

JAKE STRATTON-KENT

GEOSOPHIA
THE ARGO *of* MAGIC

ENCYCLOPÆDIA GOETICA VOLUME II

from the Greeks to the Grimoires

BOOKS I, II, III & IV

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INTRODUCTION



What is Goetia?

FIRSTLY, A WORD ABOUT WHAT GOETIA IS NOT. Many people with some acquaintance with occult literature will associate goetia with the first book of the *Lemegeton*, the *Goetia of Solomon the King*; which deservedly or not is nowadays perhaps the most famous of the grimoires. Indeed, in Aleister Crowley's *Book IV*, all the references to goetia involve this grimoire and nothing else. However, this first book of the *Lemegeton* originates in mid-seventeenth century England, whereas the term goetia is ancient Greek, so clearly there is some distance between the date of the grimoire and the origins of goetia.

This significant distance is unconsidered in popular usage, and even among many modern authors. It is not uncommon to hear such expressions as goetic demons or even goetias when referring to the spirits of this grimoire; which could be acceptable were it applied equally to demons of other grimoires, which it is not. This restricted usage is inaccurate in other ways and one in particular is of interest here. In English, the word magician derives from magic, the person taking their name from their art. Two other words used for magician in Greek follow similar lines, *pharmakos* refers to the use of drugs, and *epodos* to the use of chants; only *magos* does not follow this rule, and that is a loan word from Persian, its relationship to magic being possibly perceived rather than actual. By contrast, the term goetia derives from a word indicating a person, a rare case of the art taking its name from the artist. Such a person was termed a *goes*. Goetia is related primarily to the identity of the operator, and only secondarily to their art or perceptions of it. Additionally the evocation of 'evil spirits', while relevant to the original context of goetia, and central to

its later significance, does not define the operator's principal role or the original purpose of their activities.

The word *goes* relates to terms describing the act of lamenting at funeral rites; the mournful howling considered as a magical voice. These magical tones can guide the deceased to the underworld, and raise the dead. This is the root of the long connection of goetia with necromancy, which has come to be termed black magic.

Authors from Cornelius Agrippa to Mathers and Waite use the term goetic of most of the grimoires, particularly the darker ones. The recent fame of the *Goetia of Solomon* has obscured the long association of the term with supposed black magic generally.

From Agrippa the negative associations of the word goetia go back beyond the medieval period into Classical antiquity. Therefore, it might appear feasible that goetia is a very old word for black magic. However, in Greek use magic was a term derived from a Persian root, whereas goetia originates within the Greek language. In the history of Western magic, not only did goetia come first, it possessed a character that distinguished it from many later forms. In its original form, goetia did not involve the same worldview or assumptions as later magic of the approved Judæo-Christian type. The circumstances in which it competed unsuccessfully for a time are no longer applicable, and the old assumptions increasingly questioned. Unfortunately, since magic is a specialized, largely amateur pursuit in the West, the old cultural assumptions linger in many forms, with an occasional nod in the direction of the new.

Before postmodernism, the differences between goetia and mainstream Western magic involved certain cultural assumptions about what constitutes Western civilization and what constitutes 'primitive' religion; including those ideas inherited by nineteenth century occultists. These notions have impeded clarity in the Western tradition of magic. In order to express this more clearly some of the old assumptions regarding Westernism require deconstruction, or at least to be identified. There were two main strands to the late modern view of Western civilization: the Judæo-Christian on the one hand and the Classical or Neo-Classical on the other; each with their subdivisions, alliances and differences. This

bipolar superstructure while overly simplistic is nevertheless useful in understanding Western magic. Of course, in reality Northern European cultures played a large role in the evolution of Western civilization, magic included, but so long as we recognize it as a generalization, this idea has some use even now. It is in this sense then that my direction in writing is more towards a deconstructed Classicism than a deconstruction of Judæo-Christian tradition.

The over emphasis on the Judæo-Christian elements in the grimoires has long obscured the immense contribution of the Græco-Roman or Hellenistic world to Western magic. Ancient Jewish and Christian traditions were but parts of this world. In this deconstruction of the old view of the Classical world, its importance to Western magic as a whole is re-evaluated, not only in the past but also in the immediate present and into the future. To avoid misunderstanding, this is not a strictly academic approach, though availing itself of modern studies. The study of interpretations of history is termed historiography, and I avail myself of this term to indicate that interpretation to a definite end rather than strictly scientific use of literary and other evidence is the purpose here. Besides literary and archeological evidence, I also employ real geographical, ethnological and migratory foci. This is in order to deconstruct the old assumptions regarding the superiority of Greek over Pelasgian and other cultures which are equally a part of the Greek legacy. By means of this apparatus, I hope to elucidate and reinterpret Western magic and its relation to the wider world, both ancient and postmodern.

This approach serves a dual purpose, underlining the aspects of this lore most relevant to goetic magic, not only historically but also in contemporary practice. This, rather than a straightforward study of Greek religion, is the intent throughout. To accomplish this requires an interpretative method which necessarily differs in purpose and practice from impartial academic and archaeological evaluation of evidence. Traditional methods of philosophical speculation employed Greek myth as emblems of moral or cosmological truths; the approach here both follows and departs from this precedent. As will be further elucidated in our discussion of myth, the aspects of myth and history emphasized differ, as does the

practical purpose served. This purpose is neither impartial historical understanding nor a re-enactment style historical reconstruction nor even Hellenic neo-paganism. It serves an emergent synthesis of global magic produced by cultural forces active in our own time, in which Western magic is fused with influences from the New World and elsewhere. These Afro-Hispanic influences, essentially spiritist in nature, have strong affinities with earlier phases of Western magic. In order to facilitate the fusion to maximum effect, these earlier phases and their contributions to modern magic require elucidation.

The last great synthesis of magic occurred in the Hellenistic world; formulated in the great schools of Neoplatonism and Hermeticism, and incorporating astrology and the Græco-Egyptian roots of alchemy. Major factors in these fusions were the older traditions of Chaldean star-lore and Greek goetia. Although modern occultists often imagine the roots of their tradition lie in the Kabbalah, this is in fact a medieval system that did not enter Western magic until the Renaissance: with Mirandola and Agrippa in the 1490s. Even then, Kabbalah, and in particular those parts of Kabbalah incorporated in modern magic, involve a good deal of earlier Hellenistic origin.

The Spheres of the Primum Mobile, fixed stars, the seven planets and the Earth were integral parts of the Neoplatonist astronomical model. Thus, the order of the planets corresponding to the sefirot of the Tree of Life essentially originates in Neoplatonism and Ptolemaic astrology. The connection of these categories with letters, names and numbers by modern ritual magicians, whether they follow Agrippa or the Golden Dawn, also derives directly from Neoplatonist pagan magicians. Nor is this a superficial resemblance; Neoplatonism is – after all – the origin of the Logos doctrine fundamental to Christian theology, and the deity without attributes central to that of the Kabbalists.

For the first time since the Hellenistic era, a new global magical synthesis has the potential to emerge. Given cultural conditions in the West and elsewhere, this potential *will* be realised. What needs to be asked is, what part will Western traditions play in it, and what aspects of Western magic are most compatible with New World and other magical traditions? In

order to answer these questions it is important to bear in mind that the Greeks were in prolonged contact with both African and Indian traditions, making Western a very ambivalent expression. Given the globalisation of modern culture and the importance of Afro-Hispanic traditions from the New World in modern magic, looking beyond the recent emphasis on Kabbalah in Western ceremonial magic is necessary to achieve a workable synthesis.

It is my contention that goetic magic, properly understood, is the most important fundamental element Western magic has to contribute to the melting pot, being most compatible with magical practices from the other cultures concerned. In order for this to take place, a major reappraisal of goetic magic is necessary. In the academic world, this has already occurred in large part, but it remains necessary among Western magicians and their contacts in the other traditions. Naturally, despite the usefulness of academic studies, the requirements for this are rather different. It is to these different requirements that my study is geared, and while this requires saying, it does not require an apology.

Chthonia Lost

Many authors have expended considerable energy distinguishing magic from religion, without much effect. In reality, magical rites often include remnants of religious traditions older than those currently in favour. As recollection of the original context recedes such survivals are either devalued and demonised or heavily disguised and redefined. Negative perceptions then replace the former prestige and power of the older tradition. Even after deconstructing unsympathetic interpretations, our perceptions can never be those of the original participants in these traditions in their various historical phases over many years. Therefore, while deconstructing an outworn historical view of myth is the method, the intent is a mythic view of history.

Franz Cumont's book *Chaldean Magic* speaks of Persian magic entering Greek use around the time of the Persian Wars. He says that a *Book of*

Ostanes: was the origin of the magic substituted from that time forth for the coarse and ancient rites of Goetia. As can be seen from accounts of them in Herodotus, the rites of the Magi known to the Greeks seem in the main to have been pre-Zoroastrian, and no less coarse and ancient in many respects. More recent studies suggest that far from being replaced what we know as goetia took its historical form around this time, principally through the new movement known as Orphism. This was, as will be shown, a reform of more ancient chthonic elements in Greek religion, incorporating eastern ideas. Despite occasional use of the term *magos* these eastern influences were not Zoroastrian; they originated chiefly in Crete, Asia Minor and Chaldea, while at the same time Orphism retained much that was innately Greek.

In other words, this was actually more of a transfusion than a replacement; and in many ways revitalized and transformed ancient chthonic traditions; as Orphism actively concerned itself with Thracian and Pelasgian traditions, while introducing Eastern elements at the same time. The *Book of Ostanes* does not represent an entirely new current. In history, but not its preceding myth, goetia *began* rather than died out with the advent and evolution of these Magian rites. Many features of old Greek rituals underwent a major transformation around this time, as religion transformed from family and tribal cults to city cults; and it is precisely then that goetia appears.

In the past, understanding this transformation was complicated by a curious phenomenon in the history of magic, its foreign-ness whether actual or supposed. Goetia was foreign to the Greeks in several ways, in mythic terms it was associated with Dionysus in whom foreign-ness or outsider status was an intrinsic principle. This quality of the god was further reinforced by association with survivals of Pelasgian traditions and the cults of foreign deities such as Cybele. These were all essentially chthonic in nature. Outsider status is extremely frequently associated with demonic figures in religion, and it is remarkable that despite these associations Dionysus retained and even enhanced his divine status.

The chthonic realm was essentially coexistent with the celestial world in Greek religion; it only became demonised after the rise of more exclu-

sive ouranian or celestial emphases in later religions. However, the difference in perspective and emphasis, and the association with foreign and lower class practices, contributed to making the goetic rites and traditions increasingly repugnant to the urban literati. This prejudice significantly assisted further subsequent demonisation, but at that time goetia was neither legislated against nor persecuted. It was an accepted part of the culture, that happened to be unpopular with intellectuals. The old idea that the chthonic and celestial emphases in Greek religion were the products of different cultures is flawed. In fact many of the chthonic deities and rites of Greek religion are every bit as Indo-European as the sky-god Zeus; additionally such a dualism already existed in Mesopotamian and Hittite cultures. The two worlds co-existed in perfect balance within Greek religion for thousands of years. The demonisation of the chthonic has comparatively little to do with matters of ethnicity; on the contrary foreign-ness is simply a common attribute of the demonic. Nevertheless, fertile ground for this demonisation was present in the Classical and Hellenistic eras, and indeed long before.

The dangerous nature of many chthonic figures is essential to recognise, although at the same time other roles are also proper to them. Hades, Persephone, Demeter and Hecate, along with Hermes Chthonios are significant figures in such traditions. Hecate is often associated with the negative stereotype of witchcraft, but also had very benign roles that preceded these associations. Demeter, along with Persephone and Hades (and his alter ego Plutos) were the pre-eminent deities of the Eleusian Mysteries; her cult began in prehistoric times. While associated with earthly fertility and with the Underworld, the constellation Virgo has long been associated with her; her nature is both celestial and chthonic. While Hades as King of the Underworld was at best an ambivalent character, his alter ego Plutos was the god of wealth through the fruits of the earth. Attempts to distinguish the two are erroneous. Earthly fertility was also the special province of Demeter and Persephone, with which they were as much concerned as with death. Alongside the enactment of Demeter's search for Persephone after her abduction by Hades there appears to have existed another yet more mysterious rite, the fruitful marriage of Plutos

and Persephone. On the other hand, the dead were termed children of Demeter, or Demetrians. More sinister deities and entities, dangerous, requiring placating, were also strongly associated with the chthonic realm. These too had some positive roles, even if dependent on their dangerous nature; the Erinyes for example presided over oaths, with the clear implication of punishment for perjury. They avenged wrongdoing and, while terrible, their actions upheld what Greek culture considered right conduct. There are in fact few figures in Greek myth, if any, that are wholly evil in nature.

There were nevertheless major differences in the cults of deities of the Olympian or celestial realm and those of the chthonic region. Celestial deities are invoked in daylight, in a state of purity and cleanliness, often wearing white; the occasion is joyful, the altar is raised up, and the sacrificial victim looks towards the heavens at the moment of sacrifice. The dead on the other hand were honoured with lamentations, from the Greek word for which the term *goetia* has its origin. These ceremonies were generally nocturnal, as were the Hittite equivalents. The garments of the mourners were torn and defiled with dirt, their hair hung loose and in disarray. No altar was erected for the dead, rather a pit was dug, into which the sacrificial beast looked down. Many features of the cult of the dead were shared with chthonic deities and heroes. Some distinctions drawn between the rites of the two worlds in the past are not as binding as had been supposed; some sanctuaries and rites included elements and features associated with both chthonic and celestial entities.

The history of Greek religion is long and complex; its beginnings pre-date Homer by a far greater period than that from Homer to our own times. It is not the purpose of this work to give an account of this history, but its antiquity is important to bear in mind, as most of us are only familiar with the Classical period in some basic form. The origins of the Greek cults are to be found in the Neolithic period, from which originate substantial connections with the pre-literate cult iconography of Catal Huyuk. The Minoan and Mycenaean periods followed in the Bronze Age. After the destruction of these aristocratic cultures and their palace cults was a four hundred year Dark Age. This permitted a revival of

older Neolithic forms that had survived among the lower classes. Towards the end of this Dark Age, as well as during it, these were cross-fertilised with Middle Eastern influences from 1200 BCE to 600. This influence originated in what is now modern Turkey and Northern Syria and was particularly strong in Cyprus, from which it was diffused to the larger Greek world. From the 26th dynasty around 660 BCE Greek mercenaries served the Pharaoh, and influence from Egypt increased accordingly. The origins of much of Greek ritual and myth in the religions of the Hittites are important, but beyond the scope of a study tracing Greek influence on Western magic. The emphases for this study are the influences from Phrygia and the European near equivalent in Thrace; also considered are Chaldean ideas – often confused with Zoroastrian ideas in antiquity – such as Zurvanism and its forebears.

Chthonia Regained

Notwithstanding the complexity of the relations between celestial and chthonic religion, the goetic strand within western magic essentially represents survivals of more primal elements within host traditions of another character. For example, magical approaches adapted and systemised by the Neoplatonists. Invariably such brief attempts as have been made to define goetia are from the viewpoint of such host traditions or from viewpoints hostile to magic in general, rather than the viewpoint of goetia itself. It is difficult to speak of goetia in its own terms when competing with the accumulated assumptions of so many intervening centuries. For the last two thousand years, our civilisation has lived with the assumptions inherent in Revealed Religion. The civilisations of Classical Greece, and all other civilisations of the ancient world, were either built or superimposed upon a tradition of thousands of years of what is known as Natural Religion. Whereas Revealed Religion is delivered from on high by a revelation – frequently represented by a Book – Natural Religion is built up from below; the result of observation of and interaction with the visible world, including perceived supernatural or numinous forces. At the heart of these two approaches to religion are two entirely different worlds.

These two worlds, the centres of two opposed worldviews, can be termed the celestial and chthonic worlds. These are not the limits of the worldviews concerned, but their centres. That is to say, while Revealed Religion has as its base the celestial or even super-celestial realm, it does not exclude considerations of other regions, such as Earth, Hell and the physical universe in general. Similarly, while natural religion has the Earth and the Underworld at its heart, this does not prevent it dealing with gods of thunder or the Sun and Moon.

In the same way, the source of the revelation of revealed religion is celestial, and this is the centre of its worldview. By contrast, the chthonic realm was the source of oracular power at all stages of Greek religion. The celestial or transcendental realms became all important in later magic, not least as the source of the magician's authority. Previously the earth as source of life and the underworld as the abode of the dead were central to religion and magic. More to the point, much of the magic of later times – particularly that characterised as goetic – was an adaptation – one might even say a distortion – of the older type. Nevertheless, the initial transition from chthonic to celestial bases for magical authority did not involve a major change of character or content.

The roots of the word *goetia* exemplify its chthonic connections. Whereas *goetia* is commonly translated howling, following the precedent of nineteenth century authorities which are too often unquestioned, a closer translation would be wailing or lamenting. There is a large group of related words in Greek, the majority of which refer specifically to ancient funeral rites. The tone of voice used in these rituals distinguished the practitioner of *goetia*, and the concern with the Underworld was equally explicit.

The precursors and the earliest manifestation of *goetia* are principally concerned with the dead. At the same time, despite some parallels and later syncretism, it has little intrinsic connection with the aristocratic Olympian religion of Homer. Its primary role was benign in that it served a role in the community; that of ensuring the deceased received the proper rites to ensure they left the living alone. Alongside this were additional roles. These included laying ghosts, including those where proper burial

had not been possible. Such restless spirits were troublesome, even hostile and dangerous. Their existence was a major reason for the practice of funeral rites in the first place.

Another aspect of goetia's involvement with the dead was necromancy. This, the art of divination by the dead, correlates naturally with the ability to guide the dead to the Underworld. Those who could guide souls to the Underworld could bring them back, at least temporarily. In its original religious context, necromancy was not perceived as anti-social, and some major necromantic oracular centres existed throughout the Greek world.

The most sinister aspect of this involvement with the dead was the ability to summon such spirits for purposes other than divination. Like necromantic divination, this is a natural consequence of the role of guide of souls. However, it also relates very closely to the ability to deal with hostile ghosts of various kinds. The arts of exorcism and evocation are intimately related. It is from this aspect of its past that goetia is associated with demonic evocation. Distinctions between underworld demons and the angry dead have always been vague. Additionally, expertise in rites concerning the dead necessarily involves the gods and guardians of the Underworld. Consequently, in various guises, raising spirits has been associated with goetia for much of its history,

The impression caused by the confusion between the *Goetia of Solomon* and goetia itself is that goetia concerns evocation alone. There is a stereotyped image of the conjurer calling up spirits into a triangle from within a circle, and bidding them to perform this, that and the other thing. This seemingly reduces all goetic operations to the same format, which is not the case at all. Even disregarding the religious and funerary aspects, goetia involves magical methods of every variety. It is true that goetic magic involves the participation of spirits in virtually all its operations, but these operations are varied.

The *Grimorium Verum* makes clear that all operations are performed with the assistance of spirits, but its methods include what we would call spells, and also methods of divination. Most often in these operations the sigils of appropriate spirits are involved in the procedure. There is for instance a traditional method of causing harm to an enemy through their

footprint. In its *Verum* form this involves tracing the sigils of spirits and stabbing a coffin nail into the print. Some of this methodology is reminiscent of modern applications of Austin Spare's sigils, although rather more results oriented than the uses the artist himself employed. Incidentally, my speculation in *The True Grimoire* that Spare was acquainted with, and inspired by its contents has been verified by Gavin Semple, (see his introduction to Spare's *Two Tracts on Cartomancy*).

In general, *Verum* employs full-scale evocation for one main purpose, which is to form a pact with the spirit or spirits concerned, precisely so they will be willing to assist the magician in other types of operation. I say spirits in the plural for a reason. In contrast to the methodology of the *Goetia of Solomon* as popularly understood, *Verum's* process envisages the possibility of summoning more than one spirit at a time for the purpose of forming pacts. While any evocatory process is demanding, in terms of time and effort expended, this multiple evocation process is considerably more economical, and far more productive. Modern understanding envisages the conjuring of a single spirit in order to achieve one specific result, and the spirit concerned may never be met with again. *Verum* on the other hand envisages calling upon one or more spirits in order to commence a working relationship, so that on future occasions the same spirits may assist the magician. In these subsequent relations the full procedure of evocation is rarely necessary; and will usually only be employed to initiate relationships with additional spirits.

Such exhausting operations therefore are not the be all and end all of goetic sorcery. The magician and the spirits with whom they are involved will be active in a variety of other procedures. These will involve a range of different skills and activities, alongside a more minimalist conjuration.

The purposes of this book therefore should be becoming clear, although the work is not without considerable difficulties. One purpose is to reach behind the Classical Greek inheritance to reveal the older strata of chthonic religion. Another is to show, with demonstrations of continuity, the influence of both archaic practice and the archaic practitioner on what followed. This influence is traced in both the Classical and Hellenistic periods and the medieval and Renaissance magic of the grimoires, as well

as the interim period. In the course of this some familiar mythical and historical figures will be re-examined, and some much less familiar ones brought into the light.

Mythic Language

The purpose of a re-examination of Greek mythology may be questioned; what has it to do with goetia, aside from goetia being a Greek word? For one thing, its inclusion in this study is intended to bring the term howling, by which goetia is often translated, into its proper context. The spirit summoning aspect of the familiar grimoires is more or less compatible with Jewish and Christian culture, if not the religious authorities. Nothing in it remotely resembles howling, the attitude is one of sober and fearful piety. There is, like it or not, quite obviously another aspect of the grimoires and its folkloric background where quite other traditions are at work, which directly concern the term goetic and are more closely connected to its origins. This is the background for the mythological material included here.

It may still be asked, aside from the cultural distinctions, which are obviously significant, why the mythology? Part of a comprehensive reply concerns the nature of spirits, and of magical working that revolves around them. It is relatively unimportant whether such and such a spirit is the equivalent of such and such a mythic figure, or even an aspect of them. What is important is the fact that such figures had a myth, and were seen in mythical terms, and that this was a critical aspect of the magic in which they played a part. Even late demonologists, who spent time pedantically tabulating names of whose spelling they were never quite sure, were aware of the need for a story. Myth endows a spirit with a history, a family, a residence in the universe, and precedents for tasks undertaken on behalf of magicians and their clients.

Their likes and dislikes, and aspects of their story, also generally produce the basis for tables of correspondences. While these remain data in a table there is comparatively little magic in them. Endowed with a personality, the spirit becomes an active participant in the ritual, and in the creation of rituals. Reference tables are no replacement for the mythical

context of a spell, although with a little creativity they can partially substitute for the lack of one. That they can do this in fact demonstrates their reliance on such a context in the past, even if merely as a prototype. The loss of such a context is displayed in reliance on traditional rituals that are no longer understood, but cannot be adequately replaced. The ghost in the machine lingers even where the magician has no reference points for the background of the ritual employed. A mythology supplies such reference points, giving vitality to the composition and performance of ritual.

