas* and *astodans*. The mounds themselves are regarded as belonging to the Eurasian kurgan culture.¹⁵⁹ They are found spread from Germany to Scandinavia, throughout Russia and the Caucuses and right through to Central Asia. The practice is of considerable antiquity, going back as far as the Bronze Age.¹⁵⁹ Different variants of the kurgan are known, each of which has inherited its own archeological classification. The prevailing type consists of a wooden shelter built above an open square plot, dug deep

into the earth. The excavated pit beneath these rooves was often lined with stone flagging. 159

Kurgans were most likely of Magian provenance. One can infer this not only because they match the physical description of temporary Magian death houses, but because of a Russian linguistic survival; mogila. Mogila (which means 'a hill' or 'a grave', and in particular 'a burial mound') is connected with mozila (Bulgarian, Polish), mozyla (Old Russian, Serbian), and mohyla (Czech), which carry the same meanings. 160 Magura (Rumanian for 'a hill') is linked with this linguistic strain.¹¹⁴ The linguist M. Vasmer remained non-committal about its etymology, but claimed that mogila is not derived from magu-ula (Middle Iranian meaning 'a magus hill' or 'a magus barrow'). 160 Considering the amount of Magian indicators in Rus', I have serious doubts about his purely linguistic assessment. The only interpretation that Vasmer does not outright reject is 'a place of rule', 160 but I do not find that this interpretation need invalidate a magu-ula genesis for the word, and may even add extra impetus for such a connection bearing in mind that the Magi were about as elite as you could get in pagan society, the equivalent of princes and kings. The faithful converged on their burial site annually, praying for their souls and the souls of others. The fravashis of especially powerful kings might also have been consulted, living and ruling from beyond the grave, from within the grave.

Another Russian word for 'a burial mound' is *kurgan* (the word from which the archeological classification was derived). It appears to have been used from at least 1224 AD onwards, and is traceable back to various Turkic Central Asian words denoting strength. Another possibility is that it came from the Persian word *gurgane* (*gur*: grave - *gane*: home), though Vasmer disputes this connection. Theoretically the last option is perfectly in accordance with the archeological evidence, mound-covered buildings that typified the Magian conception of a home inside the grave, where the dead slept, waiting patiently in excitement and joy for the time when they would re-emerge to do battle with the devil and his army, then, after the universal destruction, re-populate the face of the earth.

As previously mentioned less well-to-do country Magians deposited their dead in *zad-marg* death cabins. The Celts and Russians also had death-cabins, which could be interpreted as *zad-marg*. In Russia, such buildings were called *domovishche*, ¹⁶² which denoted 'a grave', or even 'a log-construction house built over the grave site'. But as a general rule the term *domovishche* more properly meant 'a house that was stood or propped up'. Based on these meanings a *domovishche* might resemble a *zad-marg* in form and purpose, or a temporary roofed structure erected to protect an open grave plot from the elements. Certainly the *Chernaya Mogila* royal death-house near Chernigov could be deemed a *zad-marg*. *Dom* (the Old Russian for 'a home') was the root from which *domovishche* was formed. It is traceable partly to the Old Indian *damas*, but more specifically to the Avestan *dam* all of which mean 'a house'. ¹⁶³ The Latin *domus* and the Greek *domos* no doubt originated from the

Old Indian rather than the Avestan (which gave rise to the Russian). Perhaps Russian domovishche had an Iranian provenance after all.

Perhaps in emulation of the Magian death houses and temporarily roofed plots, many Russians planted a roofed cross at the grave-sites of their beloved in the post-conversion era. Originally the roof was affixed to a vertical post or board, but during the Christian era a variant of this style arose, with a crosspiece being added to the roofed posts, thus creating a roofed cross (fig 3.1). The small surface area of these rooves was incapable of sheltering a grave, so it is more likely that they were symbolic of the old ways, of the superstitious Magian admonition to place a roof over a grave. Their bets were covered both ways.

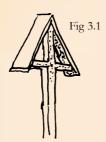




Fig 3.2

In a rite similar to those practiced by the Magi, the pagan Russians lit fires (holy fires) on top of the grave mounds and pits, a social norm which served as a means of protection. ¹⁶⁴ It succored the soul of the deceased and watched over the site as a vigilant sentinel. ¹⁶⁴ Such observances remind me of a Russian war cemetery I once visited, where the people gathering about the *vechnaya plamya* (Russian: the eternal flame; literally means *centuries-old flame*) with bunches of beautiful red flowers, especially roses. The custom may have existed since pagan times.

Whether the wood used to kindle these fires was the remains of temporary roofing built over the grave pit to briefly house the body of the deceased, or piles of well-stacked timber, or a combination of both, I cannot say. Certainly in Ibn Fadhlan's account of the Rus' openair cremation ceremony, the roofed pavilion was located separately from the pyre. 165

As with the affluent Magi of Central Asia, rich heathen Russes might have had a sturdy metal defleshing platform constructed, consisting of a metal basket mounted on a long pole. The mortal remains were placed in the basket, then the pole was impaled into the ground. The weight of the platform was supported by a stylized foot. Such a device was fairly rare, but a Soghdian sales voucher has been located, revealing the sale of such a contraption. They would, in all likelihood, resemble the excarnation platforms portrayed in Breughel's 1562AD painting, the Triumph of Death (fig 3.2). Until this point in time no such contraption has been found in Russia. Breughel's painting does however point to the existence of highly

specialized Central Asian defleshing platforms in greater Europe even as late as the 16th Century AD. This is suggestive of Magian or Buddhist excarnation rites in a European context.

The raven and the dog were two beasts mightily connected with the excarnation rites of the Magi; they who stripped meat from the bones of the dead, thereby purifying the deceased from the grip of death. In Russia the word for 'a dog' (more specifically 'a bitch') sobaka, seems to be derived from the Medean word for 'a dog' spaka. By inference the mere usage of a Magian term for a dog might, when read in conjunction with a variety of other data, suggest that Russian dogs had some hand in excarnation. In Old Norse tradition the raven played the same role as it did in nature and in Magian tradition (carrion eater), but the dog's pride of place was ceded to the wolf. Wolves were 'Odin's dogs', who scampered about the scene of a battle, devouring the slain amid flocks of jumpy feeding ravens. ¹⁶⁶

One Norse epithet for any warrior (not just an enemy) was 'the man who reddens the wolf's teeth' and 'dispels his hunger'. 166 In the same way fallen combatants were 'the reddener of Huginn's (one of Odin's raven's) claws' or 'his bill'. 166 Battle was therefore a kind of feast, to which ravens and wolves were invited by the lure of war's aftermath. War was 'Huginn's feast', and the blood of the dead, 'raven's drink'. 166 In the New Testament's Book of Revelation such scenery is portrayed, wherein it is described as the 'feast of the Great God'.

From the Norse kennings we might guess that the vikings did not immediately bury or cremate the bodies of men killed in action. Instead they left them where they fell so that the ravens could have their fill. So were these kennings just a way to poetically describe a warrior, or were they prompted in the first instance by a religious or cultural practice, namely the exposure of the slain to scavengers (as the kennings suggest)? Evidence points to the latter.

Leaving their bodies in the open air could not have meant that Norse battle casualties were callously abandoned to the elements, bereft of a proper funeral rite. After all, by their deaths in battle their bodies had been dedicated to Odin. ¹⁶⁷ By offering up their lives as a sacrifice, and succumbing to their wounds, they had entered the hall of glory, they had lived and died by the sword, they had entered the illustrious company of Odin, where feasting and everlasting combat was the order of the day. Allowing their remains to be stripped clean by ravens could not have been disrespectful for heroes such as these; it must have meant giving them a good send off. The stalwart pagan Hakon is gloriously remembered by Thorleif for feeding the corpses of enemy princes to the ravens. ¹⁶⁸ Whether he was treating his vanquished royal foes pitilessly, or farewelling them with the dignity due all good warrior-princes destined for Valhalla, is only provable where we know how the other victims of the same battle were treated.

In the Oseburg burial, archaeologists chanced upon a tapestry, crafted by pagan hands. It depicted diverse scenes, including a series of bodies hanging from trees. Alas there are no

captions to describe exactly what these hangings signified, but there seems little doubt that scenes such as these were known to people of their day. Even more importantly, the tapestry lends credence to the reports of Christians and Muslims alike concerning hangings in the North, whether it be in Scandinavia or Russia. The dangling bodies on the Oseburg tapestry might represent;

- 1. Agni Purana prescribed the execution of criminals by means of a black religious rite; hanging I believe. In a Magian context, hanging a criminal and leaving their body to rot in the open air would not have defiled the soil at the base of the wolf-tree. Exuding corpse juices and the shattered remains of 'black' corpses (ie; the bodies of condemned and executed criminals) are unable to cause defilement since the demon of corruption had already taken flight from the world with their death.
- 2. Religious sacrifices At Uppsala, the pagans made hanging sacrifices, of animals and men. The tapestry might therefore portray a sacrificial scene.

Of further significance is a fairly ancient Norse kenning (poetic saying) which speaks of the war dead as being food for the vultures. Why? Vultures don't live in Scandinavia! In fact the closest vultures to Scandinavia are in India, Central Asia and Siberia, often charged with consuming bodies during Buddhist and Magian excarnation rituals.

In England, the Saxons are known to have buried or cremated their kinsfolk. He heathen Anglo-Saxons set aside specific areas for this purpose. With very few exceptions, Anglo-Saxon graves were aligned in two different ways. As with pagan Slavic, Bulgar and Finnish graves and mausoleums, the earliest and most numerous grave-form has the corpse laid out along an east-west axis, with its eyes pointing to the east, into the rising sun. He other form of grave is aligned North to South, with the eyes glaring northward. He orth-south graves, are, as a rule, female graves, or youngsters. He closest parallel to this can be found among the Magi. The white Magi considered an east-west alignment of the skull to be holy, whereas a north-south alignment was seen as taboo, in short diabolical, for their eyes looked toward the north and beheld there the fiends. A sizeable proportion of the skeletons unearthed there were decapitated, which, owing to the sheer prevalence of the practice, has been interpreted as a sign of ritual homicide, or legal executions. While these interpretations are most likely correct, some of them could have been penitential decapitations (as practiced by the Magi), which granted unatoned mortal sinners the right to cross over the Kinvat Bridge.