In recent decades a quiet revolution in mythological studies has taken place in the academic world with crucial relevance to goetic magic. Unsuspected by many modern occultists this revolution has gone beyond the antiquated and trivialised forms of myth; the glossy productions of the literary elite of the Classical period still perpetuated in modern coffee table books. Dieter Betz underlines this in his *Introduction to the Greek Magical Papyri*. These papyri are full of references to an older stratum of Greek mythology, in which the gods are not portrayed in genteel Hellenistic forms but as: *capricious, demonic, and even dangerous*. These are the gods of the local cults and of the popular forms of myth, more primitive and primal, above all more genuine. Although finding this material in the papyri appears to surprise the editor of the collection there is really no reason why it should. Although – as he remarks – the papyri are thus a primary source for the study of Greek folklore, the reverse is equally true: the more primal forms of myth are the bedrock of goetic magic.

Whereas literary sources for mythology begin a few hundred years BCE their origins precede these by thousands of years. Of the two earliest sources, Homer – the great ancestor of Western literature – is more problematic than Hesiod. Lack of Homeric precedent cannot be automatically taken as proof that such-and-such a theme is of a later date. As observed by Dorothea Wender, Homer erases from the history of the gods all traces of incestuous relationships, he also suppresses the castration of Ouranos and the child-eating of Kronos. In short, he removes all evidence of their more ‘primitive’ beginnings; just as he has excised much evidence of magical practices, human-sacrifice and homosexuality among his human cast. There can be no doubt whatever that what he has taken such pains to

erase was nonetheless present from the earliest times. That later sources often include these themes is not indicative of innovation or fabrication simply because absent from Homer, even allowing for subsequent changes in form and expression.

For, much as the idealised human forms of the Olympian gods suit the prejudices of later rationalism, it is not true that in the beginning people made the gods in their own image. In the beginning, people made the gods in the images in which they saw the gods; like lightning, like volcanoes, like water, like powerful beasts, like life giving or mind altering plants. Until the landlord asked people if they didn't think the gods were more like him, and his friend the judge, and the judge's friend the king, and like the priest, and their friends, and their husbands, wives and mistresses. Gods such as these are neither themselves nor the people they idealise.

Hesiod by contrast, while roughly contemporary with the Homeric texts, retains much that is primitive, with the major exception of his portrayal of Zeus. It is readily apparent that in the original form of the myth Zeus was taken in by the trickster Prometheus, while Hesiod portrays him as infallible, allowing Prometheus to think him fooled for his own reasons. Similarly, Hesiod down-plays Zeus' dethronement of Kronos; as an exemplar of rebellion against parental authority such an act was unworthy of the paradigm of fatherhood himself. These examples are enough to warn us against taking the forms of myths as presented by the literary elite for true representations of more primitive phases of religion. They are retellings, often distorted by tendencies to rationalise or to promote later views. In using literary sources then, rather than take the retelling at face value, the purpose is to unearth traces of older belief in what remains.

The contrast between Homer and Hesiod is particularly illustrative. Homer wrote for an aristocratic audience and lived in Asia Minor, the birthplace of Greek philosophy and much of its higher culture. Hesiod on the other hand lived in rustic Boeotia on the Greek mainland, the literary tradition of which he was part produced among other things divinatory manuals, almanacs and – interestingly enough – handbooks of metal working. It is precisely in this 'unlearned' context that the real roots of Greek religion are to be traced and its true character discerned. In his

Introduction to the Magical Papyri, Betz directs us – in note 46 – to another note in a scholarly article by A.A. Barb. The quotation is given below with due emphasis. While appearing in a footnote (both in Betz and in Barb) it is enormously important. In an interesting study of the Gnostic gems, comparing their Greek and oriental elements, Barb speaks of the comparatively recent recognition of ancient Oriental influences on Greek religion, and by extension magic. While the Papyri are full of oriental elements – cheek by jowl as it were with classical materials – until recently this juxtaposition was viewed as late syncretism, having no relevance for ancient Greek religion. In a delightfully incisive summation, Barb completely reverses this: so far from being late syncretism, in many important respects it is: *the ancient and original form of popular religion coming to the surface when the whitewash of ‘classical’ writers and artists begins to peel off*. That this material should form in very large part the background of the magical papyri underlines the necessity for a reappraisal of myth by modern magicians.

So what is myth? Many answers are possible; one of the most interesting and influential definitions in the early 20th century was that myths were stories explaining pre-existent ritual usage. The academic reappraisals of this idea are relevant in their own sphere. However, the speculative use of mythic emblems for philosophical purposes is a not dissimilar concept of great relevance to our purpose. In other words, this might not explain the origins of all myths, but it does relate to how myth might be understood by Greek magicians, among others.

So there is another aspect to the question, which is, if mythology is a language, how does it work? Before really addressing this, some examples are useful to illustrate the innate flexibility of mythological language. Some are implicit among the themes explored herein: in the myths of the birth of Athene from the head of Zeus some uncertainty about roles is seen; was it Prometheus or Hephæstus, both Lords of Fire, who struck the blow? How could Hephæstus – the limping god – have done it if Hera created him in revenge for the birth of Athene? The mythic birth of Dionysus from the thigh of Zeus involves further apparent confusion of roles. If Zeus is lame when Dionysus is in his thigh, is Zeus

then Hephæstus? When Dionysus fetches Hephæstus back to Olympus, drunk and seated on an ass, is Hephæstus then Silenus? When Dionysus conquers the world including India he is portrayed as bearded, no longer the eternal youth; which of the elder gods is he then, is he Hades, is he Silenus? Or is he Zeus himself, of whom he was the infant form, then the son, to be finally the Father? In these scenes gods are seen at once as older and younger, dying and being born, tragic and comic. It is not that myth provides no clear cosmological system, but that it provides a language by which cosmological ideas are expressed, and by means of which they evolve. What is important is not that static forms neither define nor confine myth, but that myth gives life to otherwise static forms.

The mythological material presented here is active in precisely this way, it is demonstrative and suggestive in ways that tabulated data or analytical approaches are not and cannot be. As will be shown the roots of goetia involve gods of fire, and legendary magicians who discovered haematite iron. It will be shown too that goetia was strongly associated with the more emotionally charged, orgiastic aspects of religion. Orphic and Pythagorean associations represent a sublimating and rationalising reform of just such traditions. The Orphic and Pythagorean reforms of the older traditions of Dionysus or Demeter are personified by Apollo; now a solar god of reason, pursued in more restrained and directed religious ecstasies – the witch-doctor has become the philosopher.

In the Classical and Hellenistic periods it is to this more ethereal status that systems termed magic or theurgy aspired. Both theurgy and goetia borrowed from each other, and were never completely distinguished. The names of Orpheus and Zoroaster were intended to lend respectability to the rites and books composed in their names. In reality, Orphic rites reverted to chthonic forms even though seeking the Apollonian dignity of celestial religion, and the rites of the Magi – generally pre-Zoroastrian in origin – were as barbarous as the goetia Cumont supposed their rites were intended to replace. Myths were employed to describe this magic, to explain it, provide authors for its texts and founders for its schools. To reach back through the Orphic reforms to the more primitive levels necessarily involves examination of this mythic background.

My intention is not a complete historical reconstruction of magic and religion of a particular circumscribed historic period; this study involves several phases of the past for the purposes of the present. In any case such a result could not be achieved in this fashion; neither indeed is it likely to emerge from academic or archaeological disciplines. Orphism is still deeply controversial, and the interwoven themes of oriental and Greek magic and religion involve deeply complex questions pursued and understood by highly recondite specialists who nevertheless disagree on many fundamental issues.

Nevertheless, looking at and behind them for contemporary magical purposes is not so difficult, in the manner and for the purpose involved here. The purpose of academic historical disciplines is to understand peoples of older cultures, how they thought, how they behaved. Even so, empathically seeking to apply this understanding in contemporary life is never the stated intention. Reaching behind Orphism in the way undertaken here reveals not a historical but a mythic past. I am not drawing a family tree of dates, times and places in which oriental and Greek ideas influenced one another. The relationship of the Orphic reforms and of goetia with the Dionysian currents provides a creation myth for transforming modern magic. This creation is conceptually prior to the emergence of Goetia and its involvement with older religious traditions; it is not intended to be strictly historical. Considered in strict socio-historical terms of linear time and geographical space, traditions concerning ancient gods and magical books often appear compartmentalised and distinct, but this was never the way that they were understood. Consequently this mythic past is essential to a revitalised and practical pagan goetia in the here and now.

It requires emphasizing here that my use of mythic language to elucidate goetia, while separate from archeology and formal academia of that sort, is also distinct from theological and philosophical approaches. These might have allowed me to pursue a high-brow extension of mainstream Hermetic and Qabalistic magic. However, while simpler, such an approach would be anaemic and fall far short of my underlying intent. Nevertheless, while distinct from all these approaches, do not imagine

that *Geosophia* has neither precedent nor direction. There is a clear direction underpinning the entire work, which shares its precedent with the ancient specialists in necromancy and initiation into the Mystery cults.

The essential concerns of Orphic initiates and of goetic magicians or necromancers were and are primarily in one field. Ancient and modern syntheses alike are necessarily rooted in eschatology. Or to express it in still simpler terms: death, judgement, heaven and hell. These concerns fundamentally shaped the worldview and procedure of the papyri and the grimoires; by their very nature, they are as central to the postmodern synthesis of magic. Eschatology dictated the purposes of ritual, its structure, mechanisms and individual components. More fundamentally still, these concerns shaped perceptions of and responses to the world of spirits.

Many of the mythic figures and stories recounted in the course of this work may be unfamiliar, but they are vitally important to the study. The fact is that not only was Greek myth reshaped by the ancient literary elite, but also that until recently classical learning was the exclusive preserve of their latter day counterparts. The preferences of both were served by particular emphases, leading to the comparative neglect of others for many hundreds of years. Magicians have frequently concerned themselves with neglected or marginalised traditions; in very large degree this now includes Classical learning, stripped of the emphases involved in its former establishment form. The chthonic traditions, which were intimately concerned with the origins of later magic, were already marginalised by the end of the Græco-Roman era, and classicists until very recent times shared similar prejudices. In my opinion this is ample justification for the emphasis in this study upon mythological material; concerned not with the Olympian state religion, but the chthonic cults and other traditions which underpinned goetia.

Before proceeding with the examination in the manner outlined here, a few simple points require re-emphasis. The identity of the operator makes goetia what it is, not the good or bad nature of the spirits involved. Sun and Moon are both as important to goetia as to astrology, but then astrology itself has a fundamentally geocentric foundation. In the same way, goetia focuses on earth and the underworld. It relies not on authority

from the celestial regions – the so-called adversarial angels of aristocratic magic in the Jewish and Christian tradition – but the innate power of the magician. It has its own worldview – of which theology and philosophy are later sublimated forms – and far from being a specialised sub-discipline, it is the primal origin of the entire Western tradition of magic.

GOETIC TIMELINE

- 8350 BCE: Neolithic foundation of Jericho, first walled town.
- 6250 BCE: Neolithic foundation of Catal Hayuk in Anatolia. Produces images of a goddess between two lions, resembling later Cybele.
- 6000 BCE: Island of Crete occupied from mainland.
- 4000 BCE: Bronze Age begins in the Middle East.
- 4000 BCE: Pottery finds suggest Libyan immigration to Crete, possibly due to expanding Egyptian hegemony.
- 3500 BCE: Thracian Copper Age; produces gold horse harness decorations, the oldest gold artefacts in Europe.
- 3200 BCE: Writing developed in Sumer and Egypt, beginnings of written history in dynastic lists maintained by priesthoods.



- 2900/2600 BCE: Cretan Bronze Age begins, Early Minoan or pre-palace period.
- 2400 BCE: Troy exerts economic dominance, controlling Black Sea trade.
- 2000 BCE: Middle Minoan, first palace period.
- 1600 BCE: Beginnings of Mycenaean civilisation in Greece; Zancle (later called Messene) founded in Sicily.
- 1580 BCE: Late Minoan.
- 1450 BCE: Destruction of Minoan Crete, followed by partial revival.
- 1453 BCE, 1222 BCE, 884 BCE: Legendary founding of the Olympic games.



- 1250 BCE: The likely historical period of the Black Sea expedition of the Argonauts and of the Trojan War. Homer portrays difficulties at home attending their return. Hittite references describe the Ahhiyawa (Achaean) king as equal to the Hittite king.

- 1219 BCE: An attempted migration of 'Sea Peoples', likely including landless Mycenaean warriors (Achaeans), allied to Libyans is repulsed by Egypt.
- 1200 BCE: A period marked by widespread economic turmoil and the depredations of the Sea Peoples. The beginning of the collapse of Mycenaean culture, the likely causes are nowadays considered to be inter-state strife and revolts against the palaces by the general population, rather than Dorian invasion. Palace sites destroyed or abandoned. The Hittite Kingdom falls, and Egypt loses its Asiatic possessions. In the course of this century the Dorian Greeks penetrate into Peloponnesian Greece and the Phrygians into Asia Minor.
- 1174 BCE: Rameses III repulses another attempted migration by the Sea Peoples.
- 1100 BCE: The Dorians spread to Crete, bringing the final end of Minoan culture. The former Mycenaean retire from the Peloponnese into Arcadia and into Attica and particularly Athens.
- 1050 BCE: Phrygians established as successors to the Hittites in Anatolia.
- 1000–800 BCE: Dark Ages (Greek); the period sees mass migration to Asia Minor, the birthplace of Greek philosophy.
- 959 BCE: Solomon builds the Temple.
- 945 BCE: Visit of the Queen of Sheba, Solomon's fall into idolatry. A Libyan dynasty rules in Egypt. Oracles are important to Egypt's Theban priesthood.
- 931 BCE: Death of Solomon.
- 900–800 BCE: The approximate period of Homer.

ARCHAIC PERIOD – EARLY CLASSICAL

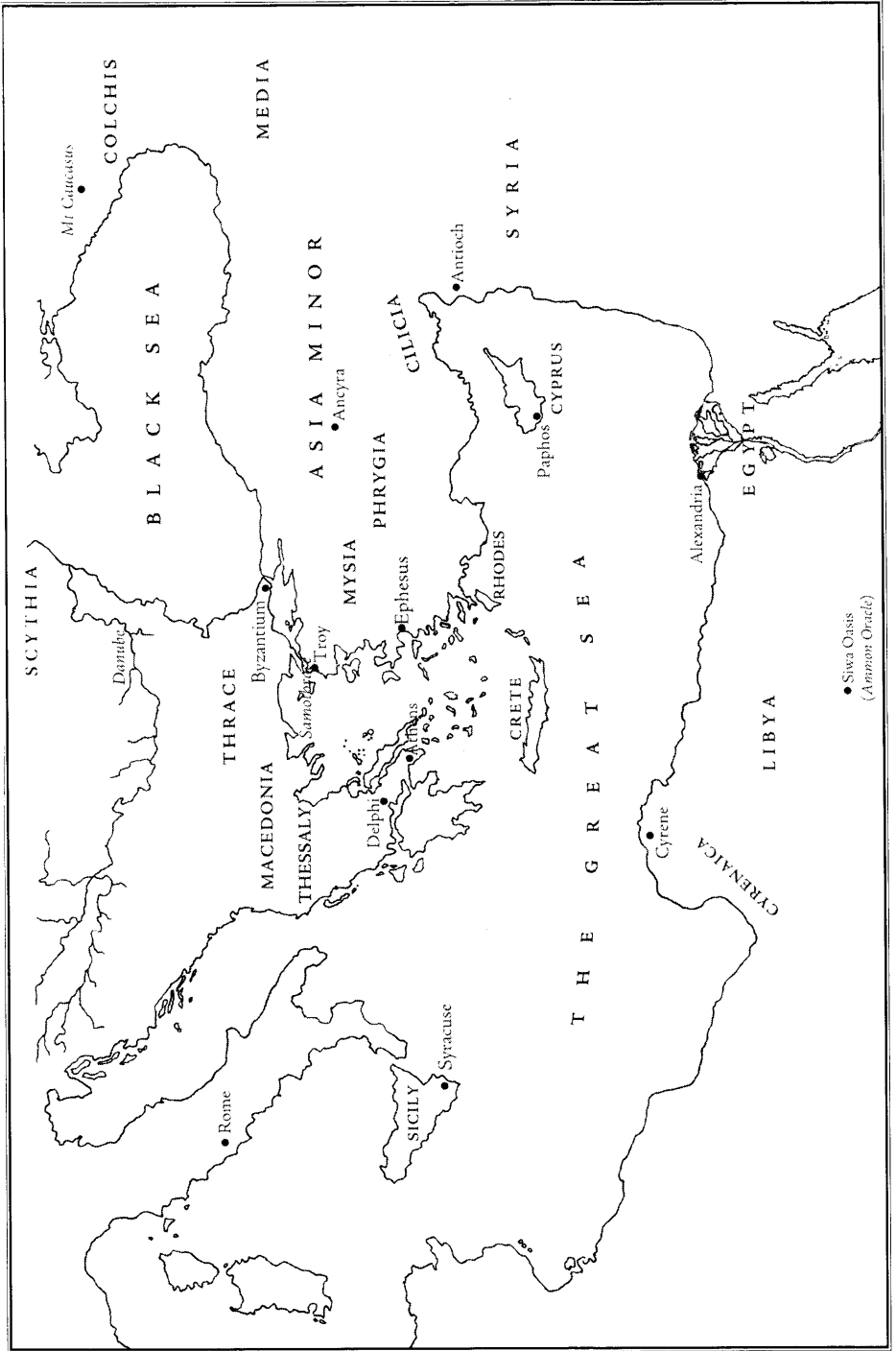
- 800–400 BCE: Major phase of Greek colonisation throughout the Mediterranean and Black Sea regions.
- 776 BCE: The traditional date of the Foundation of the Pan-Hellenic Olympics, rise of the city state: Classical Period begins.
- 732 BCE: Syracuse founded in Sicily by a Corinthian Greek named Archias.
- 670 BCE: Gyges king in Lydia, Assyria at war with Egypt.

GOETIC TIMELINE

- 630 BCE: The city of Cyrene in Libya is built by colonists from the island of Thera.
- 590 BCE: This is the likely period of Zoroaster's reforms of Persian religion, from polytheism comparable to Vedic Indian to worship of a single god, Ahura Mazda.
- 597–585 BCE: The beginnings of Babylonian exile of the Jewish people. Fundamental developments, including the Books of Moses, were shaped during this time.
- 580 BCE: Agrigentum founded in Sicily by the Greeks (Greek colonists were active in Sicily from 750 BCE to 5th century BCE).
- 583 BCE: Fall of Babylonian Empire to Cyrus of Persia, the end of the Jewish exile; rebuilding of the Temple.
- 500 BCE: Beginnings of Roman control in Italy.
- 400 BCE: Thousands of Greeks serve as mercenaries overseas ('the best heavy infantry in the world').
- 428 to 348 BCE: Plato, the hugely influential philosopher, mentioned *goes* in company with *pharmaceus* – an enchanter with drugs – and sophists, used in the derogatory sense of cheats.
- 342 BCE: Aeschines, an Athenian orator, in a speech impeaching Ctesiphon linked the terms *goes* and *magos* in a derogatory sense.

HELLENISTIC OR LATE CLASSICAL PERIOD

- 334 BCE: Alexander the Great crosses the Hellespont and defeats the Persian Empire. Hellenistic Period, cosmopolitan model replaces civilisation of the polis.
- 264 BCE: Romans control Italian peninsula.
- 185 BCE: Romans dominate Eastern Mediterranean.
- 44 BCE: Rome controls the entire Mediterranean.

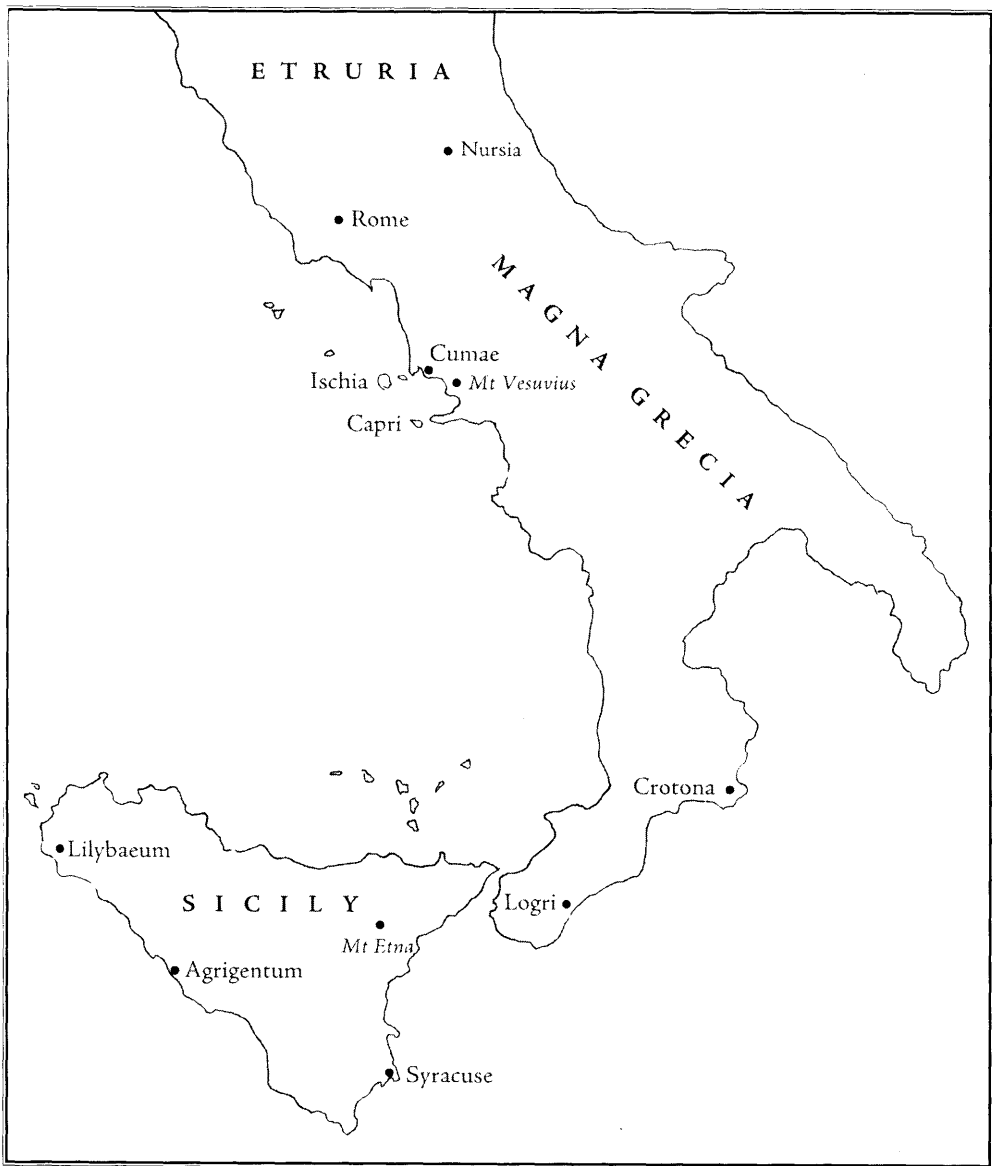


The World of the Argonauts

T H R A C E



Greece and Asia Minor



Magna Graecia



Phrygia, Syria and Egypt

*Blessed is he who knows the gods of the fields,
And Pan, and aged Sylvanus, and the sister Nymphs.*

Virgil's *Georgics* II. 490

Quoted in *The Humid Path* by Sir Edward Kelley

GOETIA & THE GRIMOIRES

I composed a certain work wherein I rehearsed the secret of secrets, in which I have preserved them hidden, and I have also therein concealed all secrets whatsoever of magical arts of all the masters; all secrets or experiments, namely, of these sciences which are in any way worth being accomplished. Also I have written them in this Key, so that like as a key openeth a treasure-house, so this alone may open the knowledge and understanding of magical arts and sciences.

The True Grimoire

OLD MAGICAL MANUALS are reasonably numerous, although perhaps the majority of well known ones are in part compilations or reconstructions drawing on the writings of learned commentators upon older and rarer works. Despite this availability it is sometimes quite difficult to obtain a clear picture of what magical ceremonies were actually like in the period 1200 to 1750 AD. Curiously enough there is a neglected but extremely useful text by which this obscurity may be lifted, and some modern misconceptions dispelled. A most complete eye witness account of magical ceremonies of the medieval and Renaissance period is contained in the lively and highly readable autobiography, *The Life of Benvenuto Cellini*. The quotations that follow provide all the information Cellini supplied. Although this appears in part in Skinner and Rankine's *The Veritable Key of Solomon* I have quoted at greater length to supply the reader with all the relevant information, and interspersed an extended commentary on several of the significant details that arise. I have made use of two English translations of this work, that of Robert H. Hobart Cust and the older translation by John Addington Symonds. While each is well regarded there are distinct advantages to consulting both. Symonds text is more elegant and readable in some respects, but Cust is less constrained by Victorian reserve. Judging from his footnotes Cust was perhaps also better acquainted with magical literature than Symonds, and decidedly more so than Symonds' commentators.

The reality of Cellini's participation in the rituals described need not be doubted. His was a tempestuous and uninhibited spirit to which action was second nature, and dissimulation a stranger.

It happened to me through certain curious chances that I became intimate with a certain Sicilian priest, who was of a very lofty genius and very learned in Greek and Latin literature. It occurred on one occasion in the course of a conversation that he chanced to speak of the Art of Necromancy; regarding which I said: *Throughout my whole life I have had the most intense desire to see or learn something of this Art.* To which remarks the priest rejoined: *That man who enters upon such an undertaking has need of a stout heart and firm courage.* I answered that of stoutness of heart and firmness of courage I had enough and to spare, provided the opportunity. Thereupon the priest answered: *If you have the heart to dare it, I will amply satisfy your desire.* Accordingly we agreed upon attempting the adventure.

This meeting took place in 1535, significant in the history of magic as the year of Cornelius Agrippa's death. This was two years after the first complete publication of his *Occult Philosophy* and five years after the publication of *The Uncertainty and Vanity of the Sciences*. It was also thirty years before the publication of the more practical *Fourth Book of Occult Philosophy*. Regarding this latter book, controversy still reigns as to whether or not Agrippa wrote it; in truth only parts of it claim to be written by him, which it is at least possible that they were. At the time of Cellini's experience some of these writings had been circulating in manuscript for some time, and they certainly could have been consulted by the heroes of this narrative. In any case, as will appear, the varieties of ceremonial magic these writings describe were indeed in contemporary use. It is of the very first importance to note that this Sicilian necromancer was, like Agrippa, no stranger to Classical literature. Such familiarity is usually understated in the grimoires, and even more so by moderns over-influenced by Kabbalistic interpretations. In reality to practice magic influenced by the pagan past was highly suspect ('to read Greek is to turn heretic'), so

such influence was usually disguised or disavowed. Its presence and influence was nevertheless very strong. Considering this Classical background the location of the necromantic experiment is rather appropriate:

The priest one evening got everything in order, and bade me find a companion or two. I invited Vincenzo Romoli my very great friend, and the priest brought with him a man from Pistoja, who also studied Necromancy. Proceeding to the Coliseum, the priest having robed himself there after the manner of necromancers, set himself to drawing circles on the ground with the most elaborate ceremonial that it is possible to imagine in the world; and he had made us bring precious essences and materials for lighting a fire, besides some evil smelling drugs (asafoetida). When all was in readiness, he made the entrance into the circle; and taking us by the hand one by one he set us within the circle; then he allotted our duties; he gave the pentacle into the hand of that other necromancer his companion; to us others the care of the fire for the perfumes; then he betook himself to his incantations.

The elaborate nature of the circle is not a sufficient clue for us to ascertain which text the necromancer was using. At this date it may well have been a circle from the *Heptameron* which was available in Italy from 1496, and likely earlier in manuscript form. The *Heptameron* sets forth rules for drawing circles that are detailed and elaborate, but there is no solid indication in the text that this was the form used.

The insistence on a companion is typical of the *Key of Solomon*, however the use to which asafoetida is put later in this rite is quite different from that of the *Key*. Of particular interest to me is the apparent use of a single fire which appears to have been of reasonable, even substantial, size. This is in accord with such texts as the *Grimorium Verum* and the *Grand Grimoire*. These are often supposed to be semi-spurious and of later date, but in fact preserve authentic traditions not found in the *Key* and other less overtly demonic grimoires. On the other hand a single censer – also described as a fire – is recommended by the *Heptameron*. However, the use of multiple perfumes also resembles the *Grimorium Verum* while utterly

distinct from the *Heptameron* which attributes a single perfume to each day of the week. Judging from descriptions and the occasional illustration in various grimoires, this fire or single censer took the form of what we nowadays would call a brazier. It is noteworthy that the *Grimorium Verum* and other late French grimoires uniformly retain this feature.

This business lasted more than an hour and a half; there appeared several legions of spirits, to such an extent that the Coliseum was quite full of them. I was looking after the perfumes, when the priest became aware that there were so large a number present, and turning to me said: *Benvenuto, ask them something*. I called on them to reunite me with my Sicilian Angelica. On that night we received no answer; but I took the very greatest satisfaction from it, my interest being much encouraged.

'This business' evidently alludes to the construction of the circle and the recital of conjurations. Modern ceremonial is often more abbreviated, and, let it be said, less effective. A preliminary banishing ritual and invocations as prescribed by nineteenth century magicians might take half this time.

Note too that there is absolutely no mention of any triangle of manifestation outside the circle. This adjunct to evocations probably is not a consistent feature of the grimoires. In its modern form it derives from mention by Weyer, elaborated in the *Goetia of Solomon*, and taken for granted by most modern magicians. That it would serve no purpose whatever when legions of spirits appear, being large enough for one human sized entity at the most, does rather militate against its utility in some conceptions of magical procedures.

The necromancer said that it would be necessary for us to go another time, and that I should be satisfied in respect of all that I asked, but that he wished me to take with me a little lad of pure virginity. I took one of my shop-boys, who was about twelve years old, and I invited Vincenzo Romoli again; and a certain Agnolino Gaddi, who was our intimate friend.

This employment of a child clairvoyant is typical of many operations in the papyri. These evolved into the Art Armadel, a highly influential procedure which is incorporated in many important grimoires. A detailed commentary on this type of operation can be found in my edition of *The True Grimoire*. Here it is only necessary to say that the rite is undoubtedly ancient, providing clear evidence of the pre-Christian precursors of the grimoires.

When we arrived again at the appointed spot, the necromancer having made the same preparations with that same and even more wonderful precision, set us within the circle, which he had again made with more wondrous art and more wondrous ceremonies; then to my friend Vincenzo he gave the charge of the perfumes and of the fire; and with him the said Agnolino Gaddi; then he put the pentacle into my hand, which he told me that I must turn in the direction towards the points he indicated to me, and beneath the pentacle I stationed that little lad, my shop-boy.

This use of the pentacle is important, details of its construction or appearance being present in many grimoires without clear instructions on its use. In *The True Grimoire* it is recommended that such a pentacle be placed at the four points of the compass. In the *Key of Solomon* other pentacles are to be worn by the magician beneath a veil and shown to the spirits at need. The procedure here appears to combine both approaches, and reflects the older traditions regarding a Seal or Pentacle of Solomon. The form in the *Key* is probably considerably later, numerous complex and specialised pentacles replacing the single ubiquitous form of the singular Pentacle of Solomon.

The necromancer commenced to utter those very terrible invocations, calling by name a multitude of demons, the chiefs of legions of spirits, and summoned them by the Virtue and Power of God, the Uncreated, Living and Eternal, in the Hebrew language, and very frequently besides in Greek and Latin; to such purpose that in a short space of time they

filled the whole Coliseum a hundredfold as many as had appeared that first time. Vincenzo Romoli, together with Agnolino attended to keeping up the fire, and heaped on quantities of precious perfumes. I, by the advice of the necromancer, again asked that I might be reunited with Angelica. The necromancer turning to me said: *Do you hear what they have told you? That within the space of one month you will be where she is?* Then again he prayed me to stand firm by him, for the legions were a thousandfold more than he had summoned, and that they were the most dangerous of infernal spirits; and since they had settled what I had asked, it was necessary to be civil to them; and patiently dismiss them.

The phrase 'Virtue and Power of God' bears some resemblance to the text called the *Ars Notoria*, while a similar expression occurs in the *Key*; however the term may be a general one. It is plain enough that the spirits answered the question of the necromancer, and while terrified he was ready enough to deal with them without threats or curses.

On the other hand the lad who was beneath the pentacle, in greatest terror said, there were a million of the fiercest men swarming round and threatening us. He said besides that four enormous giants had appeared, who were striving to force their way into the circle. All the while the necromancer, trembling with fright, endeavoured with mild and gentle persuasions to dismiss them. Vincenzo Romoli, who was trembling like a reed in the wind, looked after the perfumes. I, who was as much in fear as the rest, endeavoured to show less, and to inspire them all with the most marvellous courage; but the truth is I thought myself a dead man on seeing the terror of the necromancer himself. The lad had placed his head between his knees, saying: *This is how I will meet death, for we are all dead men.* Again I said to the lad: *These creatures are all inferior to us, and what you see is but smoke and shadow; therefore raise your eyes.* When he had raised them, he cried out again: *The whole Coliseum is in flames, and the fire is coming down upon us:* and covering his face with his hands, he said again that he was dead, and that he could not endure the sight any longer.

The position of the child seer beneath the pentacle is interesting, it underlines the protective nature of the symbol and additionally suggests that Cellini turned the pentacle this way and that rather than carry it to the various quarters. The impression created by these references implies that the pentacle was of a fairly large size, probably requiring both hands. The pentacle would be made from the virgin parchment upon which such emphasis is placed in many grimoires. The reader should bear in mind its central place in such magic, and that the parchment was obtained from a sacrificed goat or lamb. This vital talismanic object has unsuspected ancient roots in remote antiquity, which will be examined in Book Two.

As Skinner and Rankine note, the four enormous giants, who cannot have been gathered at a single point, may well represent the Four Kings of the Cardinal Points who are frequently mentioned in goetic texts. In the midst of the ceremony Cellini declared that the spirits are inferior to humans, who according to holy writ have a special place in God's dispensation. In context this has the ring of vainglory, an attempt to inspire courage rather than a statement of confident belief.

The necromancer appealed to me to keep steady, and to direct them to throw asafoetida upon the coals: so turning to Vincenzo Romoli I told him to make the fumigation at once. While I spoke, I was looking at Agnolino Gaddi, whose eyes were starting from their sockets in his terror, and who was more than half dead, and said to him: *Agnolo, at times such as this one must not yield to fear, but give oneself to action; therefore stir yourself and fling a handful of asafoetida on the fire.* Agnolo, in that moment as he moved, made a flatulent trumpeting with so great an abundance of excrement as was much more powerful than the asafoetida. The lad at that horrible stench and that noise raised his face a little, on hearing me laugh, and plucking up courage, he said that the spirits were departing in great haste.

The use of asafoetida as a banishing agent is by no means unknown, but it is necessary to distinguish its use in this way from the procedures of both the *Key of Solomon* and the *Goetia of Solomon*. In both these texts

asafoetida is used in the last resort as part of a contraining method to force reluctant spirits to appear. Here the use of stinking odours is all too plainly employed to banish spirits.

Thus we continued until the bells began to ring for matins. Again the lad told us that but few remained, and those at a distance. When the necromancer had completed all the remainder of his ceremonies, having unrobed and repacked a great bundle of books that he had brought, we all together issued with him from the circle, huddling ourselves close to one another; especially the lad, who was placed in the middle, and had taken hold of the necromancer by his gown and of me by my cloak; and continually whilst we were going towards our homes near the Banks, he kept on telling us that two of those spirits he had seen in the Coliseum were going gambolling along in front of us, sometimes skipping along the roofs, and sometimes upon the ground.

Matins may represent midnight or daybreak. It is very interesting that the necromancer has a bundle of books with him, rather than a single grimoire. This accounts for many features of this rite, such as the conjurations in different languages. Some modern magicians have a tendency to purism, treating specific grimoires as 'things in themselves'. This eschewing as eclectic any practical or theoretical combination of sources contrasts strongly with the method of this authentic Renaissance magician.

Our necromancer has evidently performed the necessary rites of dismissal (the license to depart), but despite this there are still spirits to be seen on leaving the circle. This contrasts strongly with the usual advice of the grimoires to be absolutely certain the spirits have departed before quitting the circle. Presumably the gambolling spirits accompanying their homeward journey were deemed of a less ferocious order. From another perspective, post ritual visions of this kind are only to be expected, the contrary advice of the grimoires is perhaps a little mechanistic.

The necromancer said that often as he had entered magic circles, he had never encountered so great an adventure as this. He also tried to

persuade me to consent to join with him in consecrating a book, by means of which we should derive immeasurable wealth, since we could call up the demons to show us some of the treasures of which the earth is full, and that by that means we should become very rich; and that love-affairs like mine were vanities and follies of no consequence. I replied that if I knew the Latin language I would be very willing to do such a thing. Nevertheless he continued to persuade me, saying that the Latin language would serve me to no purpose, and that if he desired he could have found many persons well-instructed in Latin; but that he had never found anyone of as sound a courage as I had, and that I ought to attend to his counsel. With these discussions we arrived at our homes, and each one of us dreamed of devils the whole of that night. As we were in the habit of meeting daily, the necromancer kept urging me towards that undertaking. Accordingly I asked him what time it would take, and where we should have to go. To this he replied that in less than one month we could conclude the matter, and that the place most adapted for it was in the mountains of Norcia; a master of his had consecrated such a book nearer to Rome at a place called the Badia di Farfa; but he had met with some difficulties there, which would not occur in the mountains of Norcia; the Norcian peasants are trustworthy persons, and have some practice in such matters, so that they can when necessary render valuable assistance.

As will subsequently be seen, the location the necromancer speaks of is an important focus of pagan survivals and folklore traditions. These are of great interest in themselves. That they were not entirely separate from the 'Judæo-Christian' magic of the grimoires, which were the province of a literate clergy, is particularly significant. It is too often supposed that the magic of the grimoires reflects only the Christianised magic of a clerical underground, an adaptation of exorcism techniques and so forth. An arbitrary distinction is often drawn between folk magic and this ecclesiastical species. Such a distinction leads to circular arguments, where magical texts deviating from the definition are termed pseudo-grimoires. In reality such folkloric elements are present to a greater or lesser degree in the ma-

jority of grimoires; those that emphasise it more than others may well be more representative rather than less.

This priestly necromancer moved me so much by his persuasions that I was well disposed to the deed, but I said that I wanted first to finish those medals that I was making for the Pope. I confided what I was doing concerning them to this man alone, begging him to keep them secret. At the same time I never gave up asking him if he believed I should be reunited with my Sicilian Angelica at the time indicated; for the time was drawing near, and it seemed me a singular thing that I heard nothing of her. The necromancer assured me that I should most certainly find myself where she was, because the spirits never fail, when they make promises as they had then done; but that I must keep my eyes open, and be on my guard against misfortune that might happen to me in that connection, and to put restraint on myself to endure somewhat against my inclination, for he foresaw an imminent danger therein; well would it be for me if I went with him to consecrate the book, since this would avert the peril that menaced me, and would make us both most fortunate...

Here Cellini's adventures with the necromancer come to an end. A great danger did come upon him, as predicted by the necromancer, and fleeing the city in consequence he was unexpectedly re-united with the Sicilian Angelica within the allotted time. Since the necromancer never appears again it can only be assumed that he had left for Norcia in Cellini's absence. It is unfortunate that the artist did not accompany the necromancer to Norcia to consecrate the Book of Spirits, and share that adventure with us. Before taking our magical book to the mountain of the Sibyl in Book Two, another important journey awaits us.

THE ARGONAUTICA: BOOK I
PREPARATION & DEPARTURE

Phrixus died, and was buried, but his spirit had no rest; for he was buried far from his native land, and the pleasant hills of Hellas. So he came in dreams to the heroes of the Minyai, and called sadly by their beds, 'Come and set my spirit free, that I may go home to my fathers and to my kinsfolk, and the pleasant Minyan land.' And they asked, 'How shall we set your spirit free?' 'You must sail over the sea to Colchis, and bring home the Golden Fleece; and then my spirit will come back with it, and I shall sleep with my fathers and have rest.'

Charles Kingsley, *The Heroes*

WHEN THIS BOOK BEGAN it was as part of a commentary on the *Grimorium Verum*, which expanded into a history of goetic magic and an exploration of its earliest roots and myths. Quite unexpectedly, in the process of elucidating the history of magic in the world of the Greeks, the voyage of the Argonauts emerged as a major theme. In time, as work progressed, there arose the need for a structure interconnecting the themes involved. These concerned geographical and ethnological issues, as well as the evolution of rituals and other aspects of goetic magic. The travels of the Argonauts presented such a structure: their voyage at once representing shamanic travel, the rise, fall and renaissance of chthonic religion, and an interconnecting route through the Mystery cults and foreign influences on Greek traditions.

In the preliminary stages of expanding the work to cover the wider historical concerns, the need for a gallery of important characters, historical and mythical became apparent. Many of these characters were involved in some way with the *Voyage of the Argo*, or *Argonautica*. Additionally, the resemblance of this gallery to the roll call of crew members at the beginning of the *Argonautica* was striking and strangely appealing. It also became

apparent that many other topics important to the study were involved in the voyage of the Argo. The geography of the *Argonautica* suited my purposes very well; a shamanic journey from Thessaly, land of classical witchcraft to Colchis home of the major witch figures of classical myth. One the way important sites and persons are encountered, and the return travels across Europe (represented by the grimoires) to the west coast of Italy and an African climax.

Accordingly, without more ado, the *Argonautica* became part and parcel of the structure of the work. At first glance an epic poem may seem a distant concern from elucidating the background to the magic of the grimoires. If present, this impression will hopefully disappear as the reader undertakes the journey involved. The decision to make a commentary on the *Argonautica* a key element of the book has an additional virtue. Many references to the Greek elements in occultism focus on Hermeticism or other philosophical traditions. Goetia is older than any of these, being more closely related to the roots of mythology in archaic ritual. The *Argonautica* is an excellent vehicle for introducing themes of this nature.

The only complete text of this ancient legend is the *Argonautica* composed by Apollonius of Rhodes. This is a much later composition than the Homeric epics, which the author consciously imitated in many respects. Apollonius was a resident of Alexandria, then the intellectual centre of the world. He was to become the director of the famous Library in the time of Ptolemy the Third. His first attempt at writing this poem was so badly received that he retired to Rhodes. Here he revised his text, and returned to a triumphant reception in Alexandria. Unlike other poets of his time Apollonius did not break with older poetic tradition but built on it. This and his unparalleled access to ancient literature and earlier versions of the legend is a major compensation for the comparative lateness of the text, which dates from the middle of the third century BCE.

An important difference from Homer is Apollonius' strong sympathy with the old Mystery cults, and dissatisfaction with the Olympian state religion. In this he is typical of many intellectuals, in Alexandria and throughout the Hellenistic world. This represents the revival of chthonic religious traditions, of which Orphism was a potent cause. Some have

gone so far as to call the *Argonautica* an Orphic book in its own right. There is a strong shamanic motif central to the epic, which has as one of its objectives the recovery of a soul from a distant place: *For Phrixus bid-deth us go to the halls of Aetes, and bring his spirit home* (Pindar's *Pythian Ode IV*). In part this explains the attraction of the theme for an author of Apollonius' sympathies, as also its relevance to our study.

Those familiar with the story will doubtless be aware that many aspects of the voyage are geographically impossible. One reason is the relative ignorance of geography when the epic first took shape, setting precedents which better informed later writers followed out of reverence for tradition. It is also partially the result of combining originally distinct legendary journeys, with differing destinations and stages. Another reason however is that earthly geography has little to do with several aspects of the myth, which are concerned with a voyage into a magical realm. Elastic geography is a regular feature of Greek myth in general. There are at least four and perhaps as many as six locations for Mount Olympus. The route and indeed the destination of the Argonauts are similarly cloaked in mystery.

The legend contains, beside its central objectives, many magical themes of great antiquity and clues to archaic elements of Greek religion. Some of the more salient, as they appear in the epic of Apollonius, are noted here.

The epic begins with the arrival of Jason at the court of the usurper, Pelias, in the city of Iolcus in Thessaly. This northernmost region of Greece bordered Macedonia to the north; to the west Illyria and Epiros, with the sea to the East. Of the various mythic locations of Mount Olympus, the Classical site was in Thessaly. The inhabitants of the region were notoriously given to magical practices and barbarous incantations. It is thus a suitable starting place for a study of archaic magic in Grecian culture. It is doubly so since, having the sea to the East, the departure of the Argo is from Thessaly towards the Black Sea. This geographically and symbolically puts Classical Greece behind us, and enters the terrain of myth and ancient ritual wherein Goetia is rooted.