Most are simple inhumations.¹⁷⁰ The fact that they are rarely accompanied by grave goods indicates the body may have been placed in the grave naked, though it is impossible to say whether perishable items were interred with them. If these burial rites were in any way related to the practices of the Magi, then the average person, being poor and unable to

finance the building of a death house, would simply be lowered into the grave onto a carpet, laid out under the heavens, clothed only in the light of the sun. Archeological reports have concluded that temporary structures were often erected over pagan Anglo-Saxon grave sites (fig 4.7), and that some graves were lidded by a trapdoor which could be opened and closed as required. This data clearly supports the use of re-usable graves and grave shelters among the Anglo-Saxons, and the religious theory behind their adoption of the practice is identical to yet another form of funerary method practiced by the Magi. An excellent parallel for these graves might be the Bulgar stepped or lidded grave pits and sepulchers.

Some excavated Anglo-Saxon graves dating to pagan times were devoid of skeletal material, and perhaps the buried remains unearthed by archaeologists were only the last generation of people to had been put inside the re-usable grave plots of their families. In support of this theory, some graves contained no remains whatsoever, which is what one would expect to see if the family grave was vacant at the time the Church ordered them to desist from 'heathenism'. At the time of the conversion, these graves would have been permanently filled in, and all the racking torn down by the Church authorities. The so-called 'Final-phase' burials are difficult to distinguish between Christian and pagan graves, for they occurred at a time when paganism and Christianity overlapped. ¹⁷⁰ Archeological data on the Anglo-Saxon graves shows that there was not a great deal of difference between the pagan graves and the Christian ones, and this continued to be the case for some time after the supposed conversion of these pagans.¹⁷⁰ The only visible difference is that other small cemeteries appear to have been founded, separate from the larger cemeteries of the pagan period. 170 These small cemeteries might be attributable to Christians who had peeled away from the majority of the population, who still practiced a close blend of pagan and Christian practice. Arnold's book does not contain dates for the phasing out of above ground grave structures. Establishing a date after which they fell into disuse is exceedingly vital, because it would coincide with the Magi's loss of control, which then passed over to apostolic Anglo-Saxon Christian clergy. Bearing in mind the prevalence of simony among the English clerics, it may well be that the grave shelters were still being sanctioned well into the Christian era.

The mere fact that these graves were readily accessible¹⁷⁰ means that excarnation practices are a distinct possibility at these Anglo-Saxon cemeteries, but Arnold provides no information about whether the remains found there were complete assemblages, or undisturbed. So confirming exposition practices would be premature on my part without this information. So the question remains, were they simply re-usable burial plots, which often had temporary roofs erected over them, or were they excarnation pits with precisely the same configuration? Determining whether these graves were being re-used from generation to generation might be ascertained by examining the number of grave plots relative to the expected population density. If the ratio of grave-pits to presumed population

size is small, then it enhances the possibility that the graves were being repeatedly used, as the archeological data suggests. My own personal opinion is that the defleshed skeletal remains were then removed from the plot and placed on the racking above, leaving the plot vacant until the next family member died. The bones might have been taken and stored elsewhere also.

More importantly, if the Anglo-Saxon grave-pits were Magian, then the northerly-facing and easterly-facing graves indicate we are dealing with Zurvanites rather than Orthodox Zoroastrians, for they show that white and black families lived side by side, freely intermingling. This of course was an anathema to Orthodox Zoroastrians, who refused to entertain the presence of evil-doers in their community. Therefore the Anglo-Saxons, like the pagan Slavs would have been the inheritors of traditions first imported into Europe with the descendants of the Zurvanite Magi banished from Central Asia between 200 and 400 AD.

A number of square wooden structures were erected inside some of the heathen Anglo-Saxon cemeteries, which followed the design of Magian shrines (ie; four corner posts walled with lattices of interwoven wood). This archeological data might support historical accounts of the countless heathen Saxon shrines. Since many of them contained a deep circular hole in the middle we might conclude that they were post holes, but alternatively they might have been used to contain disarticulated skeletal remains, or had an idol rooted in them. Therefore many of these structures could have been idol shrines.

The most common view among archaeologists is they were death houses that permitted the ongoing performance of ancestor veneration or worship. If connected with the customs of the Magi, then these more elaborate structures indeed represented places where one came to pay respect to one's kinfolk on the anniversary of their deaths, when the souls of the deceased came back to visit the world each year. Underground boxes were also found in these cemeteries, similar to those seen in pagan Russia and continental Europe. In England it appears they could be opened and closed. Where the Anglo-Saxons raised burial mounds, they were generally constructed on high ground, more than 100 meters above sea level, a practice preferred by the Magi also. 173

In a surviving historical document specifically relating to witches the *Capitulatio de partibus Saxoniae* prescribed beheading for those who 'give his or her (a male or female witch's) flesh to be eaten'. ¹⁷⁴ Here, I believe, the excarnation of Magian priests and priestesses is the intended meaning, though this legal provision mentions the same penalty for those who consume the flesh of witches, or witches who eat human flesh. This other aspect of the law may have served to eliminate demonism and the Dionysian rites of *omophagia*, frequently present throughout regions of ancient Scythia and Parthia, and transported into Europe with immigrants.

Lastly, compare the artistic reconstruction of a Magian excarnation in progress (fig 4.2), with one of the cloisonne enamel representations (fig 4.3) that was affixed to a purse found in the royal Anglo-Saxon Sutton Hoo ship grave. On face value the purse of Raedwald, a 7th Century East Anglian monarch, seems to depict two dogs eating the corpse of a man, perhaps a royal. That the bodiless death ship also contained a wand, cauldrons, drinking horns, lavish jewellry and so on, 175 probably means that Raedwald had an impressive sacral role to play in society, perhaps that of high priest. Equally intriguing is the Medo-Scythian style (an Aryan art form that originated in the Scythian and Medean regions) used by the pagan goldsmith or jeweller who crafted the East Anglian ornaments (figs 4.3 and 4.4). An example of Medo-Scythian art is shown in fig 4.5. It depicts a hare, and was probably made by a Magian Iranian craftsman during the 6th Century BC. In another interesting twist, spoons engraved with the names of St Peter and St Paul were found at this same site; 176 such an unlikely mix of heathen and Christian ritual equipment. A likely explanation is found in a variety of early medieval Church writings, particularly in the Malleus Maleficarum, the law book used to try and sentence witches. The latter text explained that some (but not all) witches and wizards were Christian 'heretics'. Sutton Hoo appears to point us in this direction.

Primary Chronicle accounts relating to the handling of Christian Russian princely corpses, reveal echoes of Zoroastrian/Magian funeral practices, and very close to the royal throne of the Eastern Slavs. According to Magian dogma, any corpse which could not be carried from the place of death by the corpse-bearers could be wrapped in a carpet, without fear of contamination to the carriers, but the carpet was seen as unclean unless washed several times with *gomez* (a consecrated mixture of water and cow's urine). If one of the faithful died at a height (say up a tree or on a roof), then the body could be lowered to the ground below by rope without fear of contamination. If the deceased expired near or touching the doorway, then the threshold was desecrated by the death demons, and so the bearers were unable to remove the corpse via that portal. Under these circumstances Magian corpsebearers would have to make a new exit point from the building, by cutting a hole in the floor or wall. They could then exit the room using this impromptu portal, as mentioned in *Vendidad*, *Fargard VIII*, *II:10*. In relation to the latter custom, there are virtually identical folk superstitions in Germany, ¹⁷⁷ though I am unaware how far these go back.

The Magi were adamant that no person was permitted to carry a body alone, for to do so meant one had taken the defilement of Nasus (the Demon of Death) into their body. Once contaminated in this way the grievously polluted individual had to be taken to the top of a mountain to live there for the rest of their life, and when old, they were cleansed, decapitated and flayed, to save their immortal soul.

In an illumination from the Radziwil codex (fig 4.1) the body of the seditiously murdered

Russian prince Igor' is unceremoniously dragged away by two men who had looped his feet through a rope. This was a perfectly acceptable way for Magians to transport the bodies of the faithful. In doing so they avoided the contamination of the death demon. Although one person was capable of carting Igor's body, the use of two men might have been symptomatic of Magian prohibitions against singular corpse bearers.

Two further historical anecdotes¹⁷⁸ show incidents in which the bodies of princes were rolled up in a carpet for cartage. Following his unexpected death, Vladimir's body was discretely spirited away, wrapped in a rug and lowered down through the hole in the floor boards by ropes. Perhaps he had died near an upper story doorway, and could only be removed from the premises in precisely the same manner as Magian custom. We can therefore infer the Chronicle account is an invaluable clue, suggesting that Magian-style funeral rites were being enacted inside the Rurikid royal household. The mere mention that Vladimir's body was ferried off in a carpet, also led to rumors that he had not died, but had relapsed and was living in the seclusion of some Albanian pagan occult monastery, having turned his back on Apostolic Christianity.¹⁷⁹ These legends acted as a rallying point for Russian pagan activists, who saw it as a cue for insurrection, and enacted the same. Professor Hollingsworth mentions that while the cults of Ss. Boris, Gleb and Ol'ga were an important part of the religious life of the Rus' Church from its earliest years, many scholars have been perplexed as to why the veneration of St Vladimir (the very person who converted Russia) was absent in their infant Church, 180 only emerging later on. Perhaps there were problems with his canonization amid the many rumors of his alleged return to paganism and subsequent abdication?

And what can we discern in *Igor's tale* ¹⁸¹ where the wounded and dying prince looks skyward to witness the eagles descending upon the bodies of his slain *druzhina* (members of the prince's personal bodyguard). The tone of the passage is more romanticized than riddled with horror. He seemed glad. The parallels between Magian funerary rites and those of the Russes may be a coincidence, but this is doubtful considering the immense Magian influences in Olden Rus'. They probably signify several things:

- 1. That only a few years after the conversion, vestiges of Magianism were still present in the community, at all levels. As much could be expected during a period of transition from paganism to Christianity. The continuation of customs espoused by one's parents through sheer force of habit remains the most likely explanation for these Magian-parallels in the Christian era.
- 2. That the servants of the princes were still pagans, or *dvoeveriye* (literally meaning 'Twin-Believers'), and not being corpse-bearers, felt uncomfortable about man-handling the dead or martyred Christian princes' corpses. So they handled their remains according

to the old ways.