King Pelias had dispossessed Jason's father, and Jason's return was at the advice of an oracle to seek and claim his inheritance. On the way there he had crossed a flooded river and carried an old woman across, who was

the goddess Hera in disguise. In getting across he lost a sandal, and thus arrived at the city with one bare foot. The single sandal is frequently found as an emblem of Hecate, while carrying a woman across a river features in important Balkan folk rituals. Interesting as these details are it is perhaps unwise to place too much emphasis on them at this point. However, the rest of Jason's costume consisted of leather buskins and the skin of a leopard, the characteristic costume of Dionysus. These details of Jason's appearance certainly suggest a ritualistic background. Curiously the name of the flooded river, Anaurus, is shared with a river of Mount Ida in Phrygia. When he arrived in Iolcus Jason encountered the king, who had been warned by an oracle to beware a man with one sandal, who would cause his death. When Jason demanded his inheritance Pelias agreed, on condition he first fetch the golden fleece from Colchis.

The fleece was that of a sacred ram, and would likely originally have been black, possibly dyed purple, as with sacred rams in Crete, Samothrace and elsewhere. Ram skins of this kind were worn in important purification rituals and were obtained from sacrificial victims. It is extremely important to note that the ram was by far the most common sacrificial victim offered to heroes. The idea of a golden fleece, and the likely change in colour from the original, derives from the use of fleeces to capture gold particles in a river bed. Both the Hebrus in Thrace and the Phasis in Colchis were gold bearing rivers. A common relative of Jason and Pelias, Phrixus, had fled to Colchis with this ram, and there been basely murdered and buried far from home. As a result his homeland was cursed, and the purpose of the quest was to rescue the unquiet spirit and lift the curse.

Colchis

What was the old Colchian magic, but the minute study of Nature in her lowliest works? What the fable of Medea, but a proof of the powers that may be extracted from the germ and leaf? [They] sought in the meanest herbs what, perhaps, the Babylonian sages explored in vain amidst the loftiest stars.























Bulwer-Lytton, *Zanoni*

The destination of the Argonauts was Colchis, a country to the east of the Black Sea, now in modern Georgia. To the north were the Caucasus Mountains, and the territory of the Scythians. To the south were the Moschi mountains, and beyond those Armenia, (and Mount Ararat, where the Ark of Noah is said to have made landfall after the Flood). It was the birthplace of Medea, and most productive of potent magical herbs and poisons. There was a longstanding Classical tradition that its inhabitants were originally Egyptians, colonists from the time of Sesostris (believed to be Rameses the Great). Herodotus records that the Colchians well remembered their Egyptian origins, and retained such Egyptian practices as circumcision, as well as physically resembling their one time countrymen. He mentions as further confirmation their distinctive manner of weaving, elements of their language, and the testimony of his Egyptian informants. This was accepted as fact by nineteenth century mythographers such as Lemprière. Whatever the case, the territory equates with parts of modern Georgia and Armenia. This is a region whose inhabitants have vigorously maintained a distinctive identity from their neighbours since ancient times. Archaic practices persist among the mountain tribes to this day, and are enumerated by Eliade, who sees in them possible traces of ancient Scythian influence. These include divinatory and visionary practices and the roles of psychopomp and necromancer, the latter involving mediumistic methods.

As the home of famed sorceresses Circe and Medea, Colchis deserves to be recognised, in mythic terms at least, as a fountainhead of magical tradition. A brief diversion towards this goal is worth taking here. Trithemius,

a major influence on both Dee and Agrippa, is also the source for a popular magical alphabet. In his work *Polygraphia* (1518) he attributed this script to a magician called Honorius, a Theban, which seemingly connects it with *Liber Juratus*. He gives as his source Peter of Abano (1250 to 1316), which if correct would push the origins of the alphabet back into the medieval period. Agrippa also mentions Peter of Abano in connection with this alphabet, but may as easily be drawing on Trithemius as his own reading. The alphabet is interesting in two major respects; firstly that it is a cryptic substitute not for Hebrew letters but for Latin. Secondly its characters appear to have been strongly influenced by the alphabet of Georgia, formerly known as Colchis, the home of Medea and Circe.

Alphabet of Honorius

					
a	b	c	d	e	f
					
g	h	i/j	k	l	m
					
n	o	p	q	r	s
					
t	u/v/w	x	y	z	&

To return to the path direct: Colchis was probably not the original destination of the Argo, nor was the Golden Fleece the prize. Older versions appear to have involved a quest for amber, a commodity with important sacred connotations in Mycenæan culture. Many places on the route of the Argonauts expedition were associated with this ancient trade. Of particular interest perhaps is the island of Samothrace, also known as the Island of Electra. Electra was the daughter of Atlas and her name means Amber. Samothrace therefore can also be referred to as the Island of Amber. The Ancient Greeks discovered that amber behaved strangely, for example attracting feathers when rubbed by fur, silk and so on. *Elektron* is their word for amber and we obtain our words *electron*, *electricity*, &c. from this. The Latin word *electricus* refers to the effects of friction on amber. These properties placed amber in a similar class to magnets magically. In addition the Greek word *elektor* literally means beaming sun, giving amber solar connotations relevant to the themes of this book.

The Argo

Apollonius does not describe the building of the ship, named the Argo, supposedly out of deference to earlier poets who had done so. However, there are good reasons not to follow his example. Given the nature of the quest undertaken by the Argonauts, the ship takes on a significance that has been insufficiently underlined. The ship serves the same purpose as the arrow of Hyperborean Abaris, or the flying drum of shamans from Tibet and elsewhere. It is a vehicle for entering the other-world.

Various etymologies have been proposed for the name of the ship. Some fly in the face of tradition, saying it was called Argo because launched from Argos, whereas tradition has it built and launched at Pagasæ. Others say it bore that name because it was full of Greeks, commonly called Argives. Another suggestion is that it was named after the man who built it, but whether he was part of the original story cannot now be known and he may equally well have been added to the story and designated the builder because of the name of the ship. The most plausible explanation is that

suggested by Diodorus Siculus who derived the name from *argos* which signifies swift, besides its better known meanings of white and shining. Besides being a fine name for a ship, this etymology accords well with the ability of the shaman to travel speedily anywhere; a power often echoed in the grimoires.

(His etymology for the Argo derives from a known Indo-European root. By contrast the most ancient roots of the word arrow, which is of Indo-European origin, are not known but inferred by philologists. It is therefore not beyond the bounds of philological possibility, in phonetics and meaning, that arrow derives from the same root as Argo. The roots of Argo and Ark are apparently as distant as Parnassus from Ararat, since the Indo-European root of Ark means secret, closed or kept safe, as in arcane. However, the same implied root for arrow is shared by the Latin *arcus* meaning a bow. Archery and the architectural arch are from a common root. However the secret of the celestial ship is not the making of arches, but the making of fire with a bow which was originally a fire drill as well as a weapon. Such wordplay though here presented hesitantly and parenthetically, would commend itself to the Greeks.)

According to Apollonius and other authors Argo was built at Jason's request by a hero named Argus. It was built at Pagasæ in Thessalian Magnesia, from the pines of Mount Pelion. Important traditions concerning various places named Magnesia and the etymological connection with magnetic ore will be discussed in Book Four. A beam of the prow, possibly a figurehead, was cut by Athena herself from an oak at Dodona. This was the site of a famous oracular grove more ancient than Delphi, which demonstrates the antiquity of the legend. She conferred on this beam the power of speech, so that it was able to grant oracles to the Argonauts during the voyage.

The Oracle of Dodona was located in the region of Thesprotia in Epiros; upon a mountain named Tmarus (Pliny names it Tomarus). It was according to all traditions the oldest in Greece, founded by the Pelasgians, often considered a pre-Hellenic race but in reality probably more an older level of culture than a distinct ethnic group. Traditionally it was associated with Zeus, although the earlier dedication was perhaps

to an earth goddess. The Pelasgians and their traditions were considered among the most ancient in the world. They were dispersed in several parts of Greece, including Epiros, Thessaly and Peloponnesus, as well as Italy, Crete and various Aegean islands.

The Oracle took its name from a nearby town, this and the temple of Zeus were said to have been built either by Deucalian, or by Pelasgus. Herodotus, who knew the priestesses of Dodona personally, made an interesting statement about its antiquity. He said that the Pelasgians who worshipped there did not at that time distinguish the gods in name or title. The importance of this statement may have been previously overlooked. Taken with his recording their use of the term *theoi* it strongly suggests a cult similar to the Cabiric cult of the *megala theoi* or great gods. Indeed just before this he mentions the use of phallic images taught to the Greeks by the Pelasgians, resembling those of Samothrace. Probably the original male deity of Dodona had resembled the Thracian 'Hero'; who possessed several qualities, and was the son and lover of the goddess. In later Greek use these attributes of the Hero were separated into distinct divine roles with different names. Pelasgus, the ancestor of the Pelasgians, was called a son of the earth goddess, or alternatively of Zeus and Niobe. These details support the idea that the traditions of the Pelasgians and Thracians had a good deal in common.

The Greeks themselves were of the opinion that the oracles were originally connected with the earth goddess and chthonic powers. The oracular response of the god was divined from the wind rustling in the trees, most particularly oaks, although beeches are mentioned. Apparently such sounds were magnified by hanging brazen vessels from the branches. These would clang against one another in the wind, and these sounds were then interpreted. Originally it was believed the oracle was derived from the murmuring of a fountain, which was afterwards changed.

Again according to tradition the original oracles were interpreted by men, but later by women. The priests were known as Selloi, occasionally given as Helloi. The priestesses were called Peleads, and may have been two in number (according to Sophocles in his *Trachiniæ*), while Herodotus mentions three. Their name derives from the word for dove;

and according to Herodotus the oracle was founded by a dove. Two black doves, perhaps pigeons, took flight from the city of Thebes in Egypt. One alighted at the temple of Jupiter Ammon in Libya, the other at Dodona. With a human voice they declared that the ground was consecrated by Jupiter, and would be the sites of oracles. One interpretation held this to result from the fact that the word for doves in many parts of Greece signified old women in Epiros.

The nearby mountain of Parnassus was where the ship of Deucalion, the Greek Noah, came to rest after the flood. It is worthy of note that Deucalion was the son of Prometheus, the Lord of Fire and the maker of men. The influence of this oracle was later supplanted by Delphi, but in the Heroic Age Dodona was the most prestigious oracle in Greece.

The Heroes Assemble

The roll call of heroes forming the crew of the Argo differs widely from one ancient author to the next. The archaic form of the legend was already well known when Homer composed his epics, and he names only Jason. The involvement of the Theban hero, Heracles, is likely a late interpolation; the Argonautica is essentially a Thessalian epic. A tradition of fifty oarsmen is likely an original part of the story and for the most part no names are really required. The names that subsequently accumulated may represent story-tellers gratifying their listeners by including local favourites, or claim staking by Greek states to trading rights in the Black Sea, breaking a Trojan monopoly. Whatever the explanation, my crew will remain largely nameless. The most important figures for this study are Jason; Peleus, who is the father of Achilles; Orpheus; Mopsus the soothsayer; Argus; Aethalides; Idmon the prophet and son of Apollo and Cyrene; and the Dioscuri, Castor and Polydeuces.

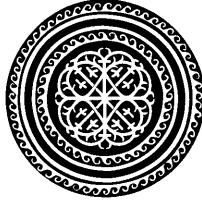
The assembled heroes received, in addition to the title Argonauts, the designation of Minyans. This title derived from a king named Minyas, whose descendents many of them were. Despite differences in the roll-call the crew contains an interesting mix of talents. The majority are fight-

ers but several soothsayers are to be found amongst them, and – naturally enough – some accomplished navigators. There are ready comparisons with the solar boats of the Egyptians, which figure prominently in Egyptian funerary texts. These too contained fighters, protecting the god on his underworld journey, but also gods of magic and a helmsman. The souls of the departed also sought passage in these solar boats; this likely supplied the prototype for Charon the ferryman of Hades. These themes are mirrored in the symbolism of an otherworldly journey implicit in the voyage of the *Argo*. Another similarity is to be found in the islands and other locations, each with distinct perils of their own, encountered in the Egyptian underworld.

Before their departure the Argonauts offered sacrifice to Apollo, in his role of god of shores and embarkation. This is an interesting and significant role of the god of prophecy, so important to the inspired magicians of this study. The altar was formed from the shingle of the beach, upon which a fire of olive-wood was built. Two oxen were brought forward to the altar by the youngest heroes present. Lustral water and barley-corns were carried by the others. The prayer to Apollo was made by Jason himself, sprinkling barley-corns while he prayed. The sacrifice was then made, and as on every occasion Apollonius describes the procedure exactly. Each time this description is made, the lighting of the fire itself is omitted, a point to which reference will be made later. Jason then pours libations of unmixed wine, while the prophet Idmon observes the sacrificial fire for omens.

Idmon observed the desired signs of flames all round the offering, and dark smoke ascending in spirals. From this he foretold the will of Apollo that the quest will be successful, and the heroes will return with the fleece. His own fate is less fortunate, he foretells his death in a distant land, as revealed by prior omens. After the sacrifice the Argonauts feast on the shore, seated on a strewn carpet of leaves. The details of the conversation during the feast, the departure and early part of the journey do not require comment.

GOETIC GALLERY:
ARGONAUTICA



O blessed is he who knows the initiations of the gods.

Euripides, *Bacchæ*

THERE ARE SEVERAL NOTEWORTHY NAMES, both mythical and historical, most of whom have either been referred to by academics in the context of the 'Greek shamans' controversy, or were referred to as *goetes* in Classical literature. All these names bear strong traces of connection with traditions related to the origins of *goetia*. These individuals arise frequently in studies of this subject and their stories involve many major aspects of the discussion. There are innumerable scattered references in ancient and modern literature to sift through in following such references. This is simple enough for a professional academic with access to a university library, but not every magically inclined reader enjoys such facilities. In writing this book therefore, presenting an account of these figures became an evident necessity. It has the additional advantage of personalising the ideas involved, making the whole topic more accessible. This first section of the gallery deals with several figures connected with the *Argonautica* in various ways. They include a wounded warrior king who underwent a healing journey, an oracular hero and four soothsayers.

Amphiarus

Like many figures in this study, Amphiarus was the focus of an oracular hero cult. His legend credits him with being present at the hunt of the Calydonian boar. He was also one of the Argonauts, whose voyage contains shamanic elements and more or less explicit references to the Mysteries. This voyage interconnects many of the figures in this gallery. He was a famous prophet, and on this account was called a son of Apollo. He attempted to avoid taking part in Adrastus' war against Thebes, knowing he was doomed to die there, but was betrayed by his wife in return for a bribe. His chariot was swallowed up by the earth during a rout in this war, thereupon Zeus made him immortal. In accordance with his wishes, when news reached his son of his death, he slew his treacherous mother. Amphiarus received divine honours after death, with a statue and oracular shrine at Oropus in Attica. Like Aeacos, he too is invoked in the Magical Papyri (see PGM IV 1445 and footnote). Some scholars prefer to see oracular heroes of his type as gods from the outset; some are certainly survivals from earlier phases of religion. Those who desired to consult the oracle of Amphiarus were required to undertake a fast of twenty-four hours without food and three times as long without wine. After this they sacrificed a ram, and laying the fleece upon the ground spent the night sleeping upon it in expectation of a prophetic dream. Such ritual use of the fleece lies behind the legend of the Golden Fleece itself, and the mysterious virgin parchment from which the Pentacle of Solomon and other important artefacts of ritual magic are made. During the time of Xerxes, according to Plutarch, a servant of Mardonius sought such an oracle for his master who was with the army opposing the Persians. In his dream he saw the priest of the shrine shouting at him and throwing stones at his head as if to drive him away. This oracle was fulfilled in the death of Mardonius by a stone striking his head. This form of dream oracle was typical of such shrines; not containing obscure symbolic elements but a straightforward visitation of a priest or god. Near his temple was a sacred fountain. Only those who had consulted his oracle or received a cure were permitted to bathe there. In gratitude they cast gold and silver into the waters.

Mopsus

There are two seers or prophets of this name in Greek mythology. The first was born in Thessaly, a region of Greece famous for its witches, in the city of Titaressa. He was the son of Ampyx and Chloris. Of the several seers on the voyage of the Argonauts Mopsus is perhaps the most significant in several respects. On the return of the Argonauts from Colchis Mopsus was bitten by a snake while the Argonauts were in Libya. A shrine built to him on the sea-shore became the site of a temple where oracles were received from him.

The other Mopsus, if indeed they are truly distinct, was also a seer, being the son of Apollo by the Sibyl Manto, who was daughter of Tiresias. He lived at the time of the Trojan War. The city of Colophon is said to have been built by him, and he performed wonders at the famed temple of Apollo at nearby Claros. He founded the city of Mallos in Cilicia with his fellow seer Amphilochnus, who was also a son of Manto. During a visit of the latter seer to Argos Mopsus took possession of the town, and a fight resulted between them in which both were killed. After death he was honoured as a god, and had an oracle at Mallos, celebrated for true and decisive answers.

As remarked in discussing Calchas, he and Mopsus both had a colleague of the same name, and proliferating oracular sites are associated with them all. The serpent turned to stone on the occasion of the sacrifice before the Trojan expedition is reminiscent of the archaic dragon image of Apollo on the Isle of Delos. If so it may have been a primitive emblem of the pre-Olympian – one might say the original Hyperborean – Apollo. Calchas, Mopsus and Amphilochnus all appear to have been involved in such a cult, in a period before the rise of Delphi and the Classical ideals of Pan-Hellenism.

Autoleon or Leonymus

Autoleon was a general of Crotona (where Pythagoras founded his school) who fought against the Locrians. His legend includes many significant

elements, including a healing journey and meetings with residents of the Underworld. The Locrians had a tradition of leaving a gap in their ranks in honour of their ancestor, one of two Homeric heroes named Ajax. In the battle Autoleon sought to pass through this gap, and was wounded (either in the thigh or breast) by the ghost of Ajax. The wound would not heal, and he was advised by the Delphic Oracle to travel to the White Island and offer sacrifice to Ajax of Locri. This island in some accounts is at the mouth of the Danube in the Black Sea, but this is likely to be a later addition. The island is associated with the Elysian Fields, the happiest and most exclusive region of the Underworld. Here he met Helen, who told him to seek out the poet Stesichorus (flourished 556 BCE). This poet had apparently been struck blind for including a slander of her in one of his poems. On singing a retraction his sight was restored. Plato mentions this episode in the *Phædrus*, where the first line is quoted: *False is that word of mine – the truth is that thou didst not embark in ships, nor ever go to the walls of Troy...*

Autoleon, otherwise called Leonymus, also returned healed, telling how he had met the spirit of Achilles – now married to Helen – and of Patroclus, Antilochus, Ajax of Telamon and finally Ajax of Locri, who had cured him. That this journey was in any sense geographical seems highly unlikely, requiring a man with a life threatening wound to travel from Italy, first to Greece and from there to an otherworldly island still more remote. A ‘poet’ is required to intercede for him, while in some magical manner also preserving himself from a mysterious female, this has all the hallmarks of a magical healing rite. Hades means *sightless*, so via the kind of pun beloved by the Greeks, a poet recovering his sight is returning from Hades. Helen’s mythological role involves far more than a pretty face, and she belongs in mythic rather than historic time. She was a twin sister of the Dioscuri, who are represented as Argonauts a generation before the Trojan War. In fact Autoleon’s journey bears comparison with the voyage of the *Argo*; a magical journey associated with an Oracle, on a quest to rescue a soul.

Calchas, otherwise Calchantis

Calchas was a famed soothsayer residing at Mycenae or Megara. His grandfather, Idmon, had been a seer with the Argonaut's expedition. The father of Calchas was Thestor, a Trojan priest of Apollo, and Calchas traitorously served the Greeks against his native city. His art, which was bestowed upon him by Apollo, involved interpretation of the flight of birds, and he knew past, present and future. There are many accounts of omen reading and prophecy by Calchas, of which a few are given here. When Achilles was only nine years old Calchas foretold that Troy could not be taken without him. He was chosen to be high priest of the Greek expedition to Troy. After a pre-embarkation sacrifice a snake appeared from under an altar; it swallowed eight birds in a nearby tree, then their mother, whereupon it turned to stone. Calchas foretold from this omen that Troy would not be taken in nine years, but in the tenth. When the fleet was becalmed he foretold that the fleet could not sail from Aulis before Iphigenia was sacrificed to Artemis. At the beginning of Homer's *Iliad* a plague afflicts the Greek army. An insult by the Greek commander to a priest of Apollo, whose daughter he has carried off, is the cause. Achilles calls a council at which Calchas foretells that the plague which afflicted the Greek army would not cease until Chryseis was restored to her father:

*Apollo's priest to the Argive fleet doth bring
 Gifts for his daughter, prisoner to the king;
 For which her tendered freedom he entreats;
 But, being dismissed with contumelious threats,
 At Phoebus' hands, by vengeful prayer he seeks
 To have a plague inflicted on the Greeks.
 Which had, Achilles doth a council cite,
 Emboldening Calchas in the king's despite,
 To tell the truth why they were punished so...*

After the Trojan War, Calchas established a number of coastal oracular shrines in Ionian Greece. He accomplished this together with a seer

named Amphiloclus, who had assisted him during the war. Amphiloclus was a son of Amphiaros, and these shrines may have involved his cult. Curiously the great rival of Calchas, Mopsus, also had a colleague named Amphiloclus.

Calchas had been told that he would perish upon meeting a diviner more skilful than himself. After the Trojan War this came about at Claros, where there was a noted shrine of Apollo. Here he competed with the seer Mopsus, first he was unable to say how many figs were on a certain tree, while Mopsus told the exact number; a second challenge to foretell the size of an unborn litter of pigs was also won by Mopsus. Calchas then died of grief. After his death he had an oracle at Daunia in Italy, which was a Greek city in northern Apulia. Here local legend told of a king Calchas. This king loved Circe, who rejected his advances on account of the love she bore Odysseus. She turned Calchas into a pig and shut him in a sty, his subjects came looking for him, and she turned him back on condition he never returned to her island. There are also south Italian legends of a diviner named Calchas. His tomb, likely an oracular shrine, was at Siris in Tarentum, the site of a Greek colony founded after the war with Troy. There was also an incubatory shrine of Calchas on Mount Garganus in Apulia on the Adriatic coast. An alternative story of the death of Calchas also concerns a rival prophet, who foretold of a vine that Calchas would never enjoy its vintage. He repeated this prophecy when Calchas came to taste the wine, and Calchas choked to death on tasting it.

Onomacritos

A soothsayer of Athens, he flourished around 516 BCE. He was a teacher of a form of Orphism. Modern academics associate Orphism with Pythagorean sects and Onomacritos was a contemporary of Pythagoras. A poem on the voyage of the Argonauts attributed to Orpheus is believed to have been his work, as are the elegant poems attributed to Musæus. He was expelled from Athens by Hipparchus, a son of Pisistratus. Herodotus records a tradition that his offence was forging oracles, but this charge is likely to have been politically inspired.

More importantly, such references in Herodotus and other sources allow us to pinpoint the period of composition of the Orphic texts. That the claim of these texts to be older than Homer was rejected by Herodotus should not obscure the fact that Orphism genuinely was both a reform and a revival of more ancient traditions. It involved both non-aristocratic and foreign elements, and was not always welcomed by either the official cults of the city states or the unreformed Dionysian tradition. The importance of the Orphic books in the development of the grimoire tradition is alluded to at various points in this volume. It is now widely recognised that the unorthodox movements these books represent signal the first development of individualism in religious expression.

Orpheus

The origins of Orpheus in Thrace are ancient. How long his history in Thrace precedes his arrival in Greece is currently impossible to say with any certainty. Orphism in Greece dates to around the beginning of the 6th century, which is within a century of the setting down of the Homeric epics in written form. Various mystical and magical works attributed to him are similarly old, although the *Orphic Hymns* date to the Roman period. His importance in the history of magic explains the fact that references in Cornelius Agrippa to Orpheus are extremely numerous. Eliade, in his classic work *Shamanism – Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*, points out that most of the major features of the myth of Orpheus have direct shamanic analogues. He goes so far as to call the shamanic descent to the underworld to rescue a soul *the Orpheus motif*. Dodds underlines his Thracian origins and his role there, as either an associate or a worshipper of a god identified by the Greeks as Apollo. These connections remain important whether or not shamanism is an appropriate term in Greek studies.

The presence of elements comparable with shamanism in ancient Greek religious culture has been approached in various ways by anthropologists, historians and other academics. Several of them have pointed to facets of archaic Greek religion, and to later developments, as reminiscent of shamanism. Others have objected to the use of the culturally specific term

shaman in such a context, and Burkert in particular has shown goes to be a preferable and indigenous term.

Controversy continues as to whether these elements were indigenous, or reflect external influences; and if the latter from where and at what period. It has been suggested that they may have entered Greek culture by way of increased contact with the Scythians and with Thrace in the seventh century BCE. There are various interesting aspects to this argument, but also some difficulties and limitations. For one thing, external shamanism does not explain significant indigenous traditions considerably earlier than this date. There are also older resemblances to Thrace present in the archaic religious traditions of Mycenaean Greece (1600 to 1100 BCE).

Another difficulty involves several individuals within the proposed timeframe, who have been portrayed as Greek shamans or as drawing on shamanism. Several, if not all of them, were connected with Mystery religions far older than the seventh century. A possible resolution of these difficulties is that contact with the Black Sea region merged with and revived archaic elements already present in Greek culture. Certain affinities, such as their connection with ideas about the soul, may have made for a ready combination with external traditions. Equally however the nature of the indigenous elements played a part in this compatibility.

It is interesting that E.R. Dodds points to the seventh century BCE as the date of entry of external shamanic elements. In a separate reference he indicates that the seventh century is the earliest date for which we have any information regarding the teachings of the Mysteries of Eleusis. This coincidence, while not explaining the entire story, presents us with an appropriate symbol; a symbol of the mysterious relationship existing between supposed shamans and archaic Greek traditions centred on the Mystery religions. As I hope to make clear, this symbol has an intimate connection with the figure of the goetic magician.

Several of the historical and mythological names associated with the academic controversy concerning Greek shamanism were linked with Crete, the earliest of the Greek cultures. Their initiation into the Mysteries – involving the birth of Zeus in one of the cave sanctuaries of the island – constitutes a major part of the comparison with shamanism. This initia-

tion involved fasting, purification, trance and a journey to the Underworld, among other features. From their experiences these initiates obtained wisdom, and powers including weather magic, healing and prophecy.

A further difficulty arises here insofar as the oldest traditions of Minoan Crete were not that closely related to Mycenaean religion. The Mystery religion of Crete therefore must involve imported Mycenaean themes, while possessing some features unique to the island. There is considerable evidence for the integration and synthesis of the Mystery religions of Crete, Samothrace, Asia Minor and elsewhere during the historical period. Despite such changes these cult centres preserved traditions of great antiquity, whether originally indigenous to one or other of them or not. In their studies of the Greek shamans both Eliade and Dodds emphasise the same points as decisive: Orpheus as *culture hero*, his power over and affinity with nature in all its forms, his combining the roles of magician, poet, religious teacher and giver of oracles; his rescue mission to the Underworld, and the power retained by his head after death. Dodds concludes that Orpheus is a magical figure of the Zalmoxis type, either a mythical shaman or a prototype of Thracian shamans.

To this should perhaps be added the ambivalent sexuality frequently associated with shamans; Orpheus and Thamyris are associated with homosexuality as well as heterosexual love affairs, and this is also a feature of the myth of Dionysus. The homosexual adventures of Orpheus and Dionysus both occur after a visit to the Underworld to rescue a female. So far as I am aware this has not been remarked on previously, and it would be interesting to know how it is interpreted by the academic community.

Orpheus was celebrated by the Greeks as the greatest poet and magician who ever lived. He was credited with founding the Mysteries and the art of prophecy, augury by birds particularly. According to the most reliable accounts he was a prince of Thrace, son of King Oeager and Calliope the Muse. In Greek myth he lived at the time of the expedition of the Argonauts which he joined. In keeping with his importance, after Jason Orpheus is the first of the Argonauts to be named by Apollonius. There is a tradition that he had previously travelled in Egypt. Diodorus credits to

these travels the similarity of the Mysteries of Dionysus and Osiris in the late period, a similarity supported by Plutarch.

He received the lyre from the god Apollo or as others say, from Hermes (who is also said to have bestowed the lyre on Apollo). Some accounts also make him the son of Apollo, but this is likely to be a Greek innovation adding further prestige to his music. It is more interesting to note that Hermes is said to have bestowed the lyre upon Apollo as well as Orpheus. This potentially makes Orpheus an equivalent of Apollo himself, rather than his son. The ambiguity also underlines the sharing of attributes between Hermes and Apollo, a conflict unresolved by rationalising mythographers. That both gods are to a degree specialised aspects of an earlier concept of deity is important to bear in mind in understanding Orpheus. The lyre in Greek culture was often contrasted with the double flute or pipes associated rightly or otherwise with barbarian cults. This conflict is highlighted in the myth of Marsyas, often said to have invented the double flute, he like Orpheus and Linus was sometimes called a son of Oeager. Marsyas' origins were Phrygian, and he was associated with the cult of Cybele, as well as with Dionysus and Bacchus. The slaying of Marsyas by Apollo is of course reminiscent of the murder of other gods in Mystery cults. In Greek myth the musical contest between flute playing Marsyas and lyre strumming Apollo represents civilised versus barbarian ritual according to the prejudices of the urban literati. This symbolic conflict obscures the origins of the myth in the Phrygian cult. A Phrygian image of Cybele has two much smaller figures below and on either side, one with flute, the other with lyre. Their size indicates that both are human, and the likelihood is that the myth originates in rituals in which both instruments played a part.

The mythology of Marsyas thus indicates the primitive origins, not only of Marsyas but of pre-Orphic Apollo. Another Thracian singer named Thamyris is said to have challenged the Muses in a similar manner. Upon beating him the Muses deprived him of the power of sight and of singing, which likely means death. Thamyris and Orpheus are mentioned together in the *Vision of Er*, selecting their next incarnations as birds.

The reality of the myth of both Marsyas and Thamyris is likely to lay in the association of Cybele in her Phrygian form with rituals involving the king priest, which reflected the Thracian origins of her cult. Such king priests would have led rituals involving music and ecstatic dance, and the goddess would also have played a major part in their funeral rites. These two roles were to become completely conflated in Greek mythology. The myth of the contest of Apollo and Marsyas involves King Midas, who according to various versions claimed the judgement in Apollo's favour was unfair (which it was) and that he was the only judge to find in favour of Marsyas. Another form credits Midas with inventing the Pan pipe. It was his favouring of Marsyas that led to the well known myth of Apollo giving Midas the ears of an ass.

Midas is linked with the Mysteries of Dionysus by various myths, such as his rescue of Silenus, where it is recounted that he recognised him due to having been initiated. Naturally this connection probably involves syncretism, involving the cult of Cybele, with Dionysus identified with a consort such as Mên (who is depicted with thyrsus wand as well as Phrygian cap in Greek statuary). The identity of the cults in the Greek mind is more important for our purposes; both are orgiastic cults, celebrating the divine mother and dynastic hero in the 'primitive' manner.

Orpheus was traditionally said to have been instructed in music and song by the Muses. These were not the Apollonian Muses of Delphi, but the archaic Muses of 'backward' Boeotia. Among the many regional variations concerning the Muses these were strongly connected to the cult of Dionysus, especially the form which thrived in Thrace. He enchanted by his music the beasts, birds and even trees and rocks, which moved from their places to follow the sound, while rivers would cease flowing to stay and listen to him. All nature indeed was charmed by his music, and the Nymphs constantly surrounded him.

After the Argonautic expedition he returned to Thrace where he married the Nymph Eurydice, the only one to have won his heart. Their happiness was not to last, Aristæus became enamoured of her, and when she rejected his amorous overtures he pursued her through the fields. As she fled she was killed by the bite of a serpent, and such was the love of

Orpheus for her that he followed her shade to the Underworld. The beauty of his music was such that it suspended the torments of the damned, and charmed Hades into releasing her soul to accompany him back to the world of the living. In the best known versions of this adventure he is bidden not to turn around before reaching the surface, on pain of losing her forever, but looks over his shoulder when the journey is nearly complete. As Eliade notes, in at least one other version there is no mention of this failure, and this may reflect the earliest tradition. There is a motif of not turning around involved in invocations of Hecate. After leaving an offering at the crossroad, the maker of the offering departs without turning around. The person one will see if this is disregarded will be the Underworld goddess to whom the offering is made.

According to this legend his grief was such that he spurned the Thracian women, who in revenge tore him to pieces. This links him to the rites of Bacchus, where the god or an animal representing him is torn to pieces, and these Thracian women are said to have been Bacchantes. This matches a motif common in the initiatory experiences of shamans, dismemberment by spirits preceding returning to life as a shaman. After his death the Muses collected the scattered limbs and buried them at Libethra at the foot of Mount Olympus. The likelihood is that the Thracian Bacchantes and the Muses are the same women celebrating different stages of the Mystery. The Thracian women had thrown his head into the river Hebrus, and it emerged into the sea and was borne to Lesbos, still singing. His lyre was also said to have been carried there. Both traditions may either represent or explain the fact that this island was held to be the home of music on the lyre. More significantly his head later served as an oracle, in common with the skulls of deceased shamans in other cultures. Oracular skulls also feature in the Greek Magical Papyri. Another account of his death says that Zeus slew him with a thunderbolt. This echoes the striking of initiates with a thunderstone, as in the Cretan initiation of Pythagoras in the cave of Zeus.

Musaeus

Musaeus was an ancient Greek poet, credited with founding the Eleusian Mysteries, a son of either Linus or Orpheus said to have lived about 1410 BCE. Virgil portrayed him in the Elysian fields, attended to by a large multitude, and taller by a head than his followers. He is mentioned in connection with magical songs in Cornelius Agrippa. He is also the reputed author of many magical books, in common with Orpheus. Some of the Jews, when under Hellenistic influence, connected Musaeus with Moses. This identification reversed the relationship of Musaeus and Orpheus to make the latter the pupil of 'Moses'. Magical books ascribed to Moses are known from this time onwards. A similar process to the Jewish use of the *Sibylline Books*, such re-attribution gradually lends the proto-grimoires a Solomonic rather than an Orphic background. In this respect the importance of Musaeus to this study is illustrating the direct linkage of Orphism and the grimoires as magical traditions embodied in books.

Phormio 1 & 2

There are two Phormios or Phormions in Greek legend and several historical characters of the same name. Some of them may have been confused with one another, but equally likely the confusion indicates regional variants in a story, and attempts at rationalisation. One such legend, surprisingly perhaps, was given a rationalistic interpretation by Robert Graves. This Phormion lived in a house which had been the home of the father of the Dioscuri, Tyndareus, in Sparta. He was one day visited by the Dioscuri in disguise, claiming to be travellers from Cyrene (a city of Libya). The twins begged to be allowed to stay in the room belonging to his daughter, which had been theirs in childhood. Phormion gave them access to the whole house except that specific room. In the morning his daughter and her possessions had vanished, along with the twin gods. In their place were images of the Dioscuri, together with a quantity of the herb called sylphion (identified elsewhere with herb-benjamin), the principal product of Cyrene, where the Dioscuri were worshipped. Another

Phormio or Phormion was a fisherman of Erythræ. This was a town of Ionia that was at one time the home of a Sibyl or prophetess. One day a raft appeared with an image of Herakles the Dactyl on board, half way between Chios and Erythræ. A tug of war resulted as the men of Chios and the Erythræan men both struggled to draw it to their own shore, but neither could prevail. Phormion, who – like Stesichorus – was blind, dreamt that the Thracian women of Erythræ, by plaiting their hair into a rope, could draw the image ashore, which they duly did.

This resembles a Roman legend where the image of Vesta – connected with the Samothracian mysteries and the Trojan Palladium – was brought to Rome. The ship bringing it caught on some rocks and could not be moved by the efforts of many strong men. It was brought ashore by a noblewoman (some call her a Vestal virgin) named Claudia who had supposedly been accused of impropriety, she is said to have proved her innocence by drawing it ashore with her girdle. This is of course not at all true; her role in the event was from the first a political one. She was honoured by a statue in the vestibule of the temple of Cybele, who's archaic image – a sacred stone – was the real cargo of the vessel.

The descendents of the aforementioned Thracian women alone were permitted to enter the house where this rope was laid, and Phormion recovered his sight. These women appear to derive from Samothracian female Dactyls founding a Mystery, accompanied by a 'blind' prophet who magically heals himself. The daughter of the other Phormion vanishing from the nursery of the Dioscuri is no less reminiscent of Mystery legends, involving either the abduction or the rescue of a divine daughter. Graves is right in suggesting the latter story is told disingenuously; who can imagine that a man possessing the house of the father of the Dioscuri would not wonder who the strangers were who had spent their childhood there?

Another tradition seems to combine the legend of Leonymus with the Spartan Phormion. This account apparently involves the historical general Phormion of Crotona, who seems to have had many names. This account relates that he suffered a wound that would not heal, as if struck by a god or divine hero. The oracle advised him to travel to the house of

the Dioscuri in Sparta. Upon grasping the door handle, he found himself holding the handle of the door to his own house in Crotona, healed and at home. An ecstatic journey to Cyrene is also mentioned. Clement of Alexandria connects the name and deeds of Phormion with those of Abaris, Aristeas, Epimenides, Pythagoras and Zoroaster.

Epimenides

This important figure was a prophet and epic poet of Crete, contemporary with Solon. He was reckoned among the seven wise men of Greece (by those who omit Periander from the number). Many details of his life appear mythical, but close examination points to a historical ritual context. Some accounts begin in an unpromising fashion: *while attending his flocks one day he entered a cave where he fell asleep*. According to various authorities this sleep endured for 40, 47 or 57 years. As other accounts make clear, this is a recollection of his initiation into the Cretan mystery cult celebrated in the cave of Zeus on Mount Ida.

The motif of a retirement and trance strongly resembles similar retreats in the careers of Greek seers, poets and wonder workers. While there he fasted and entered ecstatic states, which the Greeks referred to as enthusiastic wisdom (enthusiasm comes from a Greek root meaning inspired by a god). While in this trance state he saw the gods and attended to their words, which appear to have taken the form of speeches. These might be compared with the dialogues of various gods which form the later Hermetic literature. The same cave, according to Homer, was visited by King Minos every eight years in order to hear Zeus declare his law.

He is credited with claiming to recall his former life as Aeacos (a rain-maker and healer who became a judge of Hades), among many other lives. According to Plato in the *Laws* he foretold the Persian Wars 20 years before the event. His life is said to have extended 157 or according to others 299 years. He was able to leave his body and ate only from a vegetable preparation taught him by the Nymphs, which he stored in the hoof of an ox. According to Plutarch this substance consisted of a plant called alimos. This has been translated as hunger-bane, *a-limos* meaning without

hunger. Use of the same plant was attributed to the ascetic Pythagoreans by the comic playwright Antiphanes in the 4th century BCE. There is a reference to the hero Hercules using it in a 5th century source. Such abstinence as is implied by its use is typical of many figures analysed in the gallery; it is also a feature of preparation for magical work in the grimoires. The visit of Epimenides to Athens is factual and permits us to date part of his life. He came to Athens about 596 BCE and saved the city from a plague by mysterious rites and sacrifices. He was revered as a god after his death, and greatly honoured by the Athenians for saving them from the pestilence, giving them in addition much useful counsel and instituting a reform of their religious customs. Upon his death his body was found to be covered in tattoos, which may have been marks of initiation in Crete, but to the mainland Greek would suggest Thrace. There tattooing was a mark of status, and strongly prevalent among 'shamans'. It is curious that his name resembles that of one of the Idaean Dactyls, Epimedes. Diogenes Laertius' account of the Cretan initiation of Pythagoras claims he was accompanied into the underworld by Epimenides. The same author informs us that the Cretans paid him divine honours.

He is said to have been the first to build temples to the gods in Greek communities. He wrote poems on the genealogies of the gods, on the expedition of the Argonauts, and on Minos and Rhadamanthus – who like Aeacus were made judges of the Underworld after their deaths. He also wrote treatises upon sacrifices, and concerning the history of Crete. While fragments attributed to him are known probably none of these writings have survived; though interestingly St. Paul, in *Titus* 1:12 quotes an alleged work of Epimenides, who he refers to as a pagan prophet. It is also worth noting that Cornelius Agrippa mentions this magician several times. In his chapter *On Abstinence* Cornelius Agrippa recognises the long sleep of Epimenides to have been a period of seclusion in which his wisdom and power were obtained.

IMPLICATIONS FOR MODERN PRACTICE

Magical Holy Books

OUTSIDE THE MORE FUNDAMENTALIST THELEMIC CIRCLES there is a tendency in modern occultism to look somewhat askance at the idea of Thelemic Holy Books and other similar writings. The impression people have regarding such texts is perhaps partially or wholly derived from attitudes to the scriptures of mainstream religion. In the previous chapters we have encountered the idea of two or more types of magical book. Both of these have something to contribute to the right understanding of these latter day magical texts. The first of these is the *Liber Spirituum* or Book of Spirits, as encountered in our exploration of Cellini's adventures. This species of magical book has enormous importance in the history of magical practice. It can be related back to the knowledge Gnostic initiates possessed of the words and seals that granted access to each level of the cosmos, a knowledge which it expresses in tangible form. This knowledge itself represents the evolution of an older species of magical book, the Egyptian *Book of Coming Forth by Day*.

The Liber Spirituum as Comprehensive Pact

In my commentary on *The True Grimoire* the central role of the virgin parchment in the grimoire genre was explained in relation to the pact. The *Liber Spirituum* in which virgin parchment would obviously play a role is no exception; quite the contrary. Such a Book of Spirits is no less than a comprehensive pact, as shown by the agreement of the spirits to the book, which moreover contains their signatures. It is clear that the possession of such a book elevated the magician to a higher level of power and practice than his counterpart who dealt with individual spirits on an ad hoc basis. No other magical instrument distinguishes levels of attainment in the

same way. Its importance is therefore as central as – and its role is directly comparable to – the pact as previously delineated. The difference indeed is simply its comprehensive nature, a difference which all but disappears in the event that a magician using the *Verum* method pursues the technique through the entire hierarchy. This course is indeed facilitated by the nature of the *Verum* method, in which multiple pacts are an integral part of the procedure.

The Fourth Book of Occult Philosophy contains two rites for the preparation of such a book, and it underwent various transformations thereafter. The *Liber Spirituum* was usually written and illustrated by the magician. However, during the Bibliothèque Bleue phase of grimoire printing in France – to which *Verum* belongs – there was an alternative expression of this idea. According to this interpretation the published grimoire could be turned into a *Liber Spirituum* by having the book signed by Lucifuge Rofocale, essentially making the flyleaf into a pact. This idea is encountered in Owen Davies' *Grimoires* and explored in a modern context by Johnny Jakobsson in *Diabolical*. The Bibliothèque Bleue grimoires generally contained portraits of the spirits as well as their sigils and rites. Latterly there has arisen the idea that a special grimoire and the *Liber Spirituum* are interchangeable, such a grimoire becoming identical to the *Liber Spirituum* or Book of Spirits itself.

The famed modern grimoire *Liber 231*, with its sigils and names, is an important example of the closeness of grimoire and Book of Spirits in the more recent history of magic. The hand drawn originals of the sigils in *Liber 231* closely resemble the sigils of grimoire manuscripts. Like the Gnostic and Egyptian forerunners of the idea the spirits of this book personify the stages of a spiritual journey, in this case the paths of the Qabalistic Tree of Life.

More comprehensively significant in relation to the grimoires and to magical Holy Books in general are the Orphic books. The right place of these books in the history of culture has scarcely begun to be assessed. These books, which began to appear at least as early as the fifth century BCE, were of a revolutionary character. The received traditions of both local and state cults possessed poetry, but not holy books. Orphic texts

were an entirely new literary form; the first occurrence of a religio-magical tradition founded entirely on mysterious texts rather than the time honoured, and often scarce understood, traditions of the collective.

It is important to place this literature in the context of the cultural developments in Greek society. With the rise of the polis the conditions for the rise of the individual as differentiated from the collective had been created. The Orphic books represent an enormous revolution in human spirituality arising from this development. The conditions had been created for private religious associations and for individual interpretation to compete both with the state cults and with localised traditions, and indeed to supersede them in importance. The Orphic books are thus the first written expressions of a personal relationship with the divine and the world of spirit semi-independent of – and in competition with – received tradition. It cannot be sufficiently underlined that this literary expression of spiritual independence is the basis for the entire future development of the grimoires.