3. That stories revealing Vladimir as a closet pagan, may have had some foundation, and that the Princes wished their bodies to be treated according to the pagan Magian rites, following their deaths.

The 'French' Merovingian royal dynasty was formed by magus-kings, 182 whose magus blood must inevitably have come from Iran. Since at least some druids (Gaelic-speaking Magi) were termed Magi by the Alexandrians, we might think that the Merovingians were blood descendants of the Gaulish druids and kings, against whom Julius Caesar once directed his legions. And why not, the supreme pagan druidic shrine of Gaul, at the time of its conversion, was called Argentomagus, 183 and this is unlikely to be fortuitous. Caesar was only one of a number of Romans who saw the druids as the subversive enemies of Rome, not just on account of their bloody sacrificial rites, but because they carried immense political clout and were well able to stir the barbarian chieftains into undertaking punitive military actions, for their word was law. To kill the druids was to kill a potent force able to raise consolidated Gaulish forces in but a short time, to rise up and strike Roman frontier garrisons with all the potency of a death adder. Perhaps they were intriguers, at least in the Roman mind. 184 Pliny stated that if persons were caught in the city of Rome carrying druidic serpent eggs (crystal spheres and gems), they were executed without hesitation. 185 Some believe the druids controlled the gold trade in Britain, and parts of Europe, 186 and if they did, then I am willing to suggest that gold was very holy to them on account of its resemblance to the glittering halo of the sun, who the Magi worshiped as the face of God. Not only that, but druids would have been military as well as economic power-brokers; the sorts of enemies that Rome didn't want while it was trying to rule the known world.

Merovingian lords had similar interests to the Magi. The magus-king Dagobert paid considerable attention to the art of astronomy. As with the Magi, the powers of the Merovingian magus-kings lay not only in their magical blood, but in their hair, which was purposefully grown long, and in the case of the Merovingians dyed red in color. This was perhaps to impart the potent iron-wielding, blood-shedding capabilities of Mars, that most worrying of planets, for in Roman times these barbarians only grew lengthy hair preceding hostilities between them and the Roman state. Thus, I believe long hair was a feature of war, and their manly power.

Though the Merovingians have long gone, their royal cemetery at Kirkheim am Ries (France)¹⁸⁹ contains some very interesting features which hint that the Merovingian royal family were not Magian, but Magian-Christians, a form of 'primitive' Christianity discussed at length throughout this book. A more detailed examination of this site (which can even be called a Merovingian time capsule), such as is being conducted at the present time, might

yield the necessary answers.

The Merovingian royal graveyard was founded between the 500-700's AD to house the remains of some five hundred or so people (of diverse age and gender), clustered into three separate areas. Without exception the graves were aligned along an East-West axis, and as time progressed, and the graveyard filled yet further, the plots were dug progressively more eastward, giving the impression that the graveyard was growing in the direction of the rising sun. While the plots were not specifically arranged in rows, the deliberate easterly grave alignments prove to be the primary element of uniformity in positioning.¹⁹⁰

Since there were no deviations from this practice over the space of some 200 years (beginning around 550 AD) we can consider the easterly alignment to have been of some importance, perhaps a religious observance rather than a fad, habit or custom.¹⁹¹

In the past archaeologists felt inclined to associate the east-west graves with Christianity. ¹⁹² Though nowadays it can be seen as distinctly pagan however. ¹⁸³ In Britain especially, a good many Christians chose to continue digging their plots according to the time-honoured tradition. Usually the skulls of the deceased are found facing into the rising sun. ¹⁹² We find this in Gaul and Bavaria, as well as pagan Slavia and Finland too. ¹⁹²

The Merovingian King Childeric's presumed grave site contained numerous interments of horses, quite possibly ritually sacrificed, ¹⁹³ but we can't say for certain. Anyhow these paganisms faded out with time.

In many instances at Kirkheim am Ries, graves deviate from true east by a few degrees, which I believe may indicate the time of year the plot was dug, but that is assuming that the plot alignment was established by the direction of light emanating from the emerging sun (by a shadow cast by a stick stabbed into the ground?) at dawn on the day it was dug, rather than absolute east. If such a method was employed for each plot, then, in conjunction with the dating of grave goods, it might be possible to determine the day and span of years during which the plot was dug. By doing so we may discover the identities of the persons buried by matching this data against the historical records of burials, where the day of death/burial is recorded. Until this point, identifying the graves of specific historical personages has proved elusive, in the absence of inscribed grave markers.

That Merovingian rulers had links with Eastern Europe is evidenced by the existence of Eastern funeral goods in a number of the graves; things such as Eastern style single-edged swords. ¹⁵⁹ From historical sources we know that they entertained ties with the Bulgars who dwelled in the Balkans.

Merovingian graves show that they were a patriarchal family, with women having a lesser, though still important status within the family group. Historical sources tell us that a typical Merovingian household was kin-based, and it is believed that fellow siblings lived together under the one roof, even during their adult years. This might indicate endogamous royal

unions within the Merovingian dynasty, which later commentators termed physically decrepit.

Merovingian Adelskirchemen (members of the royal Church) were not the only Western European royals implicated in the continuing fostering of the old faith under the guize of Christianity. Redwald of Kent 'was seduced by his wife and by certain evil teachers and perverted from the sincerity of his faith ... After the manner of the ancient Samaritans (the tribe that Simon Magus belonged to), he seemed to be serving both Christ and the gods whom he had previously served; in the same temple he had one altar for the Christian sacrifice and another small altar on which to offer victims to devils'. 195

In spite of their prevalence, these customs were not a development of the Dark Ages or medieval period. Catacombs and ossuaries (bone collection places) are to be found in the very earliest Christian communities, where bodies were exposed in a rocky niche (wrapped in a grave shroud like Christ) or placed in a casket, rather than buried in the soil. Some of the oldest monasteries have fairly large ossuaries, where the bones of the monks were removed from the grottoes and heaped into one great pile. This gathering of the bones of the faithful was once common to the Magi, who retained skeletal material within the *dakhmas*, in a central pit, where they disintegrated with the passing of ages. From the 10th Century writings of the German cleric Adam of Bremen we hear that there was a group of Christians in a place called Morvern (in Scotland) using de-fleshing funerary practices.¹⁹⁶

According to the Morvern rites the bodies of commoners were left exposed in the pastures or roadways, or in the case of nobility lashed to the trunks of trees to be eaten by birds. The corpses of the rich were plunged into the water, weighed down with a weighty piece of stone, tied about the neck by rope. While the custom must have been sufficiently strange for him to make mention of it, he did not then proceed to condemn the Christians employing excarnation there.

The noticeably weird practice of corpse exposition was known in Ireland too.'... there is an island in the sea west of Connacht (Aran island)... In this island human corpses are not buried and do not putrefy, but are placed in the open and remain without corruption. Here men see with some wonder and recognise their grandfathers, great-grandfathers, and great-great-great grandfathers and a long line of ancestors'. As for how they might have avoided rotting to nothingness we are left with three options. Either it was a miracle (the island was said to have been blessed by St Brendan), or the bodies had been mummified with waxen unguent and embalming fluids (an ancient Magian and Scythian custom), and lastly the story may be untrue. But against the latter proposition, why would Gerald of Wales bother to fabricate such a story? That gulls and other carrion birds did not lift the flesh from their generations-old remains is problematic, unless of course the corpse-ground was manned by keepers tasked with scaring them off.

Excarnation was probably known in Gaul and Britain from Celtic times, and, indeed, long before that. Throughout Europe and the Baltic zone, stretching back as far as 8,000 BC the de-fleshing or exposure of corpses was commonly practiced.¹⁹⁹ At first their families placed the disarticulated and often incomplete remains of the deceased under their living quarters, in company with horns and antlers belonging to oxen or deer, and also dog heads (bear in mind the sacred nature of these creatures to the Medean Magi).¹⁹⁹ According to Gimbutas it is exceedingly rare that *megalithic* inhumations of excarnated corpses contained a complete number of bones.¹⁹⁹ The remains are frequently missing their heads, or show signs that they had been decapitated, either before or after death. Often skulls are found separately, embellished with inlays of various materials such as amber. Here we find another possibly Magian parallel, for decapitation was the highest and sweetest form of penance that a person could undergo, since it was believed to remove the threat of damnation to the person concerned. It allowed them avoid the three-day punishment in the underworld and thus cross the Kinvat star bridge into heaven unimpeded.¹⁹⁹ But alas, we don't know the motives of the megalithic people, for lopping the heads off their dead.

Moreover the remains of carrion birds (deemed especially holy to the Magi) are found buried at many of these ancient places, birds such as ravens, the noble predator birds and, more especially, the magpie (whose warbling was regarded by the Magi as a potent weapon against demons). Interestingly the skeletons of large fish were found there also. This could be related to Magian thought, for the great tree that imparted life was protected against Ahriman and the demons by ten large fish. Why didn't they bury rams, cattle, sheep, seagulls, or pigs at these sites, we should ask? Is it a coincidence that the species of animals found buried in association with megalithic excarnation sites (with the exception of the fish) were those mentioned by the Magi as performing the defleshing of corpses?

The careful burial of these birds and animals in conjunction with the dislocated remains does not conform to Aryan Hindu notions concerning dogs and black birds, ²⁰⁰ especially likely since these sites were pre-Indo-European. As we know the Vedic Aryans cremated their dead, and from the next two vedic passages, were none too keen to have their remains devoured by dogs or black birds.