The Practical Philosophers

Academia has been divided for many decades over the relationship of the Hermetic Corpus to the Magical Papyri. Initially the former were often seen as an elevated philosophical literature and the latter as de-based sorcery. Others argued that there was a High and Low Hermetic cultus, so the one literature pertained to philosophers of the elite, while the other was popular; this argument at least places the two within the same spectrum, if at opposite ends of it. More recently a new perspective has emerged, in which the Hermetic Corpus is indeed distinct from the magical papyri, but only in that theory is distinct from praxis. Others have pointed out that the Hermetic Corpus reached Western Europe through the intermediary of Byzantine manuscripts, and magical elements present in older originals may have undergone censorship at the hands of later Neoplatonists; it is certainly noteworthy that the Byzantine Neoplatonist scholar Michael Psellus referred to Thrice Great Hermes as a goes or wiz-

ard: *this goes (Hermes Trismegistus) seems to have had more than a passing acquaintance with holy writ.* Interestingly however Psellus also accredits his knowledge of demonology to instruction by a *prophet of Elasonia*. This prophet had been initiated by Aletus Livius, who had given him a potion and ointment by which he was transformed into a raven and able to fly wherever he willed in time and space. This is startlingly reminiscent of the legend of Aristeas (6th century BCE), showing remarkable continuity between Byzantine knowledge and the roots of the goetic tradition underlying the grimoires.

The *Picatrix* was delivered to the West via Arab rather than Byzantine intermediaries. Nevertheless it was undeniably inspired by the same Hellenistic Hermetic philosophy, and developed upon it. In this form at least the Hermetic legacy contains both theoretical and practical as a continuum.

For better or worse much of modern magic, both traditional or of more recent vintage, is often identified as Hermetic. Whatever shortcomings this classification may have it is useful enough, given the practical and theoretical aspects implicit in the term. On the other hand Neoplatonism is evidently a philosophical movement of great significance for ancient magic; its praxis might be exemplified by the *Theurgy* of Iamblichus. Orphism too certainly included philosophical strands alongside its practical application in initiation, necromantic procedures, ritual purifications with an eschatological basis &c. Whether or not the magician identifies with any, all or none of these philosophies, the need for earthing the mythic strands implicit in ancient goetic magic through practical work remains implicit.

Perhaps the importance of practical work is less problematic for some readers than considering magicians as philosophers. Understanding magicians as philosophers is not new; arguably the most important sourcebook of Western magic is Cornelius Agrippa's *Three Books of Occult Philosophy*. In the ancient period, as will be shown, some of the more important philosophers were viewed as magicians. Empedocles particularly was responsible for such fundamental ideas of magical theory as the four elements. His magic was undoubtedly the practical application of this wisdom. From this point of view magic can be understood as philosophical praxis.

Stephen Flowers in the introduction to his *Hermetic Magic* provides a useful discussion of the relationship between *theoreia* and *praxis* in magic. In essence *praxis* is the implementation of theory, whether that theory consists of philosophical systems such as Hermeticism and Neoplatonism or specific concepts such as *Sympathia*.

In the course of this study the origins of goetia are related to the practices of barbarian shamans, Thracian and Scythian. Among the former were ascetics whose morality and eschatology appear to have been potent influences on Pythagorean and Orphic teachings in Southern Italy and beyond. On the other hand the religious basis of both these schools can be traced to cults of Demeter and Dionysus, incorporating Eastern influences. The older Dionysian cults on the other hand were ecstatic, providing potent opposing precedents and contrasts with these ascetics. These cult aspects of ancient goetia – among other strands to be examined here – provide mythological bases for *praxis* alongside the purely theoretical. Accordingly when Flowers speaks of *praxis* vivifying or externalising internal models, it should be clear that while these models involve theoretical considerations, it is equally important to consider that these have mythic expressions. Magic without theory is a dead letter, a mere recipe; but theory without mythic language cannot be readily transformed into magical practice. In fact regardless of the particular philosophical model, these mythic expressions constitute a language of archaic goetic practice.

Accordingly throughout this text various practical workings are emphasised. Many of these involve very down to earth procedures closer to Hoodoo than to complex rituals, necromantic conjurations or other sophisticated applications. This kitchen magic is not to be despised on account of its seeming simplicity. In each case the ingredients are strongly associated with the mythic themes of the study; they range from magnets and iron to various herbs, olive oil and so on. This magical involvement with substances and senses reifies the mythic language; time is transcended, through experiential *praxis* the magician is united with the ancestors and gods of the tradition.

The Magic Circle as Ritual Space

Magical circles have been in use for thousands of years, an important Assyrian text describes one made from a circle of lime (flour is also mentioned) and incorporating seven statuettes of winged spirits, apparently set before an image of Nergal. The magicians employing this appear to have been priests of the god, and magical work part of their official role. This is an important fact considering Nergal's relationship to the Greek Apollo, who in turn was the tutelary deity of Orphic magicians. Nevertheless it is very far from being the whole of the story.

An interesting sidelight on magical circles in the grimoire context is contained in the augmented editions of Scot's *Discoverie of Witchcraft*. This anticipates the modern idea that such rituals as the Lesser Banishing Ritual of the Pentagram form an imaginary circle; a notion sometimes pooh-poohed by so-called traditionalist magicians. The text is worth quoting in its entirety:

Of Magical Circles, and the reason of their Institution

Magicians, and the more learned sort of conjurers, make use of Circles in various manners, and to various intentions. First, when convenience serves not, as to time or place that a real Circle should be delineated, they frame an imaginary Circle, by means of Incantations and Consecrations, without either Knife, Pensil, or Compasses, circumscribing nine foot of ground round about them, which they pretend to sanctifie with words and Ceremonies, spattering their Holy Water all about so far as the said Limit extendeth; and with a form of Consecration following, do alter the property of the ground, that from common (as they say) it becomes sanctifid, and made fit for Magicall uses.

How to consecrate an imaginary Circle

Let the Exorcist, being clothed with a black Garment, reaching to his knee, and under that a white Robe of fine Linnen that falls unto his ankles, fix himself in the midst of that place where he intends to per-

form his Conjurations: And throwing his old Shooes about ten yards from the place, let him put on his consecrated shooes of russet Leather with a Cross cut un the top of each shooe. Then with his Magical Wand, which must be a new hazel-stick, about two yards of length, he must stretch out his arm to all the four Windes thrice, turning himself round at every Winde, and saying all that while with fervency:

I who am the servant of the Highest, do by the vertue of his Holy Name Immanuel, sanctifie unto my self the circumference of nine foot round about me, ✠✠✠ from the East, Glaurah; from the West, Garron; from the North, Cabon; from the South, Berith; which ground I take for my proper defence from all malignant spirits, that they may have no power over my soul or body, nor come beyond these Limitations, but answer truly being summoned, without daring to transgress their bounds: Worrab. worrah harcot. Gambalon. ✠✠✠.

Which Ceremonies being performed, the place so sanctified is equivalent to any real Circle whatsoever.

There are various interesting aspects to this extract from Scot; of which one certainly requires comment. This is the distinction between *Magitians* on the one hand and *the more learned sort of conjurers* on the other. Clearly these are seen as two distinct types of practitioner, the magicians are learned by definition, while conjurers may be but need not be so.

This is not the only such case where practitioners who employ grimoire techniques – with some variations that are unspecified – are divided into separate classes. Weyer's text, predating and textually more informative than the *Goetia of Solomon*, mentions a demon that is called by different names by various classes of operator.

18. Berith is a great and terrible Duke, and hath three names. Of some he is called Beall; of the Jews Berith; of Necromancers Bolfry: he cometh forth as a red Knight, in red clothing, and upon a horse of

that colour, and a crown upon his head. He answereth truly of things present, past, and to come. He is compelled at a certain hour, through divine virtue, by a ring of art magick. He is also a liar, he turns all metals into gold, he adorns a man with dignities and confirms them; he speaketh with a clear and a subtle voice, 26 legions are under him.

One of these practitioners – from whom the author clearly distinguishes himself – is the necromancer, the true goetic magician. This resembles in some respects the type of snobbery which Athenians and other ‘sophisticated’ Greeks exhibited towards Boeotia and other ‘backward’ areas, where older traditions were more faithfully preserved. This must serve to rescue us from this interesting tangent to the subject of the magical circle and Greek tradition.

Greek religious ritual did not take place in a temple, but outside it. The major type of ritual was an offering or sacrifice; other aspects of ritual such as singing were adjuncts to this. It was distinguished from normal activity in various ways, including ablutions and clean garments of traditional style, with further adornments such as a garland of appropriate twigs on the head. Those attending went in procession to the site, just as the disciples in the *Key of Solomon* are said to do. Once at the site a circle was marked out enclosing the place and those taking part, dividing them from the mundane world. Sacred objects, including a vessel of water – soon to be used to purify human and animal participants – were borne around its limits. From thence the ritual proceeded to invocations, prayers and the sacrifice.

There is no need here to discuss the complexities of sacrifice or other aspects of ritual, that is done far better than I might do by Walter Burkert in his *Greek Religion* (pages 56 & 58), where I first became aware of the above details in coherent form. What is striking is how this contradicts the widespread belief that there is, firstly, no precedent for pagan worship in circles as practiced by modern witches. So too it opposes the notion that circles in ceremonial magic are limited to the role of excluder of the dæmonic, and are solely of a Middle Eastern origin favouring this interpretation.

That is not even their only role in the grimoires, where both circles and triangles appear in a variety of forms, positions and roles. A circle enclosing a triangle could be marked on the floor, or upon an altar top for crystallo-mancy. Characters of invocation could be stood upon or held in the hand (Iamblichus' *Theurgy*, Dee's *Heptarchia*); the same designs used for magical circles could serve for portable talismans or pentacles in operations of the same days (compare the *Heptameron* and *The Keys of Rabbi Solomon*, Skinner and Rankine's *Veritable Key* page 104, 124 &c). Some instructions in *Liber Troisième* (see the spells in *The True Grimoire*) involve drawing a circle around objects, putting things in and manipulating them from outside – casting a spell within whilst without. Additionally, magic and the more magical religions were not waiting for Aleister Crowley (*Liber 333* cap 36) or Gerald Gardner (*Book of Shadows*) to introduce the idea of occupying the same ritual space as gods and spirits.

In short a circle is not an obsolete symbol of a superstitious fear of spirits, but an intentionally created ritual space for various purposes. It is not always required for all kinds of ritual work, but neither is it of no value, quite the contrary. Making sacred space is among the most primal of rituals, such intentional actions are as worthy of the term psychoactive as any substance.

Mythic Geography

As was mentioned earlier, due to migration and other factors there were several locations for Mount Olympus. Similar duplication or mobility of various sacred landmarks can be readily traced. For example the workshop of Hephæstus, originally located in Asia Minor or on Lemnos, was latterly identified with Mount Etna in Sicily. This elasticity of mythic geography, which undoubtedly served various needs and roles in ancient society, has profound implications for modern practice. It is only if we permit it that the secularised landscape of the modern world is emptied of myth and magic. After all, this is not the inevitable impinging of the supposedly real world on our fantasy life; on the contrary, an irreparable separation of the inner and outer worlds is both unreal and undesired.

Mountains, burial mounds, crossroads, monuments, graves, trees, streams and rivers were ancient locations of the numinous. They are no less full of power today, if we but reclaim them. If communities and individuals have lost the sense of power attached to places – a very real loss – nevertheless the magician's work requires them: this crossroads for offerings to Hecate or the spirits of the Underworld, this hollow tree to hide and isolate the image of a foe, this mountain, cave or lake to court the favour of the otherworld. More routine tasks too, disposal of ritual by-products and remnants, cutting of herbs and gathering water at auspicious places, or rods at suitable ruins, cemeteries &c. This extends even to suitable stores for obtaining mace, olive oil and other sundries, not to mention the gathering of dirt or clay from banks, police-stations, prisons &c. Employ mythic thinking to invest the mundane with the magical.

The magician looks about them and sees the magical potential in all things. Has this river no nymph, this mound no hero, this mountain no god? Perhaps under no name known today, but the magician is – like a second Adam – replete with the Power of Naming. Many locations have magical uses or associations, awaiting our use of mythic language. If, say, a prehistoric burial mound is associated with no name known now, then ask your spirits which of them or their companions and allies dwells there. What matter if no-one called the resident by this name before? Names change, but the ancient magic continues regardless. This extends to new places as much as old or rural ones; to any place with meaning for you. Reclaim the landscape, reinvest it with power and significance; be aware of the innate power and significance inherent in every place.

THE BOOK,
THE TREASURE HUNT
AND THE CAVE



The necromancer said that often as he had entered magic circles, he had never encountered so great an adventure as this. He also tried to persuade me to consent to join with him in consecrating a book, by means of which we should derive immeasurable wealth, since we could call up the demons to show us some of the treasures of which the earth is full, and that by that means we should become very rich; and that love-affairs like mine were vanities and follies of no consequence.

The Life of Benvenuto Cellini

IN THE FOURTH BOOK OF OCCULT PHILOSOPHY, attributed to Cornelius Agrippa, are contained two sets of instructions for the consecration of a Book of Spirits (*Liber Spirituum*). One of these instructions closely resembles the method given in Mathers' *Key of Solomon* (taken from *Lansdowne 1203*); an abbreviated instruction for preparation of such a book is also given in *The Grimoire of Honorius*. The apparent purpose of such a book is to simplify and facilitate the process of evocation. Its composition involves a major act of conjuration in which the entire hierarchy of spirits is evoked. They are severally sworn by individual oaths to appear on future occasions, when the appropriate conjuration is read from the page corresponding to whichever spirit is required at that time. While this operation is in itself complex and painstaking, all future evocations will be considerably simplified by use of the book thus created.

There are some very curious details and inconsistencies surrounding such a book in magical literature. In the first place, the account in the *Fourth Book* is specific:

There is extant amongst those magicians (who do most use the ministry of evil spirits) a certain rite of invoking spirits by a Book to be consecrated before to that purpose; which is properly called, A book of Spirits [Liber Spirituum]; whereof we shall now speak a few words. For this book is to be consecrated, a book of evil spirits, ceremoniously to be composed, in their name and order: whereunto they binde with a certain holy Oath, the ready and present obedience of the spirit therein written.

This is clear and unequivocal in the presumption that such books were used by magicians employing 'evil spirits'. On the other hand the description in *Lansdowne 1203* is equally clear:

Make a small Book containing the Prayers for all the Operations, the Names of the Angels in the form of Litanies, their Seals and Characters; the which being done thou shalt consecrate the same unto God and unto the pure Spirits...' On future occasions 'the Ceremonies and Characters being correctly carried out devoutly and with perseverance, they will be constrained to come.

This description clearly contradicts the *Fourth Book* insofar as the evil spirits have been replaced by pure spirits, or Angels. The tenor of *Lansdowne 1203* throughout is, incidentally, very favourably disposed towards spirits in general. Even in accounts of potentially hostile Elemental spirits, it ascribes such hostility to punishing human avarice, rather than to a supposedly demonic nature. This difference aside, parts of this *Key of Solomon* are plainly influenced by Agrippa's *Occult Philosophy*. It also shows familiarity with the *Heptameron* (included in English editions of the *Fourth Book*), and later works such as the seventeenth century *Magical Calendar &c.* The method of consecrating the magical book is similar to that described in the *Fourth Book*. This is not to say it is reliant on Agrippa, plainly comparable material was available to him, and this rite may be older than other material in the manuscript. On the other hand there is substantial evidence that many grimoires drew heavily upon Agrippa, who enabled their compositors to at least imitate the magical writings known to him.

An author whose debt to Agrippa is plain is Francis Barrett, whose monumental *Celestial Intelligencer* compiles materials from the *Fourth Book* (including the *Heptameron*) as well as the *Occult Philosophy*. Barrett includes the instructions for compiling the Book of Spirits from the *Fourth Book*. He also provides an illustration of a typical two page spread devoted to an individual spirit. Barrett's illustration is technically correct in every particular; the image of the spirit is drawn on the left hand page, its conjuration on the right, along with the magical character or sigil appropriate to it. The image is interesting, and throws light on the apparent differences between the entities of a Book of Spirits as envisaged by the *Fourth Book* and *Lansdowne 1203*. The spirit depicted is Cassiel, ruler of Saturday; one of the planetary Angels from the *Heptameron*. Barrett's illustration shows a figure riding a dragon, and the figure in question is as scaly as his mount, with clawed fingers and toes. Above and below the image are symbols which plainly derive from a plate in the *Fourth Book* entitled *The characters of evil Spirits*, those labelled *Penetrate* and *Broken*. The two characters accompanying the conjuration on the right hand side are also readily identified. One is a magical symbol found under Saturn in the *Heptameron*. The other is a sigil derived from or associated with the square of Saturn. Each of these squares are associated with three such sigils, one is the Seal of the Planet, another that of its Intelligence, which are generally held to be benign in nature, the other of its spirit which are generally held to be inferior or even infernal in nature. The spirit of Saturn associated with these sigils is named Zazel – one of the most unambiguously demonic of these spirits – and it is the sigil of Zazel that appears in Barrett's illustration.

For Barrett at least then, in accord with the opinion of numerous theologians throughout the history of Christian Europe, the Angels of the grimoires are hard to distinguish from demons. The demons in turn are – by the same opinion – identical with figures in earlier pagan theology, which in the late Classical period were often aligned with the planetary spheres. As may be readily deduced from the *Testament of Solomon*, magicians familiar or contemporary with the Solomonic magic of the 2nd century would also have been familiar with astrological demons. Regarding Cassiel in particular it is noteworthy that the *Grimoire of Pope Honorius*

explicitly identifies this angel as an evil spirit in the Conjunction for *treasures hidden by men or Spirits*.

The Conjunctions of Angels found in the *Heptameron* are identical with those in the later *Goetia of Solomon*, which deals exclusively with supposed demons. The alleged author of the *Heptameron*, Pietro de Abano, is denounced as a black magician in the *Sacred Magic of Abramelin the Mage* which is roughly contemporary with Agrippa. Agrippa's mentor, the Abbot Trithemius, described the *Heptameron* as a *Clavicle*, a title which firmly and correctly identifies it as belonging to the Solomonic genre. It is in fact an older text than most of the better known Solomonic grimoires.

It may be objected when I wish to draw conclusions from comparing some of these texts that they are of widely varying date. However, Barrett was extremely well versed in the older literature, and his usages are authentic. *Lansdowne 1203* meanwhile, while plainly partly dependent on Agrippa, reproduces features which he portrays as belonging to older texts with which he was familiar. It is indeed still a matter of dispute whether the *Goetia of Solomon* is entirely derivative from Reginald Scot's publication of Weyer in English translation, and Turner's translation of the *Heptameron*, or represents to some degree the older text described by Weyer (my own view is that it is essentially an attempted reconstruction of Weyer's text, drawing on Scot and the *Heptameron* translated by Turner). Essentially, in such consciously retrospective works differences in date can often be comparatively unimportant. Moreover, comparisons within the genre are frequently more revealing than considering texts separately as supposed 'things in themselves'. Since the vast majority of such texts are compilations to one degree or other, this approach is also more realistic.

Be this as it may, the Book of Spirits as described in *Lansdowne 1203*, while drawing on the *Fourth Book*, also involves authentic traditions which the *Fourth Book* does not mention. It is to these connections – central to this present chapter – that I am about to turn. In the celebrated account of necromantic practices contained in the *Life of Benvenuto Cellini*, there is reference to the consecration of a magical book. Judging by the evidence the evident conclusion is that this book is none other than a Book of

Spirits. Contextually it is plain that this book gives power over spirits, and there is no other book requiring consecration to be found in magical literature. Interestingly, Robert H. Hobart Cust, who edited Cellini's autobiography in 1910, seems to have been fairly familiar with magical literature. His footnote to the first reference to the book says: *Consacrare un libro, i.e. construct a magic book with which to control spirits good and evil*. This may indicate that he was familiar with both with the *Fourth Book*, and perhaps with *Lansdowne 1203*, or with Mathers 1888 edition of the *Key*, but had not realised the partial dependence of one on the other. Whether or not he had read these, he was plainly familiar with the idea of a Book of Spirits, and thus able to identify its consecration as the intention of the necromancer.

What remains unexplained is the purpose to which the necromancer wished to put this book, that of obtaining access to the treasures of the earth guarded by spirits. In Cellini's account this purpose is completely conterminous and convergent with the consecration of the book itself. Now, this might be simply ascribed to avaricious intent. The comprehensive powers of the spirits involved make this a less than satisfactory explanation, since there are individual spirits in several grimoires whose province is the uncovering of treasure. Perhaps then the magician supposed that an appeal to Cellini's avarice might make him a more willing accomplice? This too is unlikely since the magician already plainly knew that Cellini was desirous of locating a former lover. This was the only request Cellini made of the spirits during two arduous conjurations, and a promise in this regard would have been an obvious incentive. Yet, rather than use this as leverage, the magician actually tried to dissuade him from the *vanity and folly* of love affairs.

(Incidentally, I disbelieve Arthur Calder-Marshall's suggestion that the necromancer had a sinister ulterior motive in involving Cellini, intending to sacrifice him to the devil in Norcia. It is hard to see Cellini, a pugnacious manslayer with little regard for superior odds, in the role of hapless victim. All the indications are that these conjurations incited terror in all concerned, who were – jointly and severally – convinced Catholics, whose acquaintance with fire and brimstone was an essential part of their

upbringing. The most likely explanation for the necromancer's interest in Cellini was simply that he had proven himself a brave and trustworthy companion in a frightening adventure.)

Was there a goetic tradition linking the consecration of the Book of Spirits and the treasures under the earth? It would appear from *Lansdowne 1203* that there was. The instruction for the consecration of the book in *Lansdowne 1203* includes a prayer:

Adonai, Elohim, El, Eheieh Asher Eheieh, Prince of Princes, Existence of Existences, have mercy upon me, and cast Thine eyes upon Thy Servant N, who invokes Thee most devoutly, and supplicates Thee by Thy Holy and tremendous Name Tetragrammaton to be propitious, and to order Thine Angels and Spirits to come and take up their abode in this place; O ye Angels and Spirits of the Stars, O all ye Angels and Elementary Spirits, O all ye Spirits present before the Face of God, I the Minister and faithful Servant of the Most High conjure ye, let God Himself, the Existence of Existences, conjure ye to come and be present at this Operation, I, the Servant of God, most humbly entreat ye. Amen.

Turning from this section of the Solomonic magician's manual to the instructions on *How to render Thyself Master of a Treasure possessed by the Spirits*, this exact same prayer is discovered to be a major part of the ritual proceedings. The prayer is to be made at various points once excavations have commenced. Comparisons, even with talismans included in the same book, show something startling. Whereas these treasure hunting talismans are geared towards removing magical guards already in place, dismissing them or at least subduing them, this prayer very clearly invites the entire spirit hierarchy of the Solomonic universe to take up residence! This distinguishes the rite not only from talismans within the *Key of Solomon* itself, but from a great many other such operations throughout the genre.

Cellini's necromancer plainly connected the Book of Spirits with magical treasure hunting, and here is a significant convergence of the two ideas in a Solomonic grimoire. When the two rites are examined it is plain this

is not a case of misapplying a prayer from one operation to another context. Contextually the prayer is perfectly suited to and integrated with both operations.

The preparation of the Book with this prayer gives power over the complete hierarchy of Planetary Angels and Elementary Spirits; representative of the cosmology used throughout the Lansdowne manuscript. The description of the operation involving treasures also makes explicit mention of both Celestial and Elementary spirits:

The Earth being inhabited, as I have before said unto thee, by a great number of Celestial Beings and Spirits, who by their subtilty and prevision know the places wherein treasures are hidden...

We might imagine only one class of the latter type to be directly involved in guarding subterranean deposits. The grimoire anticipates this, mentioning this type, the Gnomes or Earth Elementals, as the immediate guards of the treasure.

... it often happeneth that those men who undertake a search for these said treasures are molested and sometimes put to death by the aforesaid Spirits, which are called Gnomes; which, however, is not done through the Avarice of these said Gnomes, a Spirit being incapable of possessing anything, having no material senses wherewith to bring it into use, but because these Spirits, who are enemies of the passions, are equally so of Avarice, unto which men are so much inclined...

With some allowances, in the frame of reference assumed by the Grimoire as a whole, everything in the treasure hunting operation is consistent and well thought out. These allowances consist of two things: the Celestial Beings and Spirits inhabiting the Earth are not clearly distinguished from the Gnomes, and it appears unclear whether the Prayer accompanies the stages of the work or its conclusion. The prayer includes the phrase *be present in this Operation*, so this difficulty really arises from obscure phrasing, and the other is probably nothing more. So if the invocation of all the

spirits is conceptually appropriate to both operations, what does its presence in the magical excavation signify?

A magical treasure cave is a perennial folklore motif. Often entrance into such a cave requires a magical formula; the *open sesame* of the *Thousand and One Nights*. Within are to be found fabulous things; even in later forms where the contents are reduced to hard cash there are mysterious elements involved. Magical treasure hunting has been a feature of European and American occultism, numbering Joseph Smith, founder of the Mormon sect, among its exponents. There are also verified accounts of how such beliefs enabled unscrupulous sorcerers to perpetrate swindles. Such folklore motifs are frequently derived from older beliefs and practices. Cellini's necromancer is described as: *of a very lofty genius and very learned in Greek and Latin letters* [writings]. Nevertheless it might be thought a great leap to derive his search for treasure from a folk memory of the Cretan cave of Zeus. It would be a great leap indeed, if this connection depended on his familiarity with Greek literature. In place of such a leap is a short journey, which Cellini might have taken, had he not refused the invitation of our necromancer to go with him from Rome to Norcia (Latin Nursia).

The Sibillini Mountains

... in the ancient Duchy [Spoleto] not far from the town of Nursia, there is a spot where beneath a precipitous cliff there is to be found a cavern, in which there is a stream of water flowing. Here, as I remember well to have heard, was a meeting place for witches [striges], demons, and shades of the night, and whoever has the courage can see the spirits [spiritus] and converse with them, and learn their magical arts.

Letter of Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini, later Pope Pius II (d. 1464)

Materials relating to medieval and later traditions regarding the region of Norcia are not restricted to Cellini's *Life*; they are very plentiful and include peasant beliefs, extensive literary references and the records of the Inquisition. The ever helpful Agrippa confirms that it was known in his day as a dark place associated with the underworld:

Neither are those mere fables which many have recorded of the cave of Patricius, of the den of Vulcan, of the Aetnean caves, and of the den of Nursia, many that have seen and known them testifying the same.

The central figure of almost all of these references is the Sibyl of ancient Greek and Roman lore. The central location is a mountain in a range that still bears her name. Atop this particular mountain are two peaks, one with a lake the other with a cave, both also associated with her. This lake was connected in the medieval mind with Lake Avernus, one of the doorways to Hades. Its waters are home to a species of shellfish (*Chirocephalus Marchesonii*), unique to this place. At certain times of year this shellfish causes the waters to turn red, like blood.

The cave meanwhile was believed to be the home of the Sibyl, a friendly figure in peasant lore, a veritable demoness according to the Inquisition, and a curious combination of both roles in poetry and other literary sources. These include a witch and queen of witches variously likened to

Medea and Herodias; the sister of Solomon; an erotic fairy or seductive demoness; and sometimes outright identified with Venus.

According to these traditions necromancers came to the lake from all Italy, and elsewhere in Europe, to consecrate their 'books' with its blood-like waters. Afterwards they visited the cave, to consult with the Sibyl and enhance their magical knowledge and powers. So many came that a local bishop constructed a gallows at the valley entrance to try and dissuade them, while a fifteenth century document, held in the Historical Archives of nearby Montemonaco, explicitly refers to such visits from all parts of Europe. Even the threat of excommunication was insufficient to discourage these necromantic pilgrimages.

Visits for such purposes are portrayed in literary references; for example the poet Fazio degli Uberti (d. 1367) wrote of Simon Magus coming here to dedicate his magical book. Andrea da Barberino wrote a romance or novel in 1409, his hero visits the cave with its half pagan, half devilish Sibyl, seeking to hear from her concerning his lost parents. At least one literary figure wrote of a visit made by himself to the area in 1420; this was Antoine de La Sale, the tutor of the son of Louis III, King of Sicily and Count of Anjou. He was aware that necromancers visited the lake and the cave to consecrate their books and acquire magical knowledge from the Sibyl. One had come not long before his visit and been violently put to death; apparently not all the locals were friendly to necromancers. La Sale made sure to distinguish himself from such visitors and took with him on his visit a local doctor and others from nearby Montemonaco. Together on the mountain they heard a loud voice resembling the cry of a peacock, those accompanying him assured him this voice came from the underground paradise of the Sibyl. It is striking that the peacock is the bird associated with Juno, arch-goddess of the Romans; as well as with prideful Lucifer, and the god of the much maligned Yezidis.

Such visits were apparently not restricted to so-called necromancers, but also to knights and other types of magician. Whatever their diversity, these visitors were likely not entirely orthodox Christians. The mountain and its cave are comparable to themes widespread at this time in medieval Europe, among heretics with apocryphal scriptures and oral traditions;

those of the Manichean Bogomils for example feature a Cave of Treasure, situated on a holy mountain. Through these heretics themes of Iranian, Syriac and Jewish Gnosticism also entered Europe. With this mysterious cave of the heretics, with their Eastern influences, are associated the wood of the True Cross and the Tree of Life. It is visited by the same Magi who visited the infant Christ, whose birthplace according to many sources was – like that of Zeus – in a cave. From such traditions it is but a short distance to Greek and Middle Eastern Mystery cults of the Roman and Hellenistic era.

Aeneas Sylvius, referring to a question asked concerning such mountains, compared the mountain of the Sibyl with others associated with Venus, the goddess of love, citing Mount Eryx in Sicily and Porto Venere in Liguria. Erotic overtones are frequently found associated with medieval and later traditions regarding the Sibyl, as well as a magic that is at once pagan and Christian. A mid-sixteenth century confession of witchcraft mentions a visit to the cave, and refers to the Sibyl as Donna Venus.

Similar themes are to be found in folklore, survivals of pre-Christian beliefs, such as those involving travellers who visit the interior of fairy mounds. These and other variants on the theme, including the German Tannhäuser cycle, may have had no original connection with the Appenine Sibyl. However, with or without her mountain, the enchantress was travelling far outside Italy and influencing other traditions. Her specific combination of the magical and the erotic is to be found in an English grimoire transcribed by Reginald Scot in 1584. In *An experiment of the dead* the necromancer first conjures the ghost of a suicide or executed criminal; of this spirit he requires firstly visions in a crystal stone, and secondly that the spirit *fetch me the fairie Sibylia, that I may talke with hir visiblie*. Once the magician has conjured this shade into the crystal at the graveside, another operation is performed in a fair chamber, for the summoning of Sibylia. Rather than a triangle of manifestation, the magician draws a second circle outside his own for this secondary appearance following on the necromantic operation. Somewhat tellingly, the operator is instructed not only to leave this second circle unmarked by holy names, but not to *cast anie holie thing therein*. Speaking to the spirit in the stone

again, the shade is bidden to fetch Sibylla, telling her that the conversation the magician wishes to have with her *shall be to hir honour and glorie*. In the conjurations that follow she is called *gentle virgine of fairies* and bidden to appear in the *forme and shape of a beautiful woman . . . For I will choose thee to be my blessed virgine, & will have common copulation with thee*. She is further bidden to give the magician good counsel at all times, and assist him to *come by treasure hidden in the earth*.

The theme of the treasure cave, and the magical excavations of occult treasure hunters, reaches into the antique past. Associated with the erotic, the pagan and the necromantic, it is the cave of Cretan and Phrygian goddesses. Through the heretical and Gnostic traditions which entered medieval Europe through Bulgaria, it connects with the grottoes of Mithras and other Mystery gods. Certainly in desacralised form it becomes a treasure cave in folklore and magical tradition. There is however no doubt of its origins in initiatory cults, where the Cave of Treasure is home to secrets of wisdom. It is the cave into which prophets and deified kings retire, to emerge with divinely given laws or secrets.

Were there medieval and renaissance magicians who saw such a meaning in this treasure cave? The answer lies in the relations of magicians, witches and heretics, with each other and with older lore. While the subject is exceedingly obscure some of the magical literature of the time shows signs of being written in a twilight language. The ritual from the Lansdowne manuscript may well be among them. The time of year given for the rite is when the Sun and Moon are in Leo. In Agrippa we find two scales of the number twelve, one Cabalistic and one Orphic. The latter faithfully preserves many features of Roman astrological lore, originally derived from Hellenistic sources. These features are also known from archaeology and elsewhere, they are not medieval but Græco-Roman. Leo is ruled not by Apollo or Helios, as might be expected. The ruler of the time period specified is Jupiter, or in Greek terms Zeus, born in a cave on a sacred Phrygian or Cretan mountain.

Orphic Table of Correspondences

<i>Olympian Deity</i>	<i>Zodiac Sign</i>	<i>Consecrated Bird</i>	<i>Consecrated Animal</i>	<i>Consecrated Plant</i>
Athena	Aries	Owl	She-goat	Olive tree
Aphrodite	Taurus	Dove	He-goat	Myrtle tree
Apollo	Gemini	Cock	Bull	Laurel
Hermes	Cancer	Ibis	Dog	Hazel
Zeus	Leo	Eagle	Hart	Oak
Demeter	Virgo	Sparrow	Sow	Apple tree
Hephæstus	Libra	Goose	Ass	Box tree
Ares	Scorpio	Magpie	Wolf	Dog tree
Artemis	Sagittarius	Daw	Hind	Palm tree
Hestia *	Capricorn	Heron	Lion	Pine tree
Hera	Aquarius	Peacock	Sheep	Ramthorn
Poseidon	Pisces	Swan	Horse	Elm tree

* Traditionally Hestia surrendered her place on Olympus to Dionysus. He has very natural Capricornian associations, given some adjustment of the other correspondences.

The ritual given by Scot is to be performed when the Sun and Moon are in Cancer, Sagittarius or Pisces, the first is the exaltation of Jupiter, and the latter two Signs are ruled by him. The planet Jupiter is of course named after the Roman equivalent of Zeus. The difficulty in reality is not whether some medieval or Renaissance magicians perceived a metaphysical doctrine behind the symbols of apparently superstitious rites. Many of them had access to Greek and Latin works, while using Christian and

Jewish terms to distract from the dangerous interpretations of some of their rituals. The treasure cave connects with the lore of peasants and witches, heretics and magicians. It is no great leap to see adaptations from heretical lore or pagan survivals underlying some of the twilight language of the grimoires.

In the meantime another obstacle exists. The meanings of many symbols of the old pagan cults were distorted in the rationalistic interpretations of myth and archaic ritual which predominated in the nineteenth century. Such devaluation was not new; Classical authors and Christians alike had placed restricted interpretations on the symbols of the Mysteries. Among these misunderstood symbols, one of the most significant is the Cave of the Mysteries. Many authors in the past have tended to interpret the cave only as a symbol of the realm of the dead, or of earthly fertility. Now it is of course true that the ancients conceived of a connection between these two concepts, and to this degree there is some residual value in the interpretations which developed in the nineteenth century.

Against this however there is the evidence of wider meaning, which shows how very far reduced the symbol has become when interpreted in this way. This wider meaning is evident firstly in the locations of such caves. Many such will be encountered in this book, and many more may be found in the sacred texts and traditions of many periods and peoples. A great many such caves are to be found at the top of a mountain, for example Mounts Dicte and Ida in Minoan Crete. This is hardly the most natural location for a cave whose symbolism was restricted to the subterranean realm of the dead and earthly fertility.

Such caves were associated with initiation and the gaining of wisdom by divine instruction. This meaning is very apparent in the tradition related by Strabo, where King Minos of Crete ascends the mountain to the cave of Zeus, and receives there the tables of law by which his people are ruled. As will be blazingly apparent to many readers there is clear convergence of this legend with that of the biblical Moses. Neither Zeus nor Jehovah is solely involved with the realm of the dead or with fertility cults, which fact serves as a useful introduction to the wider significance of the cave.

The cave is not simply a metaphor for the realm of the dead, although it grants access to that realm among others. Neither is it an allegory for the fertility of the earth, although again it includes such meaning. The cave, whether a man-made hole or a natural grotto, is an inclusive symbol of containment. It contains not a part of the other world, but all of it. Within such a cave are granted visions of the entire Universe, and a complete cast of supernatural beings are encountered.

This significance was as remote from the understanding of some of the Classical authors as to the nineteenth century rationalists. The descent of Pythagoras or other wise men and initiates into caves was frequently associated exclusively with Hades in Classical times. However, in the *Vision of Er*, while apparently dead the visionary sees the planetary spheres and souls descending from the celestial realms as well as ascending from the Underworld. Nor, notwithstanding changes in how the Underworld was viewed between Homer and Plato, is this feature of the vision peculiar to Plato's account. Along with the seasonally dying son or abducted daughter, and the fertile Earth Mother of the primitive Mystery cults, are encountered heavenly powers of rain and sun, of thunder and lightning. Even the Cretan Earth goddess herself appears to have links with the ancient sky goddesses of ancient Egypt. These too came to be associated with the zodiac, and this symbolism is resumed by the Gnostic Sophia. In the grottoes of Mithras are encountered a deity comprehending the whole heaven; a figure swathed in the seven coiled serpent of the heavenly spheres, often marked with the zodiacal signs. Yet the distinguishing feature of these grottoes is the descent into them by seven steps.

Lansdowne 1203 is one the most revealing of the Solomonic manuscripts, clarifying much that has degenerated in other sources. It reveals the Book of Spirits, in its most comprehensive form; wherein are written the names, seals and conjurations of the entire celestial and elemental spirit hierarchy. These are the occupants of the Cave as a spiritual image of the cosmos in its entirety. Although I am unaware that anyone has made the comparison before, the Book of Spirits is the most comprehensive possible form of a pact with spirits. Many accounts of the book involve ambiguity as to whether such a book deals wholly with evil spirits, or of complete an-

gelic hierarchies. This is due to its equivalence with the pact, the devalued equivalent of the original concept. Once the *Liber Spirituum* is seen as equivalent to the pact, the concept is revealed as central to the processes of the grimoires as a whole, and not merely those that deal overtly with evil spirits.

Such a book can be compared with the Gnostic initiate's knowledge of the words and seals that permitted their ascent through the spheres. The powers bestowed by the book are correspondingly comprehensive. The coherent and sophisticated concept of the *Book of Spirits* as a spiritual methodology lies behind the devalued pact with the devil. As will be seen in the course of this study, the core concepts of Western magic both originate and are embedded within the goetic tradition. Goetia has long been devalued and disowned, but these concepts persist within occult traditions even while their origin is disguised.

GOETIC GALLERY:
SIBYLLINIA



I told a lie when I said that the beloved ought to accept the non-lover when he might have the lover, because the one is sane, and the other mad. It might be so if madness were simply an evil; but there is also a madness which is a divine gift, and the source of the chiefest blessings granted to men. For prophecy is a madness, and the prophetess at Delphi and the priestesses at Dodona when out of their senses have conferred great benefits on Hellas, both in public and private life, but when in their senses few or none. And I might also tell you how the Sibyl and other inspired persons have given to many people many an intimation of the future which has saved them from falling. But it would be tedious to speak of what every one knows.

Socrates, in Plato's *Phædrus*

AS A TITLE, SIBYL IS A GREEK TERM SIGNIFYING A PROPHETESS of the ancient world. The origin of the word is disputed, as is its language, which may be Greek or Semitic. It may originally have been the name or title of one important personage, extended to represent others who shared some important characteristic. As a mythological term it is widely used in the Classical period, while the Sibyls – or the traditions they represent – were more ancient. The Sibyls were associated with specific significant locations in the ancient world, among which Phrygia and its neighbouring states are very prominent. In the late Classical period the Sibyls were considered as holy virgins, resident in caves and grottoes and possessing the gift of prophecy; connecting them with nymphs such as Egeria, the instructor of King Numa.

Written collections of prophecies ascribed to them were known as the *Sibylline Books* and were regarded as of the highest authority. Both meaning and context has changed over time, and the original and subsequent phases all have some relevance to this study. An important secondary phase derives from the adoption of the Sibyls by 2nd and 3rd century Christians, as pagan prophetesses supposedly foretelling the coming of Christ and Christianity. In this guise they were frequently associated with Hermes Trismigistus, and were to inspire Renaissance Hermeticists and magicians, among others. An additional devalued meaning of fortune-teller, or even witch, developed in the late medieval period. This negative interpretation was more commonly applied to the Pythoness or Pythia; the Sibyls having been co-opted by the Church while the Pythoness was seen as wholly pagan.

The Sibyls are celebrated in Greek Classical literature, and still more so in the Roman period. This literary context – historical as well as mythological – is obscure and contradictory in some respects. It is consistent nevertheless in portraying the Sibyls as historical and important in earlier phases of religion and culture. Reconstructing the more ancient historical context presents some difficulties. The first problem is that in the Classical period the prophetesses associated with Delphi and other cult sites had little independence. While traditionally regarded as virgin brides of the god, to ensure their chastity, priestesses of Delphi were women above marriageable age who were simply dressed as brides.

The Pythoness of Delphi in Classical times was controlled by the priesthood; the Sibyls by contrast are portrayed as independent, prestigious, and able to travel. According to Strabo there was a Sibyl of Erythræ named Athenais, in the time of Alexander the Great. The site of an Erythraean Sibyl's dwelling has been excavated, and inscribed utterances discovered. Among them is the Sibyl's claim of a status between men and gods, along with caustic comments concerning the priests of Apollo, and even the god himself. This supports the literary evidence for a historical background in which the Sibyls, unlike Delphic prophetesses, were not under priestly supervision but possessed their own authority. This status survived into the Pan-Hellenic Olympian age of the polis, but was not a product of it.

Cassandra

Another difficulty is the apparent absence of the Sibyl in the works of Homer, despite traditions that one or more of the Sibyls predated the Trojan War. A Homeric character who does resemble a Sibyl, and is occasionally called one, is the Trojan princess Cassandra. In common with the Sibyl of Cumæ, and the Nymph Daphne whose name is borne by more than one Sibyl, Cassandra is portrayed as resisting the amorous advances of Apollo. He grants her the gift of prophecy as an inducement, and when she wishes to retain her virginity he punishes her by imposing the penalty that her prophecies, though always true, will never be believed. Another connection of Cassandra with the Sibyls is that she predicted the downfall of Troy, due to the abduction of Helen, as did the Sibyl of Marpessa. Another prophecy concerning the fall of Troy is significant in relation to Cassandra; this relates to the famous and highly mysterious image known as the Palladium, a complex matter which requires further elucidation.

The Palladium, according to some accounts, was an archaic goddess sculpture. Its feet were not separated, and it stood three cubits in height. Its right hand was raised and held a spear, while in its left was held a distaff and spindle. One tradition has it fall from heaven while a prince is building the citadel of Ilium, which was to form part of the city of Troy. Another has it fall at Pessinos in Phrygia; still another has Dardanos bring it to the region from Samothrace. Yet another has it made by Abaris from the bones of Pelops. There is even a late version that supposes it to have been a clockwork statue, but this is probably a rationalisation of a legend in which the statue of Athena objects to being sacrilegiously stolen.

The Palladium is variously described, and was undoubtedly an important cult object. It is described as a statue of Pallas, whose identity is similarly mysterious. In some accounts Pallas is said to have been a giant slain by Athena, who flayed him and wore his skin, and took his name as one of her titles. Another account makes Pallas female, a foster-sister of Athena whom she accidentally slays during her infancy in Libya. Athena carves the Palladium in memory of her friend. The name Pallas appears again as that of the son of Evander who assists the Trojan Aeneas when

he flees to Italy. In Roman legend Aeneas brought the Palladium with him from Troy; in Roman history a real image was brought from Pessinos in Phrygia, and was guarded by the Vestal Virgins. As will also appear later, Evander is related to one of the Sibyls, and Aeneas makes a journey to the Underworld guided by a Sibyl.

Both the Palladium and the Aegis were powerful talismanic objects, and the Aegis deserves our attention in this discussion. Mythologically the Aegis was made from the skin of Pallas, but is usually said to have been the skin of a goat or serpent. The she-goat was the sacrificial animal of Athena and in ancient ritual the distinction between victim and god was very slight, thus investing the skin with tremendous power. The Aegis traditionally bore the mask of the Gorgon, a powerful magical symbol often worn by priestesses and goddesses in the archaic period. The goat skin Aegis of Athena as a magical talisman connects powerfully with the Pentacle made from the skin of a goat in grimoire ritual. One of the most ancient of these protective Solomonic talismans is the Gorgonian Face of Shaddai. The origin of the Pentacle is to be sought in sacrificial skins adorned with mask-like images, subsequently replaced with geometrical designs and names of God.

Returning to the Palladium, whatever its form and origin, aside from Homer the tradition was that Troy could not be taken while it resided with the Trojans. For this reason Odysseus and Diomedes are said to have stolen it on behalf of the Greeks. It is on the occasion of this supposed theft that Athena, displeased with the sacrilege, made the eyes of the image flash, and the statue resist capture. According to others the image never was stolen, but only a duplicate, so that Aeneas was able to bring the real Palladium to Italy. When Troy fell to the Greeks Cassandra was found in the sanctuary of Athena. Homer, who never mentions the Palladium by name nor alludes to its significance, nevertheless portrays Cassandra clutching the image of Athena. That the Palladium was said to have been made from the bones of Pelops is significant for many reasons. Among these is the fact that after Cassandra was carried off by the victorious Greeks she gave birth to a son, whose name was also Pelops.