'Prepare not our bodies for the dog, or the jackal; for the aliklavas, the vultures, and the black birds! Thy greedy insects, O Lord of the Cattle, and thy birds shall not get us to devour!' 201

'Far from us shall go the jackals, evil omens, dogs; far shall go the mourning women who bewail misfortune with dishevelled hair!' 202

According to the late Professor Gimbutas the corpses of the megalithic era were informally presented in locations where vultures came down to feed on the cadaver. There are also the famed megalithic tombs of Britain; homes for jumbled defleshed skeletal material. Features of such sites include being roofed with a single rock slab, with a towering funnel rising above the chamber, and an eastwards facing corridor or wall opening. These bone repositories therefore resemble Magian 'Towers of Silence' or 'astodans' in important respects. An open wall section, especially on the eastern wall, was a structural modification common to many of the places excavated in Ireland. In a Magian context such a hole was seen as a crucial exit-point, a pathway to the Sun, for souls departing the death ground every dawn. So what we have here is a comparable description of a Magian death ground, a considerable distance from Iran.

When the Bronze Age Celts first arrived in the British Isles, Europe's closest land to the setting sun, they brought an elaborate dualistic ritual calendar, and a range of other customs. As the colonists worked their way inland they may have been shocked to find stonehenge and the seemingly eternal megalithic monuments that studded the British landscape. But we don't know this for sure. Nor do we know if they marvelled over their similarity to Magian excarnation grounds. What we do know is that these gargantuan constructions were erected millennia previously by unknown hands. If they were death grounds, they used different construction techniques to those preferred in Iran. Ireland has a hardy geology, well endowed with basalt, with which the ancients constructed the archaic pre-Celtic cult sites. Whereas in Iran the more permanent death grounds were made from mud bricks, or cut sandstone, and so are less likely to survive thousands of years of exposure to the elements and various invaders.

If the Irish megalithic constructions prove to be the handiwork of Magian engineers, then they are evidence of the oldest existing *dakhmas* in the world. One neolithic tomb site from Co. Kerry, Ireland, had corridors a mere 0.5 to 1.3 meters high, in other words accessible only when stooping low, or even barred from human passage. ²⁰⁸ But dogs and birds would have had no such troubles getting in and out. It possessed three concentric passages arranged around a central pit area possessing accumulated charcoal and pieces of burned bone, potential evidence for a fire in which skeletal material was reduced to ash. ²⁰³ It seems to have been open on the eastern wall. ¹⁹⁴ Was this a Neolithic *astodan* in Ireland? The Celtic site at Navan Fort in Ireland (1st Century BC) must have taken a lot of effort to build, and yet it was covered over with limestone debris and turf, barely a few years after it was made. The structure was originally composed of concentric circles of upright wooden posts, with a large central pit that had a sloped ramp leading down to it. No charcoal remains were located at the pit, so it was not used for fire. ²⁰⁴ Perhaps Navan Fort was not a temple, strictly speaking, but a 'dakhma' death house, which was filled in by its builders once it had served

Christianily's Greatest Controversy - Probuse to Conceide

its usefulness.

The writings of Aenghus infer that Glendalough (in Ireland) once served not only as an important cemetery, but the most important one in the Western world. ²⁰⁵ Considering the Magian-style customs found in Celtic Gaul and various regions of Europe, his comments may reveal that Glendalough was a major funerary center. For instance, Navan fort in Co. Armagh, Ireland is described as a royal cemetery, ²⁰⁵ wherein resided the remains of royal personages and druids (ie; Magi).

A strange 6th Century AD tale from the *Gothic Wars* may have some bearing on this. Procopius mentions that Britons had a duty to row their boats to the continent nightly to pick up the souls of the dead and ferry them back to Britain. Despite inconsistencies which Procopius recorded regarding Britain, there may be an element of truth behind this particular account. Perhaps seamen carted the bodies of deceased Celts from druidic Gaul back to Magian *astodans* located in Britain proper, or in Ireland. Whether the tale can be considered factual is best left up to the reader.

Their many similarities to Magian funerary centers are either related or purely coincidental. If they are unrelated then no more need be said. But if a number of megalithic and Celtic sites (like Gavrinis, Newgrange, Navan Fort, Carrowkeel, Creevykeel, the Orkneys and Knowth) were astodans, then this would prove that Magian-style excarnation practices existed in Europe long before the accepted date for Zarathustra's period of religious influence. Under these circumstances the megalithic ossuaries may have been an ancient progenitor for the Magian excarnation culture, perhaps belonging to extremely primitive Magian communities living much farther west than we could ever have been expected, many millennia before Magianism is thought to have begun.

The arrival of the Aryan hordes into Europe, amongst whom were the so-called Kurgan people, has long been a topic of discussion. Since late last century they were viewed as a predominant cultural influence on early paganism in the West. Be that as it may, we have just traversed evidence for the existence of Magian (not shamanic) de-fleshing customs in Europe somewhat earlier than the Bronze Age. This indicates one of two things. Either there was a movement of Iranians and Magi onto the continent in the Late Paleolithic, or the megalithic excarnations of Old Europe predated Zoroastrianism, perhaps influencing the ascendancy of excarnation customs into Iran.

The Russian Academy of Sciences is belatedly cataloguing some 3,000 dolmens along the Black Sea coast in the Krasnodar region, and Caucasian foothills. Based on their current estimates they date to between 1,000 and 3,000 BC.²⁰⁷ Archaeologists there hope to document features common to these younger Caucasian megaliths, and the much older Western European constructions. Nevertheless the heart of Magian civilization predominantly centered around the Caspian and Iran (according to Persian religious texts), so I tend to

believe that it had always been located there. That Magianism originated in the West and later abandoned western Europe in favour of a shift to Iran appears to be an unsound theory. In spite of this it may be significant that the earliest Magian calendar suited the needs of a people who lived at far more northerly latitudes. Such a detail could be introduced into the argument.

Long after the Neolithic period had come to a close, in the mid 6th Century BC, people of the Danube region began organising special excarnation sites or death grounds, where the remains of their kinfolk were laid out for the birds. This change in their excarnation practice was a very late development, and occurred at a time when Indo-European culture was part of their daily lives. In assessing this information we find clues that the waves of invaders who came into Europe were Magian, or Indo-Europeans who had a certain Magian component, or Vedic Indo-Europeans who had adopted an unspecified number of Magian customs. In places like Ireland, Poland and Germany the archeological remains of bones or ashes were often accompanied by razors and (bone) scrapers, objects conceivably linked to the Central Asian practice of cutting meat from the corpse so that it can be handfed to dogs, vultures and carrion birds, slice by slice. Present day Eurasian Buddhists still farewell their dead in precisely this way. Following the stripping of the corpse the bones are buried or cremated.

The comprehensive early medieval laws of Iceland, after the conversion of the vikings, contain provisions seemingly formulated to halt any and all instances of excarnation. If one were to kill a person 'he is to cover his corpse so that neither birds nor beasts may eat it', and if not 'the penalty is lesser outlawry'. ²⁰⁹ It may be difficult to prove specific instances of de-fleshing in Christian Iceland. Whensoever an Icelandic Church fell into a state of ruin, through calamity, it is believed they relocated all the skeletal material from within the church yard to the newly consecrated cemetery, wherever that may be. ²¹⁰ Upon arrival the bones were placed in a mass grave, or distributed over a number of plots. ²¹⁰ This naturally presents problems for any archaeologist attempting to discover excarnated bones in Iceland, where bone piles are datable to the post-conversion era. That is because cemeteries are frequently jumbled masses of skeletal material, consistent with excarnation sites.

Some scholars have attributed medieval skeletons showing signs of prolonged exposure and dislocation prior to the interment of the bones, as indicating the transportation of dead friend's mortal remains back to their home or settlement. This would have been more prevalent amongst merchants, travellers and soldiers, but few others, and no doubt did occur among those groups. To illustrate this, if a person was to pass away some distance from home (such as during the Crusades, or on a long journey), the body might be boiled in a cauldron to remove the fleshy parts.²¹¹ The bones were gathered, and placed in a clean funeral cloth to be transported home, while the rest of their soft remains were buried at the

place where they died. Burying body parts, such as the heart, in different locations, was also present in western Europe, a custom which raised the ire of the clergy. Such disarticulation customs failed to gain the approval of Pope Boniface the VIII, who proceeded to invoke laws aimed at banning the practice of de-fleshing or embalming.²¹²

There were once a number of Christian charnel houses in Europe. At one site in Paris (the Church of the Holy Innocents) there was an ossuary, where piles of skeletal material stood piled up for all to see. ²¹³ Surprisingly this was also a favourite meeting place for the locals. If such locations could be in any way linked with Magian de-fleshing in Europe, then the gatherings at the charnel houses inside some medieval churches would have been to perform prayers for the remembrance of the dead.

Much of the architecture and artwork of Europe during the high Middle Ages was exceedingly grim in nature. Almost exclusively they concentrated on the assault of demons dragging damned souls off to their Judgement at the hand of Christ and his angels, and thereafter an excruciating fate in the Abyss. Many items of exquisite monumental masonry created during the Middle Ages were very revealing, and help prove that Magianism was absolutely rampant within the nobility (the only people who could afford to commission such elaborate stonework), and perhaps even the general community. One 1400 AD tomb carving shows the body of the person interred there, riddled with worms, his face covered by toads.²¹⁴ One can only wonder what the stone mason was trying to tell us in this particular work. Obviously it was not the way one would wish to be remembered for eternity, and not typical of standard tomb imagery. What was standard though, was the representation of one or more dogs sitting at the feet of the deceased (a custom that appears very Magian). Another popular motif was that of a man hanging from a tree, as serpents gnawed away at its roots²¹⁵ (yet another Magian image; that of the holy tree under attack by Ahriman's reptiles).

A detailed bass relief at Rhiems Cathedral clearly depicts clergy, royalty and other high born people being thrown into Hell's boiling cauldron. This frank representation of a Church administered by Magi and heretics' was by no means concealed from the public by the Church. Evidently it must have been common knowledge in those days, and only in later centuries have we lost contact with the events of that time, largely by haywire inquisitorial censorship. Magian Christians evidently occupied very important posts within the medieval Church. One French Cardinal named Lagrange specifically requested that his body be dismembered and de-fleshed with a boning knife following his death in 1402 AD, so that his bones and flesh could be interred at separate locations. He was most likely a Magian Christian operating among the Cardinals.

One would think that practitioners of primitive or alternative forms of Christianity had trouble keeping their identities a secret from the papal reformists, but then again they might

have been numerous and brazenly open about their true nature. By the time the Dominicans (the so-called 'Hounds of the Lord') set the wheels of the Inquisitions in full motion however, these covert Magi needed to be very discrete, or else they would almost certainly have gone up in flames if they remained 'impenitent'.

Were medieval Christian de-fleshing practices merely a manifestation of Magian customs that had not fully died away following their conversion, and which the Church tolerated only until the 15th Century? Or were they being steadily imported from the East? Only further archeological examination across the breadth of Europe is likely to answer these questions.

Accounts of medieval Christians practicing excarnation yield two main interpretations. Either these were a continuation of older pagan practices, which the Church was trying to phase out. Or it was a habit that resulted from the importation (or renewal) of covert Magianism within the Church. The time frame for the penetration of Magianism back into Europe could easily be established by a thorough analysis of tomb masonry and skeletal remains stretching back throughout the first 1,000 years of Church history.

Similarilies between Wagian and Opristian sacraments and observances

BAPTISM, HOLY WATER AND PURIFICATION RITES

Magi believed more than a thousand things could make you unclean. To remedy this defilement of body and soul, various ceremonies were enacted to purify the body, the most important of which were ablutions. These purificatory washing ceremonies were the only things enabling a Magian to maintain their sanctity. Without recourse to them, a Magian remained physically and spiritually defiled. A major requirement of spiritual ablutions was, naturally, water. Magi used holy water for this purpose, normally drawn from a natural spring, especially one with reputed healing capabilities then consecrated by ritual incantations. For it was not so much the water that came from above, but that which welled from beneath the ground,²¹⁸ that the Magi considered holiest, nourishing, invigorating, salvific, and cleansing - it was the blood of the earth, which brought life to all things on the planet.

The circumstances under which ablutions had to take place were cited in the heavily Magianized *Vendidad*, which was a catalogue of sinful deeds, penance, ablutions, punishments and lashes of the whip, all rightly apportioned, and fit for the crime. Purification was required from contact with plagues, demons and spirits, or from black magic, evil thoughts, evil dreams, evil words spoken, curses, touching dead animal matter,

bloodshed, murder, oath-breaking, sexual depravity, having extinguished a fire, having been near a corpse, or a pregnant or menstrual woman, polluting the elements, or for the exorcism of demons. A penitent would simply wash themself with a little water, or if they had been exceptionally sinful they might have to undergo the *Bareshnum* rite, which necessitated the use of *gomez*. For instance, those who had been exposed to plague, or had perpetrated a death sin, would normally experience the onerous duty of a *gomez* washing.

PADYAB

The Magian *padyab* penitential rite demanded a ritual washing with spring water (known to the Magi in former times as *Zaothra*). A second rite of purification demanded the use of *gomez*, a mixture of water and bull or sheep urine, *or urine from one's closest kinsmen*. Defiled belts, and footwear had to be washed in it and clothing soaked in the mixture of cow's urine and water before being left out to dry for some time. Only then could unclean items be rendered pure once more. A similar though different purification rite is found in the Indian *Puranas*.

'One should bathe in the urine of a cow, maintain himself with milk and move with the cows eating after they had eaten. It is known as govrata. One would become free from the sins in a month. He would attain the world of cows and reach heaven'. ²²⁰

One can infer that urine was used by certain European pagans while washing themselves, and that their usage of urine was more Magian in nature than Hindu. St. Sturma observed communal bathing in Slavia as he was en-route to Mainz from Thuringia.²²¹ There he 'came upon a great number of (pagan) Slavs swimming in the river and washing themselves. When the ass on which he was riding saw their naked bodies he began to quiver with fear, and even the man of God could not bear the stench of them'.²²¹ The strange thing is their unclothed bodies stank even after they had washed themselves. I believe this account is actually describing a communal Nan river-bathing session on a pagan ceremonial feast day, followed by the liberal use of gomez after emerging from the water. The folk in question were Slavic, though some could plausibly have been of mixed Bulgarian, Saxon or Scandinavian ethnicity.

So were German (Christian) claims that the Slavs stank like nothing you had ever smelt really only mud-slinging? Or had they come across pious pagan Slavs who reeked of animal or human urine? The answer seems evident in the Russian language. From the few words beginning with *modi-*, we find that they mainly relate to the urinary function, such as *mocha* ('urine'), and yet there are two words *mochyoniy* ('steep' or 'soak') and *mochit*' ('to wet' to soak' or 'to steep').²²³ It seems a little incongruous to have words meaning 'urine' and 'steeping' emanating from the same root word. This suggests that urine served as a cleansing agent. Moreover the Slavic word 'to wash' *myti* or *miti* is related to the Lithuanian *maudyti* or the Latvian *maut*, which are connected with the Old Indian *mutram* or Avestan *mutram*

both of which mean 'filth or dirt'.²²⁴ These are apparently also connected with the Irish word *mun* ('urine').

The *Primary Chronicle* talked of Bulgars drinking down, or washing themselves with moistened excrement.²²⁵ If accurate such an inclusion might describe Bulgars washing in *gomez*, or if excrement is taken to mean faeces it may describe a defilement ceremony of the sort perpetrated by black wizards.

Until comparatively recent times, in distant Scotland (especially at *Morvern* and Breadalbane) and even Russia, there is a belief in the curative effects of urine. ²²⁶ In Scotland it was believed that urine bestowed protection upon those things washed by it; it was used as a benediction for plough cattle or, as in Russia, to heal the sick. Clearly urine was used to wash things in northern Britain, an area formerly controlled by Norse invaders and colonists. Moreover they also believed urine caused much offense to the fairies. ²²⁷ The Norsemen in Iceland used to cleanse their garments in diluted cow's urine, which had been deliberately collected up from the cattle, and contained in specially stored buckets. ²²⁸ Comparatively modern examples do exist. As recently as last century, the womenfolk of Yorkshire reportedly used the contents of chamber posts to wash their hair and faces. ²²⁹

In Eastern Europe one's pagan dualistic persuasion determined what sorts of behaviour were appropriate or inappropriate. Prussians preferred to wear the sort of cloth more favoured by their respective gods, some linen, others wool.²³⁰ For some Prussians it was improper to ride a white horse, whereas others considered it bad to mount a black one. Likewise 'Some Prussians, in honour of their gods, bathe daily, others never'.²³⁰ Here washing or staying filthy were determined by one's religious persuasion, and, in this particular instance, I believe suggestive of white cleanliness, black filthiness, or Magian waterless washing.

Before the advent of later *nan* bathing, Magians would not directly wash in natural water sources. Instead the Magi (and Scythians) exfoliated with incensed mud packs, or were made clean in sauna-like bath houses that leeched impurities from their skin pores. The dirt could then be wiped off, and did not provide a direct source of contamination for water bodies like rivers, ponds and so forth.

Bath houses were important locations for the performance of bodily cleansing in Eastern Europe. In *the Kalevala* the Finns are portrayed as having them. In the *Primary Chronicle*, pagan Russians are described as dousing themselves with an unspecified liquid and ferociously whipping themselves with a bundle of birch switches inside their bath houses. The latter devotion resembles Magian and, more particularly, Mithraic penitential bathing.

It is noteworthy that medieval pagan Rus' bath houses vaguely resembled Herodotus' description of Scythian hemp tents, but were of more permanent construction. In both instances water was poured onto red hot stones to produce copious amounts of steam, which filled the bath-house's interior. Though pagan Russians grew hemp, we do not know

if they continued the Scythian custom of throwing hemp seeds onto the hot stones, allowing them to get 'stoned' while they bathed. The Scythian custom of 'skull cups' was still extant in medieval Rus', why not bath house hemp sessions?

The Irish had sweat baths too, reminiscent of Turkish baths,²³¹ which enabled villagers to cleanse themselves.

NAN

The *nan* was a ritual bath during which a newly born child was cleansed of its impurities and dressed in its sacred white shirt. It was conceptually similar to the ablutions which Hindus take in the Ganges River, to purify themselves from sins and other bodily impurities.

At no point was the *nan* purification rite mentioned as having been practiced by Magians within the Magian texts, and so we must question its original acceptability in the Magian religion. Around the time of Christ, Strabo shed some light on their bathing practices, and it did not include bathing in bodies of water.

'For the Persians neither urinate, nor wash themselves, in a river; nor yet bathe therein or cast therein anything dead or any other thing that is considered unclean'.232

This is of course true of many early Magians, but in later times, under Hindu and Buddhist influences, the Parsee exiles residing in India began to take ritual baths. A date for this acquisition is unknown, nor do we know how widespread the custom became among the Magians living in Eastern Europe, China or deepest Eurasia. As far as Ibn Fadlan knew, the Slavs washed stark naked, both males and females together.²³³ But there was to be no lascivious skinny-dipping. Any incidents of promiscuous intercourse were punishable by execution, the offenders being slit in half.²³³ Whether Russian river bathing was related to the *nan* is unclear, though I would say their custom is closer to the way of the Hindu than the traditional Magian. Incidents where Slavs bathed in a river may have been rituals dedicated to Perun, the thunder god whose names and functions seem derived from the Hindu Daeva Indra. By bathing during the first thunder storm of the year, a Russian was said to be fortified against the affliction of diseases.²³⁴

BARESHNUM

One of the most gruelling purification rites was the *bareshnum*. This rite had two major variants, one a more lavish affair performed at a *bareshnum* ground, the other a vital and extremely powerful heathen baptism. The latter form was a pagan baptism of the forehead, which had to be performed following the birth of a child using consecrated water. This specially blessed pagan holy water was normally sprinkled over the brow, as stated in the following quotations.

'In revelation it says, if any one who has not performed the Bareshnum shall die, the demons make him as though he were a corpse kept one month in the hot season. And, when the soul arrives at the head of the Kinvat bridge, the archangels and angels complain of the stench of that soul, and are not able to make up its account and reckoning. It remains at the Kinvat bridge and is not able to pass; it experiences much repentance and has no advantage from it'.235

'If it be necessary for anyone to perform the Bareshnum of the head, and he be able to do it, but does not do it, if he performs the ceremonial ablution of the head a thousand times, it does not become pure from that pollution...it does not become pure through any other thing except through the liquid consecrated by the religious formula'. ²³⁶

The bareshnum 257 ceremony took place in an open field with relatively dry ground, and devoid of trees. Basically the site where it took place was made from a series of nine holes (2-4 fingers deep) dug in a straight line, in groups of three. Water and gomez were placed in various holes. Each group of holes was separated from the others by a gap of nine feet. The gap between each group was traversed by walking across a series of stones which were properly aligned and set in the ground. The groups of holes were surrounded by a total of twelve furrows which had been gouged from the earth using an iron blade, perhaps a sword or a plough. Over a period of nine nights the penitent underwent an arduous set of ablutions which entailed the washing of one's body and clothing with water (in the first set of three holes) and gomez (in the second and third set of three holes). From outside the furrows, the cleanser (see the True History of Wizards and Witches) reached into the holes with a spoon on the end of a lengthy stick, and sprinkled the person with water or gomez. The penitent progressed to each hole walking the series of stepping stones already mentioned. Also connected with this was the magh, or stone ablution seat, upon which the defiled person sat or crouched while the cleanser went about his work, pouring water and gomez over the individual. On each of the nine penitential days the person, and the clothes they wore at the time of the offense, was repeatedly washed. In a more recent form of bareshnum ground, the holes were filled with standing stones instead of water and gomez. The repentant sinner sat crouched on these stones as the magus cleanser washed away his sins.²⁸

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'.²³⁹

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 baptized 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 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 that they destroyed images of St Mary, Jesus and many other saints. The point is this; there is a very real difference between worshiping a carved object, and adorning a place of worship with sacred images, or venerating and celebrating the sanctity residing behind such images.

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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.²³¹ People expect to be healed.²⁴⁰

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, armor, money, torques, arm-rings. Wells were able to impart prophetic knowledge, remedies for ailments and injuries, and bestow gifts of fertility. It stock could be healed with holy water too; one only had to call on the proper saint. At Abergele though, a horse had to be slain if one wanted to ensure the utmost efficacy of the water's healing powers. Here a pagan rite is additionally performed, a sacrifice conceptually similar to the Hindu Asvamedha.

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.²⁴⁴ It was able to cure a wide range of malaises if water from St Teilo's well was imbibed from his skull.²⁴⁴ 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.²⁴⁴ If they did not dip his skull into the water, bring it up and give it to the sufferer, no results could be expected.²⁴⁴ 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 \$100.²⁴⁴ 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'.²⁴⁴ 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.²⁴⁵ Strictly speaking though, Wales seems to have been more deeply immersed in the practice than their neighbors to the North and West.²⁴⁵

CONFESSION

Like the Christians of the apostolic era, Zoroastrians also believed in two very different varieties of sin, both of which had enormous implications for the soul of a trespasser, 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'. ²⁴⁶

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 advized 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, the 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?

PATET

The Magi professed that sinners should avail themselves of the *patet*, a penitential ceremony requiring the oral confession and renunciation of serious sins. Those guilty of a *death sin (Marg-argan)* had to utter the *patet* in the presence of a *dastur* (the Magian equivalent of a Christian bishop). He heard the confession of their wickedness, and gave absolution for whatever sins they had honestly admitted to. As you will soon see, the power to forgive sins, through a rite of confession, was the domain of bishops within the Christian world, or to parish priests, but only if they had been specially commissioned as confessors.

At the completion of the *patet* rite the penitent solemnly vowed to avoid sinning again. *Patet* was strictly a form of spiritual cleansing. In no way did it obviate the need to undergo physical punishment for their sin in this world. It merely prepared the soul for its reunification with God in heaven. Full forgiveness was not complete until penitents had placed themself at the disposal of a magus, to perform a physical penance of the magus' choice. Without this, the person could expect to undergo lengthy excruciating purgation during their three days in the underworld. Some sins were inexpiable, meaning that although a soul might be destined to reach heaven, the punishment attached to the more heinous classes of sin could not be in any way negated in the next world. As heavy as these burdens may have seemed to the faithful, the Magi taught them:

'It is not desirable for any one that he should become hopeless of the pity and forgiveness of Ahura Mazda, and fix his heart outwardly on this'.247

For this reason the high priests, the *dasturs*, provided an avenue of forgiveness for sinners, acting on the creator's behalf. *The Vendidad* (especially *Fargard VIII*: 29) explains the *patet's* efficacy in extinguishing wrongdoing, and *Shayast La Shayast VIII* expounds its brilliance in the renunciation and atonement of *death sins* (especially crimes against 'good' life and the generative act).

While the great demon was the sole cause of mortal destruction, he might also destroy our souls if our bad works gave him power. Good works helped provide protection against punishment in the afterlife. Through them, ablutions and varied penances came 'the preservation of all good creations from every evil'.

SAGES, THE WISE MEN - WHITE MAGIAN CONFESSORS

'the wise and the ancients say that when a man becomes fifteen years of age it is necessary that he takes one of the angels as his own protection (ie; a particular guardian angel), that he takes one of the wise as his own sage, and that he takes one of the high-priests and officiating priests as his own high-priest. So that, if, any time, a bereavement approaches, he may beg a favour from the archangels, in order that it may furnish an escape from that bereavement'.

And, any time any affair comes forward, and he has to have opinion and advice, he holds a consultation with that sage, while the sage tells him his opinion. And, if any question as to proper and improper comes forward, he speaks with that high-priest, so that he may tell him in reply. When the instructions of these three persons are brought to pass, carrying out the commands of the sacred being is accomplished. Especially the instructions of the high-priests, because their satisfaction is connected with the satisfaction of the sacred being; and the high-priests possess so much dignity in the presence of the sacred being, the good and propitious, that they are quite able to forgive any trivial one of the sins of mankind, and Hormazd (Ahura Mazda), the good and propitious, quickly forgives that sin for the high-priest.

Therefore carrying out the commands of the high-priests becomes incumbent on every one; and the fulfilment of this maxim is better than that of a whole assemblage of maxims'. 248

Besides the *patet*, other avenues of penitential sacrifice existed, allowing white Magian families to nullify temporal suffering for specific sins in the next world.

- 1. The giving of charitable alms to the poor and needy.
- 2. The performance of works and deeds in the service of others.
- 3. The offering up of prayers to God was also very high on the list.
- 4. The sacrifice of personal 'honourable wealth' with a value comparable to the magnitude of the sin committed by the penitent.
- 5. Submitting oneself to a magus to be flogged with the whip / scourge.
- 6. Turning oneself over to a magus to be beheaded and sometimes flayed.

THE CHRISTIAN SACRAMENT OF REPENTANCE

Jesus came into the world for the remission of sins;

'If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and there is no truth in us. But if we confess our sins to God, (then) he will keep his promise and do what is right: he will forgive us our sins and purify us from all our wrongdoing. If we say that we have not sinned, we make a liar of God, and his word is not in us'.²⁴⁹

'It was late that Sunday evening, and the disciples (ie; the apostles) were gathered together behind locked doors, because they were afraid of the Jewish authorities. Then Jesus came and stood among them 'Peace be with you,' he said. After saying this, he showed them his hands and his side (which bore the wounds which had killed him before he arose from death). The disciples were filled with joy at seeing the Lord (they thought he was dead and gone forever). Jesus said to them again, 'Peace be with you. <u>As the Father sent me</u>, so I send you'.²⁵⁰

Then he breathed on them and said, 'Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive people's sins they are forgiven; If you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven'.

What the book of John the Evangelist speaks of here is a precise moment in time, when Jesus gave to his disciples the ability to forgive sins on his behalf. He didn't give it to just anybody, but to his disciples, the apostles.

In Rome and the East, the spoken confession of each major sin was commanded by the Church, although in the Nestorian church, only heretical felons needed to submit to this sacrament. The power to erase the punishment attached to someone's sins could not reside within man alone, and was the exclusive prerogative of God. To this end the Church believed its ministers were tasked with carrying out the mission of forgiving sin in the world, by acting as Christ's special helpers in this matter.²⁴³ Each successive generation of bishops passed on to the next this same charism of the Holy Spirit granted them by Christ. Parish priests took Christ's spiritual cleansing out into the world only once a bishop had passed this gift on to them; the office of Confessor. In truth however, no priest had the right to conduct the sacrament of confession without being deputized as a confessor by his bishop. Therefore the sacrament of confession²⁵¹ obtained the forgiveness of one's sins, via an ordained and suitably empowered Church minister (through the power of the Holy Spirit), who was able to bind and loosen the sins from the person's soul. The bishops of the Roman Catholic Church regarded themselves as the principle dispensers of this gift (due to their belief that St Peter founded their Holy See, and personally ordained their stream of bishops), and that those portions of the Church that were no longer doctrinally united with the Bishop of Rome (later called Pope), no longer had the power or divine authority to carry out this task. This claim was based on (NT) Matthew 16: 13-19;

'When Jesus came into the coasts of Casesarea Phillipi (where Eusebius would later be bishop), he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets.

He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am?

And Simon Peter (St Peter) answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven'.

If we are to believe the historical accounts of the Church historian Eusebius, it would appear that there was a pan-Christian belief in the authority of the Bishop of Rome, but the other Holy Sees, once they had eventually broken off ties with Rome, no longer subscribed to this view. The Holy See of Constantinople considered that they too shared in the right to send forth confessors, since their city was the New Rome that Emperor Constantine had built. Thus it seemed that there were two Romes, one in the East and one in the West. Just who and where the authority to forgive sin resided, and who had the right to bind and loosen the flock through Church edicts (which would be honored in heaven) was the main thing that the fragmented Church squabbled over. During the Eastern Christian rite of confession (which the Russians called *Ispoved'*), the sinner walked before the priest who stood openly beside the person directly in front of the Gospel and the Cross. The svyashchennik (priest) recited a prayer, urging the person to confess everything openly. The Christian off-loaded every sin that could be honestly remembered, nothing major was to be hidden. Upon completion of the rite, the priest granted absolution and placed his stole upon the person's head as he did so. Thereafter the penitent was required to carry out an act of self-humiliation, normally in private, but perhaps even in public. These acts of penance, or deep contrition, could range from self denial (food, water, sleep, clothing), to severe penitence (self scourging, hair shirts, shaving of the head). It was customary for all Christians, as Christ mentioned, to fast (ie; to renounce or say no to the very things that the body craves for).

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;

'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 worldy existence of mankind, as to proper living and immortal progress, and first confines their thoughts'. ⁵⁵²

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'.253

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

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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, 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.

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.²⁵⁴ 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.

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.

This may account for why pagan Slavs and other Europeans loved silver coins during the Middle Ages, particularly dirhems. Silver coins were good to gain exoneration, but some might have felt that 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 (see the *True History of Wizards and Witches*).

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'. 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.²⁵ Following the beating administered by their master, the penitents proceeded to mercilessly flog themselves with their own scourges.255 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.²⁵⁵ 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.²⁵⁵ 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.²⁵ 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 the white Magi held very great sway over the populaces of numerous medieval countries, and that the 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,256 thus hastening the sect's demise across a number of nations.

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.²⁵⁷ The means by which the money was given was important, as also whether it was handed to an ordained clergyman in

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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! Clearly this 'small gift' was given as a payment for a spiritual gift, expiation of past sins. 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.

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 organizational 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).

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 <u>not</u> suspended from the bottom of the chaplet as it is nowadays, leaving them resembling bead necklaces.²⁵⁸

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.²⁵⁸ 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 unlikely that 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

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.

CONTRACEPTION

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. Contraception²⁵⁹ 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 abortificient 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).²⁶⁰ 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.²⁶¹

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'.'⁸⁶²

Jews and Zoroastrians originally believed that 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

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'. 263

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'. In modern Russia when people marry, they are said to *Igrat' svadby*, 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 fossilized 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. 265

This Old Russian custom has an immediate parallel among the Parsees (modern Zoroastrians) who perform a play, that serves as a right 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, priests tried to prevent *Volkhvy* (Magi) participating in wedding ceremonies, and protect married couples from their influence. Presumably the Russian Magi wanted to celebrate marriages, but were prevented from doing so.²⁶⁶

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 or mound, rather than suffer the degradation and humiliation of life without them. In the past this 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.

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.²⁶⁷ 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 following their death and subsequent cremation, that the offending male should have a rendezvous with the noose. 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. 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 the *True History of Wizards and Witches*, 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.

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. ²⁶⁹ It was therefore imperative that such unions be carefully planned and arranged.

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.

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 that 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 kinsmans 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-worshiping 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 authorization 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'.⁷⁰

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. 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. 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 Rus' royals believed that 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 concubines²⁷³ 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.²⁴ Not only does this account reveal a desire for intermarriage between 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, 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? ²⁷⁵ 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 princes 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')²⁷⁶ 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 the 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.

Despite the fact that 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.²⁷⁷ 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.²⁷⁸ By the same token the king had to keep his women supplied with valuable clothing, gifts and amusements, and protect them from every danger.²⁷⁷ In return the king's ladies had to treat him with utmost reverence, showing every gratitude, and delighting in his presence.²⁷⁷

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'. The 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. His wives woke him in the morning with love play and scented oils, paying particular attention to dressing the 'edible thing', 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. The issue of successorship amongst the royal progeny loomed large in the minds of royal mothers, and could give rise to damaging conflicts.

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.²⁷⁷ These would one day be needed, should they ascend the throne after their father, or simply perform regional appointments bestowed upon them.²⁷⁷

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'.²⁸

CLOTHING

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.²⁹ 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 Strosho-karanams (scourgings)'. 280

'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 Tanapuhar sin (1,200 dirhems)'.281

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.²⁸² 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 <u>fornication as is not</u> <u>so much as named among the gentiles</u>, 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'. 283

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 demonolatry. 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'. 284 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.

The univaled guests who would sit at Thirist's welding 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'. 285

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,²⁸⁶ 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 worldy 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.

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 center of Edessa into a pasture for sheep. These apostolic preachers were doing immense damage, spiritually vandalising their ancient faith, a situation replicated in far off Israel, but to a much smaller degree. Learned Magian high priests appeared before Emperor Shapur polemicising against the Christians, who they termed 'the Nazarenes'.287 This phraseology should not be misconstrued as a reference to actual Nazarenes. While it is incontestibly 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 judaizing 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 defense 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 (archangellic genii)',287 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'?.287

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 realized that Orthodox Zoroastrian bravado,²⁸⁷ 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 *True History of Wizards and Witches* and the preceding chapter of this book will instinctively know what sort of issues are being attacked.



The Granks and Gaxons convert

Much of Gaul had been evangelized 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 the Irish monks from the 6th Century AD onwards. It is thought that the heathen Franks were responsible for the widespread de-christianization of Gaul under their initial period of rule. A similar scenario occurred 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'.²⁹⁰

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. 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.²⁹⁰ This was the greatest phase in the evangelization of Europe, and its speed and efficacy was perhaps only bettered by the Nestorians in the Far-East.²⁹⁰ 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 Roman reformists was still very distant.²⁹⁰ Gregory of Tours tells us how it happened.

The son that Clovis sired in Clothild was to be baptized 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'. ²⁹¹ Clothild went on to deride Saturn and Jupiter (a seducer of his own sisters and cousins), adding: 'What have 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'. ²⁹¹ These very gods featured in Chaldeanism and Magian Zurvanism.

Clovis defended paganism, saying that all creation was made 'at the command of our gods'. 51 In open defiance of her regal spouse, Clothild bade him baptize Ingomer, but the child died just after being removed from the holy water font.²⁹¹ A similar fate almost befell their second son.²⁹¹ 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 worshiping our mortal gods, pious king'. 291 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.²⁹⁰ 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.200 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.²⁹² 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, descenting churches, or not observing the Easter feast days²⁹³ 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.²⁹⁵

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.²⁹⁴ St Boniface complained that his subordinate Catholic Christian missionaries 'lead a very bare existence ... cannot procure clothing without help'.²⁹⁴ Evidently they were not drawing big congregations, hence few donations for their upkeep.²⁹⁴ Evidently the aristocracy didn't want to pay for them either.²⁹⁴ Financial attrition could be employed against the new faith 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 evangelize 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. 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 the level of prosperity experienced throughout nature and society.²⁹⁷ 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 fulfiling 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.²⁹⁸

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'.²⁹⁹ 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...augries ... sacrificial rites'.³⁰⁰

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'.³⁰⁰

'... 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'. 301

That is how Boniface's writings immortalize 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 visualized 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'.³⁰¹

To them he sent the emboldened missionary Boniface, to remedy the said errors.²⁸⁵ 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', 302 for they and their ilk were the hungry, soulconsuming 'precursors of Antichrist', 303 or so it was said. These heretics were not small fry either; a number of the German bishops were to be found amongst them.³⁰⁴ 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 been the norm.³⁰⁴ In it he professes that he would have no dealings with heretical bishops, and report their identities to Rome once they were identified.³⁰⁴Come 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.³⁰⁵ By Boniface's estimation most appear to have been suspect.305 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.305

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.³⁰⁶ 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 reproval, 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.³⁰⁷ 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.' 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'.³⁰⁸

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. 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'. 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). 'From time to time their superstitions should be compared with our Christian dogmas and touched upon indirectly'. 309

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. Marriage was not to be solemnized where both parties were closer than the 4th degree. 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'. 312 Boniface was evidently coming across masses, during which the celebrant was using 2-3 chalices. 312 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.³¹³ The baptism practiced by the white Magi may afford a good parallel, but insufficient details were provided by Gregory to enable any further exploration of this possibility.³¹³

Pope Zacharias condemned at length 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', and the perpetration of murders. 'Are they not afraid to handle the sacred mysteries?' he asks rhetorically. 44

King Aethebald was strongly reproved by Boniface in 746 AD, for seducing large numbers of nuns in the convents that lay within his realm.³¹⁵

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

Boniface stressed the difficulties he was experiencing eradicating the use of magical incantations, divination, and talismans in Germany.³¹⁷ 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 center of Roman Catholicism.³¹⁷ 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? ³¹⁷ 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'.³¹⁷

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

Relapsae - The Deather 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.³¹⁸ 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'. 319

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. The *True History of Wizards and Witches* 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 <u>persecution against the Christians</u>, devastated the territory of the Franks as far as the Rhine'.³²⁰

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'. 321

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

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 Slaws as allies, plundering first of all the Transalbingian Saxons then ... this side of the Elbe'.³²⁴

'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'. 325

(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 vassalage 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'. 256

During the early Middle Ages paganism was rampant in Saxony and among the Slavic nations. 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. Bavarians who worked in closely with them.

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.³²⁹ 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. He would couple the acquisition of power with evangelization, 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. 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.

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. 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.

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.³³³ Between 911 and 918 the 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.³³⁴ 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' 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'.³³⁴

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.

Newly appointed to the Dukedom, Bernhard planned insurrection against the Western emperor. 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. He turned on the Slavic Winuli tribe, with whom the Germans and Saxons had come to be on good terms. 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. 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. With most of the Slav auxiliaries dead on a far off battlefield, Bernhard rescinded the proposed marriage deal, and labelled them dogs. Mistovoi's response was 'if we are dogs then we will take big bites'. 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.

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.³³⁶ 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.³³⁶ 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.³³⁶

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.³³⁷ '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'.³³⁸ 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'.³³⁸ Prior to his apprehension he had tried to arrange a truce.³³⁸ The wording of his peace offer was preserved, and in it he declares that he would hand over the 'band of robbers' who had aided him on his retributive forays into the Holy Roman Empire.³³⁸ 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.³³⁸ 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.³³⁸

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. 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. New religious centers were founded by brethren at Mecklenburg, Lubeck, Ratzeburg, Lenzen and even as far as Oldenburg.

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. The trouble makers during these hostilities were the Tholenzi, and the Redarii foremost, militants who other heathen Slavs looked towards. 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.

'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'. 340

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'.³⁴¹

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 remodelled or refurbished Christian churches. After all, every last one of the chapels had been burned to the ground. But in a very short space of time immense capital outlays were made to rebuild the heathen temples. For their part, overseas contributors helped make this happen all the quicker; probably pagans sympathetic to the cause. But the pagan uprisings, the Slav temples were not remodelled or refurbished Christian churches. After all, every last one of the chapels had been burned to rebuild the heathen temples. For their part, overseas contributors helped make this happen all the quicker; probably pagans sympathetic to the cause.

Some clergy felt that 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'. 343

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 judaized 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 'suspect' nature) as 'ever august Caesar ... my Glorious Lord Otto'.³⁴⁴ 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.344 Before him, onlookers and his many attendants witnessed the unfolding proceedings, bowing, in eastern fashion,³⁴⁴ in his presence. Apocalyptic motifs decorated his full robes,344 and gold filagree zodiac signs his cape.344 In his hands rested the orb of dominion, and a spear granting temporal power.344 A web of special, nay secretive offices were instituted by him, each bearing some semblance to those of Ancient Rome.344 If Otto III's personal entourage of clergy were party to the same warrior-priesthood, who in a very Mithraic way were also worshiping 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'. 345 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.

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. 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. 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 evangelization. But the tide changed, as anti-reformists periodically gained power at the Vatican.

The creation of an exulted German nation under the Ottonians caused much disquiet among the other crown heads of Europe. Wevertheless 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. 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.³⁴⁸ Little quarter was given, with pagan Slav war prisoners often strung up.³⁴⁵ This came back to bite them during the 1030 AD pagan Polish uprisings against the Church, when many clergy were murdered.³⁴⁶

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'.349 It seems evident that Otto's animosity towards them centerd 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. 350 Paradoxically, the emperor's evangelization 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. 351 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. ³⁵² 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. ³⁵¹ 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. ³⁵¹

Despite the large number of Frankish troops deployed in the East, the evangelization missions to the Wends and Magyars (dating to the mid to late 10th Century AD), were predominantly spearheaded by the Czech bishop Adalabert, 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 baptize 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 'baptized', 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.³⁵² Accordingly, Saxon-orchestrated, anti-Slav crusades began anew during the 12th Century, which caused Pope Eugenius III great disappointment.³⁵² 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 *kostyol*, which meant 'a Catholic Church'. It is related to the Polish *kosciol*, 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 *kostyol* 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 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 Savs and the mission to Riev

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;

'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 Phyrgia, furnished their most distinguished prelates...'354

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;

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'. 355

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.

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 <u>Hormisdas</u> (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.³⁵⁶ 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 monophsite adherents could subvert its intended meaning and turn it to their own use.

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.

The almost impossible task of re-evangelizing 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.³⁵⁷

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 artisitic 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.

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 civilization 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.

At once St Vladimir's newly baptized 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 Volkhrvy that stayed on. Others migrated out into the deepest recesses of the forests, or to the militant pagan strongholds of 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. 38 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 galvanized under the 'Black Pope', the supposed grand master of all heresies (ie; the head of the pagan religious apparatus).359

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'. 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 prosperity 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 circumcized. 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 *svyashchenniki* 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 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. Frior 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, the adherents of Roman traditions were most likely seen as followers of untruth, and vice versa.

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* interfamiliarity 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'.362

Eatholic Eburch reforms in the missle

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, epitomized the reform papacy's struggle to totally eliminate a range of practices seen as serious heresy;

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'. 363

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.³⁶⁴ These men too paid the price.

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 <u>really</u> 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 last straw came when Gregory VII decreed that 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.

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 ousted from the city by force of arms, or subjected to even worse sufferings. 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.

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 fulfiling their Magian duty to fallen kinsmen who had died without sons, by looking after their wives, and siring children by them.

Follows' 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 <u>not a few clerics</u> and lay folk of those countries, seeking too curiously to know more than concerns them...' ³⁶⁶

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'. 367

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;

'But there were with the bishop others, <u>false prophets</u>, <u>who made promises of a far different kind</u>, and in them he had greater faith'. 368

Cardinals such as La Grange are likely to have been Magian-Christians, judging by his desire to be defleshed after his death. 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 <u>simony</u>. 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?

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.³⁷⁰ 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.³⁷⁰ Nogaret kidnapped Boniface to bring him to trial, and held him detained inside a castle.³⁷⁰ So harrowing an ordeal was it that Boniface died barely a month after being released from imprisonment by a crowd of sympathizers.³⁷⁰ Boniface VIII's successor, Pope Benedict excommunicated the intriguers who had incarcerated him.³⁷⁰ 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 recognized by the papacy).³⁷⁰ Clement, it just so happens, was a friend of Nogaret, Boniface's original

accuser.³⁷⁰ 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.³⁷⁰ 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'.³⁷⁰

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.³⁷⁰ 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.³⁷⁰ 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).³⁷⁰ 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.

One monk testified that Boniface VIII payed homage to an idol which held a demon within it, whom Boniface regarded as God himself.³⁷⁰ 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 (See the True History of Wizards and Witches). 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.345 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 worshiping the 'evil majesty'. 370 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 blooding 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 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,³⁷¹ 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.³² Rumor 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.³⁷³ At the time of his death, gossip spread that he wanted his corpse reduced into pieces, a rumor which in the 17th Century was found to be false when his tomb was broken open and his remains found perfectly intact.³⁷⁴ 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 the *True History of Wizards and Witches* 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). 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 Hormisdas³⁷⁶ (St Hormisdas) is an interesting one indeed. How is it that a Catholic pope chose to be named after the high God of the Aryan Magi, Ormazdes in the Greek. 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, an Italian 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 Symmarchus, 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),³⁷⁷ not to mention Bishop Cyrus of Poti.⁵⁷⁸ 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.³⁹ With only a little imagination it is possible to glean that he was spreading the word about the 'counterworld', or *anticthon* 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. 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-worshipers. 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. 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. In concluding the Holy Father at length decried them as 'slaves of the devil and the precursors of Antichrist'.

Frouble 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, it may have gone something something like this.³⁸¹

Pope Steven V³⁸² (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 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 Formosus³⁸³ had realized 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 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.³⁸⁴ 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 VI³⁸⁵ by dying, we are assured, of an attack of gout. Enter Pope Steven VI,³⁸⁵ 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 that he may even have been sacrificed by the particularly pagan method of strangulation, which probably carried with it an infernal destination for the deceased.

He was in turn replaced by Pope Romanus, 386 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,386 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 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 V^{SST} 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,388 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 III³⁸⁹ 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, Lando³⁹⁰ became pope for just over half a year before dying naturally.

The next pope was John X³⁹⁰ (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 rumored 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 VI³¹ took his place for a reign of seven months. It would seem that 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 VII³⁰¹ 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,302 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, 393 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 II³⁰³ 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 scrutinize 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.

Pope Gregory VII⁹⁹⁴ 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, coloring 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 Caucuses and Iran. Things looked bleak for the reformists.



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 that 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 cliches. And yet, as one delves ever deeper into the close interrelationship between paganism, heresy and witchcraft one begins to realize 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 visualize 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 arachnaphobe 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;

'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 imumenable 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).'395

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 the core teachings of Zoroaster, 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,³⁹⁶ 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.

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 chthonic 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.

Beliefs common to Bereties'

Heresy can only exist relative to the views of a given belief system. With the exception of hardened devil-worshipers, 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 judaized 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.

The bipartite (and even tripartite) nature of cosmic dualism dictated that heaven <u>had to be</u> mirrored below ground in the Abyss, <u>so that</u> cosmic equilibrium was maintained between the greatest height and the most unimaginable depth: 'Just as it is above, <u>so shall it be below'</u>. 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*),³⁹⁷ 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.³⁹⁸ 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 commonalties 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 which 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 <u>and</u> darkness), the Christian holy trinity transmuted into dualistic form. There were now two trinities, one holy, the other abominable.

HolyUnholyThe FatherSatan

Jesus Christ, God the Son Antichrist, Son of the Devil (God incarnate) (the Devil made flesh)

The Holy Spirit The Unholy Spirit, the Mystical Antichrist

The Virgin Mary The Whore

The very concept of Antichrist as a man-devil was very much in accordance with Hippolytus' view that 'the wicked one' would eventually materialize 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.³⁹⁹

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. 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.

Disions of the apocalapse

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. 400 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-worshipers (See the *True History of Wizards and Witches*). 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 characterized the attitudes of the soul-doctors, with the comment 'one diseased sheep will infect the whole flock'. 401

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 <u>flaming fire</u> 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'.⁴⁰²

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 pendition; 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 witholdeth 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 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.' 403

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.

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. 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. From an Iranian

perspective these Muslim notions of Antichrist appear to contain a dualistic parody of the *Book of Bundahishn's* account of *Snaosha*, 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.

'only he who now leteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that <u>Wicked</u>

(<u>One</u>) be revealed'.⁴⁰⁵ 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.

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.⁴⁰⁶

'... 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'. 407

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'. 406

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.

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.⁴⁰⁸ The final persecution was a Babylonian putsch, which would see Chaldeanism enter the Church in no small dosage.⁴⁰⁸

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. 406 Medieval apocalyptic Christian literature acquired a Persian spin, particularly through the prophetic ministrations of the Pseudo-Methodius. 409 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. 408 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*, 409 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. 409

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. 410 Alexander's quick, though fictional, engineering project gave the world a momentary reprieve from the predations of the monster nations, a godsend for mankind.⁴¹⁰ But some day in the future they would break free once more, and war would come. 410 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. 410 This theme was even more elaborately built upon in the Play of Antichrist, penned by some erudite visionary within the Frankish royal court. 410 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.411 Otto of Freising sycophantically thought to caste the illustrious King Louis in this virtuous role, but it could have been any one of them.⁴¹¹ In the last great act of defiance against the devil, the emperor awakens Jerusalem from the catalepsy of its Babylonian captivity.411 Wherefore, upon completion of his divinely inspired mission, the emperor relinquishes his office to Christ, the King of Kings. 411 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.411

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