Judging from the testimony of ancient writers the Palladium was either similar to or identified with the stone sacred to Cybele, and also a sacred artefact – possibly phallic – central to the Mysteries of Samothrace. It may be identical also with a beehive-shaped stone called the *omphalos*, known from Delphi and Delos, which have possible Mesopotamian and Egyptian analogues. That it was sacred and involved in the Mysteries of a Phrygian or Cretan goddess led to it being interpreted, or even deliberately misrepresented, as an actual statue of a goddess. Various indications suggest it was originally the seat of prophecy of an entranced Sibyl or Pythoness. Its importance led to various cities and nations claiming to possess it, and to legends accounting for its moving from one place to another. The likelihood is of course that there was more than one, made from bone, wood or stone, and with some variation in form.

The Classical Sibyls

When considering the Classical Sybils various ancient authors offer divergent opinions regarding their number. Plato mentions only one Sibyl, Martianus Capella two, Pliny and Solinus three, Pausanias and Aelian give four while Varro enumerates ten. Varro's list has been the most influential among later mythographers and classicists, and might appear to represent a convenient start point. Against this there is the complexity of traditions; involving accounts of the same Sibyl moving from one location to another, or sharing the same name. Varro's listing therefore requires some judicious handling. The Sibyls he enumerates were associated with ten locations, which will here be divided into two groups of five.

The most famous Classical Sibyl came from Italian Cumæ, which was originally an Ionian Greek colony. Another Sibyl was associated with Tiburtis, also in Italy. For our purposes, it is useful to deal with these two alongside the Sibyls of Persia, Libya and Delphi. The remaining five are from the region of Phrygia and Ionian Greece: Erythræa in Lydia; the Isle of Samos; Aeolian Cumæ; Marpessa on the Hellespont and Ancyra in Phrygia.

The Sibyl of Erythræa

This Sibyl from Lydia in Asia Minor is known in Latin as the Sibylla Erythræa. The Greek name Herophile is used of her, and she is considered the most important of the Greek Sibyls. Her father was said to be a shepherd of Mount Ida named Theodorus, and her mother a nymph. At first glance Herophile's having a Nymph and a shepherd for her parents appears little more than a Classical cliché. However, like Sibyls, nymphs also frequently live in caves and grottoes. A cave on Mount Ida is at once a sanctuary of Cybele, the birthplace of Zeus and the site of initiatory rituals. Epimenides – who is unlikely to have been a simple shepherd – was supposed to be tending his sheep, when he entered such a cave. After her birth she grew very rapidly, and began to pronounce oracles in verse. Her parents accordingly dedicated her to Apollo, and she foretold she would eventually die from one of his arrows. Tradition has it that she lived as long as nine men, each aged 110 years, which appears to be a sacred or canonical period.



The Samian Sibyl

Called the Sibylla Samia after the Isle of Samos, the name of the Samian Sibyl was Phyto or Phemenoe. The latter name is also given as that of a priestess of Apollo said to have invented heroic poetry, being the first to render oracles in verse. A Theodorus of Samos is mentioned by Pliny (died 79 CE), who supposed him to have been an artist of around 700 BCE. Another interpretation follows naturally upon the details he supplies: Theodorus was the first man who discovered the working of iron with fire. To his ingenuity man also owes the lock, as well as the rule, the level and the turning lathe. This description is very reminiscent of the Idaean Dactyls. This Theodorus and the father of the Sibylla Erythraea are likely to be identical. There is a legend which makes an Ionian rather than Libyan prophetess the first of the Sibyls. According to this tradition the father of the first Sibyl is Dardanos, and the mother a sea nymph or Nereide named Neso. Dardanos brought the Palladium from Samothrace to Troy, and instituted the Cabiric cult there, and is thought to have been one of the Cabiri himself. He is the father of a prophetess, as is Theodorus, whose namesake resembles a Dactyl. This Theodorus – a fire-working goes – lives on an island also associated with a Sibyl. It seems fair to assume a connection between these details.



The Cimmerian Sibyl

The Sibyl of Cumæ in Aeolia, known in Latin as the Sibylla Cimmeria. There are two peoples described as Cimmerians by Greek and Roman authors. One of them is historical, another features in myth and legend. The historical Cimmerians were a nomadic people living north of the Black Sea. They were neighbours of and perhaps related to the Scythians, considered by some as a shamanic influence on Greek culture. They invaded the Persian Empire in Anatolia, penetrating as far as Aeolis and Ionia, taking Sardis in Lydia 635 BCE. Alyattes of Lydia expelled them after twenty-eight years in the region. The Scythians were – compared to the Greeks – a sexually egalitarian people, whose society included female shamans and related figures.



The mythical Cimmerians lived in a land where the sun was never seen. They dwelt underground, in homes connected by passages, and only left their city at night. One of the gates of Hades was there, and Odysseus came to conjure the dead and consult the shade of Tiresias. According to Homer Cimmeria was placed to the extreme west of Great Ocean. The place was shrouded in perpetual darkness, a circumstance mentioned by Cornelius Agrippa, who knew his Homer tolerably well:

*Here people are that be Cimmerian named,
Drowned in perpetual darkness, it is famed,
Whom rising, nor the setting Sun doth see,
But with perpetual night oppressed be.*

According to others it was in the far north, beyond the Black Sea, where the historical Cimmerians lived in the Tauric Chersonesus. In other accounts – which converge with some later readings of Homer – it was near Lake Avernus, a gate of the Underworld, at Italian Cumæ. Historical and mythological Cimmerians alike connect the Sibyl with shamanism and mystical adventures in caves.

In Virgil's *Aeneid* the Sibyl of Cumæ is as major a character as Circe in the *Odyssey* of Homer, and in a very similar role. Indeed Virgil was essentially the Homer of the Romans, who came to be seen as a magician in his own right. While the *Aeneid* is by definition a literary source it has played a major role in shaping magical traditions, and was extensively used for bibliomancy in the Middle Ages. Virgil's Sibyl is a priestess of Persephone, who guides him through the Underworld in search of his dead father:

*Enjoin'd to seek, below, his holy shade;
Conducted there by your unerring aid.
But you, if pious minds by pray'rs are won,
Oblige the father, and protect the son.
Yours is the pow'r; nor Proserpine in vain
Has made you priestess of her nightly reign.*

The Sibyl of Marpessa

From Marpessa on the Hellespont, her Latin title is the Sibylla Hellespontica. Marpessa was a village in the region of Gergithus (otherwise called Gergis) connected with a form of Apollo. Gergis stood on Mount Ida, sacred to Cybele; the local Apollo was likely associated with her cult, as was the necromantic oracle at Hierapolis. In some accounts

this Sibyl, who also bore the name Herophile, was counted the second after the Sibylla Libyca. She lived before the war with Troy, and predicted its fall through a Spartan woman. She was born at Marpessa in Mysia, whose Thracian inhabitants had a reputation which on occasion appears to have been wildly misunderstood or rationalised. According to Classical writings they were much in demand as mourners, and some have claimed this is due to their being naturally melancholy and inclined to tears! However in ancient texts they are described as a hardy and warlike people, and contrasted favourably with the Lycians and Phrygians. Their ancient reputation as mourners relates to aspects of their religion and culture that suited them to the role of goetes, officiating at funeral rites. Eliade discusses a passage from Strabo relating to rites among the Mysians in Thrace that resembled Scythian practices. In the next chapter a ritual performed off the coast of Mysia will be examined.



The Sibylla Hellespontica is said to have lived at Samos for most of her life, and to have visited Claros, Delos and Delphi. She is said to have carried with her the stone upon which she sat when prophesying. Pausanias records having seen this stone at Delphi. He mentions also having seen her monument in the grove of Apollo Smintheus in her homeland Troas,

where tradition records her returning before her death. This tradition may suggest that a sacred stone preceded the tripod as the seat of prophecy, while a black stone was also a sacred image of Cybele. Alternative interpretations have been proposed, such as a freelance Sibyl competing with the Pythia of Delphi. Claros was famous for an oracle of Apollo, said to have been built by Manto, one of the Sibyls, the daughter of the seer Tiresias; a lake at the site was said to be formed from her tears. Delos was particularly celebrated for its sanctuary of Apollo, and was one of the holiest sites in the Greek world. It was the birthplace of both Artemis and Apollo, although the dedication to Artemis preceded Apollo's involvement. The image of Apollo there represented him as a dragon, suggesting a pre-Olympian cult. A hymn composed by this Sibyl was sung during rituals there; according to others several of her poems were possessed by the people of Delos as late as the reign of Antoninus (138–161 CE).

The Sibyl of Ancyra

From Ancyra in Phrygia, and called the Sibylla Phrygia, she appears to be a duplication of the Hellespontine and Erythraean Sibyl. As seen in connection with the former, there was an Oracle attributed to Apollo at



Gergithus, although the dedication was likely originally chthonic or even necromantic.

The Persian Sibyl

The Sibyl of Persia, called the Sibylla Persica is said to have been named Sambethe, and was also known as the Babylonian Sibyl. Outside of much later tradition, little appears to be known concerning her.



The Libyan Sibyl

The Sibyl of Libya, called the Sibylla Libyca, who bore the name Pemonoe, was associated with the Oracle of Zeus-Ammon in the Libyan Desert. The original dedication of this oracle is impossible to discern, although it is known to have been founded by Libyan tribes, and to have retained its Libyan character even after the extension of Egyptian sovereignty. The first Greeks to visit the oracle in historical times were from Cyrene, and the cult of the god spread to Sparta, Macedonia and throughout the Hellenic world, a process that accelerated after the visit of Alexander the Great.

According to other traditions, the first Sibyl received her name from the Libyans. Called Hierophile, she was the daughter of Zeus and Lamia who was in turn the daughter of Poseidon. Curiously, there were three Lamias in Greek myth, but they do not appear to have been distinct originally. One was the daughter of Poseidon and mother of the Libyan Sibyl by Zeus. Another was more monstrous, she was said to steal children and was thus a terror to nursing mothers. This Lamia was also connected to Libya, being the daughter of Belus and the Nymph Libya who gave her name to the country. Reinforcing the connecting links with our first Lamia, this Lamia was also loved by Zeus, but each time she gave birth Hera caused the death of the child. In her despair Lamia hid herself in a cave and preyed upon the children of mothers more fortunate than her. Hera also afflicted her with sleeplessness, which Zeus counter-acted by giving her the power of removing and replacing her own eyes.



Vampiric female spirits that preyed on children took the collective title Lamiae from her. Accordingly, there are descriptions of Lamiaë, as great serpents with the breasts and faces of beautiful women. Also called Lemures, they were considered witches or evil spirits who lured strangers to their doom with a melodious hissing, being incapable of speech.

Another monster named Lamia used to haunt the area around the Delphic oracle (which of course also had its own Sibyl). Various features of these legends suggest an identity between these figures, including the dwelling in a cave and the removal of the eyes (emblematic of seeing into another world). In addition, mythically if not actually, Olympian Apollo was a latecomer to Delphi; formerly it was an Earth oracle, and the deity residing there was Python, from which the oracular priestesses of Delphi took the name of Pythoness.

Lamia as a monstrous female may well represent a witch like priestess, and darker aspects of ancient cults lurking behind the sanitized Olympian cultus. As seen earlier, simultaneous religious respectability and recognition in underground magical traditions did not entirely elude the Sibyl in subsequent periods. Lamia in later lore is associated with such vampiric figures as Empusa, Gello and Mormo. The origins of Hera's malice towards Lamia lay in cultic practice, where such figures personify – so to speak – the negative reflex of Hera's role as protector of mothers. Essentially similar themes are at work in the cult and myth of Melissa and Medea in Corinth.

The Delphic Sibyl

The Sibyl of Delphi, called the Sibylla Delphica, appears to be related to the Sybilla Hellepontica who is alleged to have travelled to Delphi. A rock of the Sibyl, distinct from the Omphalos and the oracular chamber of the site, is shown at Delphi. There are traditions of her competing with the Pythia. The nymph Daphne, prominent in various traditions concerning Apollo, has curious links with her. Daphne is the name Diodorus gives to the daughter of Tiresias, usually named Manto. The seemingly apocryphal theme of earlier dedications of the Oracle involves Daphne, the prophetess when it was sacred to Gaia. In other versions her father is either: a Thessalian river god named Peneios, or another of Arkadia named Ladon. Both of these were of course highly traditional rural areas, with Thessaly in particular being famous for witchcraft. This nymph Apollo loved, and he pursued her without success. When he was on the point of capturing her, she prayed to Gaia; or to her father, or even to Zeus, but the

Gaia variant is significant right now. In answer she was transformed into the laurel tree; which Apollo took as his symbol from thereon. There was a Delphic custom of fetching a bough of laurel from Thessalian Tempe, probably indicating that her cult in Thessaly was the older.



Intriguingly enough, in his *Life of Apollonius of Tyana*, Philostratus mentions a holy site of hers in the major Syrian city of Antioch. This Daphne was a park or garden with a grove of laurels and cypresses, consecrated to Apollo by the Seleucids, who also built him a magnificent temple. Apollo's links with Syrian solar Baals are of course much older than this.

Other tales of Daphne concern virgin maidens who loved hunting and shunned wedlock. Described as beloved of Artemis, who as well as being a virgin huntress herself, among other things presided over the transition from maiden to wife. This is in part a cautionary tale, of the moral and spiritual dangers of not making the transition. This would link her with other more sinister figures, since such unfulfilled women are frequently associated with ghosts and monsters. In this respect, the mythology of Artemis and associated figures shares certain features with those of Hera.

*The Italian Sibyls**The Sibyl of Cumæ*

The most famous Sibyl in the Classical period was the Sibyl of Italian Cumæ, called the Sibylla Cumana. Cumæ was originally a Greek colony, and it was said that Greek colonisation of Cumæ predated the Trojan War; also that a temple of Apollo at Cumæ was built by Dædalus when he fled from Crete. As at Thesprotia, there is an impressive literary tradition concerning a cave at Cumæ, and physical sites have consequently been misidentified at both places. In actuality such caves are not a consistent feature of necromantic sites, and a precinct adjacent to a lake was the more likely ritual space at both locations. At Heraclea and elsewhere however a sacred cave was the site of necromantic consultations. Despite this difficulty, there was Greek contact at Cumæ – from at least the Mycenaean period, as shown by pottery finds. Later colonists came from Chalcis and from Aeolian Cumæ. The Sibyl of Cumæ was known by various names including Amalthea, Daphne, Deiphobe, Demo, Demophile, Herophile, Manto and Phemonoe. She had also more barbarous names: Taraxandra and Melan-kraira. Such barbarous names are possibly untranslatable, but it is interesting that Melane is an ancient name of Samothrace.

One myth portrays Apollo as enamoured of her, and offering her anything she might ask for. In response she took up a handful of sand and asked for as many years of life as the grains of sand she held, but forgot to include retaining her youth, beauty and health. Apollo granted her request, but she would not yield her virginity even though he offered to grant her perpetual youth, beauty and vigour along with this extreme longevity. Thus in time she grew old, haggard and melancholy. As she aged she shrivelled up, coming to resemble a cicada, and was hung up in a cage in the temple of Apollo. When children asked her what she wanted, she replied that she wished to die. One account reckons her to be the same as the Sibyl of Erythræ, and that Apollo granted her longevity provided she never returned there. She lived for a very long time, but one day she received a letter from the Erythraeans, with a seal made of her native earth.

Upon seeing this she died. However, the usual tradition places her not in the temple of Apollo but in a cave, where she uttered her prophecies.

There is a well known tradition concerning her method of prophecy in this cave. It was said that she wrote her prophecies upon leaves, and left them at the mouth of the cave. Varro indicates that these oracles were written in Greek letters and that the leaves were those of the palm tree. Those consulting her had to take particular care to gather the leaves before the wind dispersed them and made the message unintelligible. This tradition itself appears to have been blown around a little, but there may be a way of rendering it intelligible. There are several references to writing upon leaves in the *Magical Papyri* and elsewhere. These references frequently involve divination, and on occasion the names of gods written on the leaves appear to be the letters of an alphabet. After particular letters were drawn by lots, the Sibyl could conduct her oracle by cross reference of the selected letters to the initials of gods whose names occurred in a set of oracular verses. Some such procedure may explain the tradition that it was Evander who introduced the Greek alphabet to Italy.



The Sibyl of Tiburtis

This Sibyl was named Albunea and called the Sibylla Tiburtina. She takes her title from the Italian town of Tibur, modern Tivoli, about twenty miles north of Rome. According to legend it was built by Tibur (called also Tiburnus and Tiburtus), Coras and Catillus, sons of the seer Amphiarus. This Sibyl is connected to the Camenae who were prophetic nymphs in the religion of ancient Italy. Later traditions suppose them to have been introduced to Italy from Greek Arcadia and they have been identified with the Muses. The most important of these goddesses was Carmenta or Carmentis, who had a temple at the foot of the Capitoline Hill, and altars near a city gate called the Porta Carmentalis. Those traditions that attribute a Greek origin to her cult give her the name Nicostrate, and make her the mother of Evander, with whom she is said to have arrived in Italy. According to this tradition she was received by King Faunus (identified with the Arcadian god Pan, he appears to be the patron of a hero oracle here) around sixty years before the Trojan War. Evander's father in this version is said to have been Hermes. An altar to him stood at the foot of the Aventine Hill in Rome, symmetrical with that of Carmenta at the foot of the Capitol. However Carmenta is older than the Greek colonisation, her name appears among the Dii Consentes of the Sabines, making her status well nigh Olympian in native Italian cults.

Her name of Carmenta was supposed to derive from the wildness of her expression when prophesying, as though *carens mentis*, without thought. A clearer derivation involves the word *carmen*, which means a song or tune, a poem, poetry or verse; also prophecy, or a legal or religious formula, literally an incantation. Delivering prophecies in verse was associated with Sibyls and other prophets, and the term poet had a wider meaning connected with ecstatic states, prophecy and enchantment.

While living she was considered the oracle of the Italian people, and was deified after death. This suggests the confusion of traditions concerning those who officiate in the Mysteries, and the deity served. A festival was celebrated in her honour on the eleventh of January. On this occasion she was entreated to make the women of Rome fertile and grant them ease in labour. When invoked as goddess of childbirth she was called Prorsa and

Postversa, head first and feet first, being the two positions in which a child can be born.

Carmenta was considered to be same as the goddess Themis of the Greeks. Themis possessed an ancient oracle; was considered the first deity to whom temples were raised; to have instituted religious customs, sacrifices and divination and all that prospers human society. She presided over petitions to the gods, and agreements among mortals. In modern times she is represented with sword and scales as the goddess of justice. When Aeneas came to Italy after the fall of Troy, he was welcomed by the aged Evander. The reason for this welcome is said to be that Evander recalled being the guest of Aeneas' father Anchises. The mother of Anchises was also named Themis.



Carmenta also received the Greek name of Timandra, sister of Helen, which relates her to the Dioscuri. In other accounts Carmenta is the wife of Evander, and he is the son of Timandra. Another of her names was Telpousa, (also given as Thelpusa, Telphusa and even Telphussa). The Arcadian nymph of this name gave her name to a town and a spring; the waters were so cold that the seer Tiresias died after drinking from them.

Manto, called the daughter of Tiresias, is also called one of the Sibyls; so she and Telpousa may originally have been related. Telpousa is said to have tricked Apollo into building his shrine at Delphi, when he had designs on her spring. Later, after slaying Python at Delphi, he avenged himself on Telpousa by erecting an altar on the cliffs above the waters. This suggests that the Sibyls were older than the cult of Olympian Apollo, and that their shrines were originally chthonic. Thus at Telpousa there is a temple of Demeter Eleusinia, the goddess of the Eleusian Mysteries; dedicated to a Cabiric triad of Demeter, Persephone and Dionysus.

Carmenta is also called Tiburtis, who has been compared with Telpousa. Two legendary drownings are associated with the river Tiber; the death of Tiresias at Telpousa was more likely from drowning than the temperature of the drinking water. The Greek and Italian myths may thus be related in terms of ancient cult, rather than a simple tendency to render Italian myths in Greek terms. According to some accounts Tiresias had two daughters, Manto and Daphne. Daphne, in common with Telpousa and Carmenta, was said to be a daughter of Ladon; this was the name of a river god of Arcadia, but also the name of the serpent guarding the apples of the Hesperides in Libya.

Feronia

Another ancient Italian goddess, associated like Carmenta with one of the gates of Rome, deserves mention here. This is the goddess Feronia, a major goddess of central Italy. She has another connection to Carmenta, apart from each being associated with a city gate. Her son is said to have been Erylus, who possessed three separate lives and bodies. This son fought with Evander, the son of Carmenta, on his arrival; and was slain by him. Whatever the nature of the relationship between these goddesses, Feronia is interesting for several reasons. She was a goddess, called a nymph, of woods, trees and flowers. She possessed several temples in the region of Campania. Custom dictated annual sacrifice to her, accompanied by a fair, at which slaves were set at liberty. For this reason she was identified with

the Roman goddess, Libertas. Intriguingly a symbol of liberty, often carried by this goddess, is the Phrygian cap.

At her rites, worshippers, as with initiates into Greek Mystery cults, were required to first wash themselves in her sacred fountain, beside her temple. In addition however, those inspired by her were said to gain the ability to transform themselves into wolves and walk over a bed of hot coals without being burned (attested by Pliny and Strabo). Shape-shifting and immunity to fire are common features of shamanic cultures, and it is distinctly likely that originally her worshippers were from a mountain tribe. Mount Soracte features prominently in accounts of her cult; in these accounts, while the names are Greek, the rites plainly retain strong archaic and indigenous traditions.

Feronia had a notable temple at Anxur, now Tarracina, which town was sacred to Jupiter Anxurus. This form of Jupiter was represented in numerous statues as a beardless boy, reminiscent of the child Zeus in the Cretan Mysteries. Whether – as has been suggested – this cult connects with the cult of the Greek god or hero Phoroneus, credited with giving fire to mankind and raising the first temple of Hera, is unknown. However, as appears from Virgil's *Aeneid* XI.II.1153–1158, Apollo (known also as Phoebus) had a shrine at the foot of Mount Soracte, which may connect him with this youthful Jupiter:

*O patron of Soracte's high abodes,
Phoebus, the ruling power among the gods,
Whom first we serve; whole woods of unctuous pine
Are felled for thee, and to thy glory shine.
By thee protected, with our naked soles,
Through flames unsinged we march treading the kindled coals.*

The Apollo of Mount Soracte was simply a classical Greek name for the Sabine and Etruscan deity Sūri, known to the Romans as Soranus. The use of the Greek name, as in Virgil, does not imply any changes in cult; unlike other Greek imports it appears that no indigenous deity was supplanted by Apollo, only the name was borrowed. Even Aplu, the Etruscan

form of Apollo, retained the underworld connections of his Eastern origins intact; so too Latin sources refer to Sūri as Dis Pater as well as Apollo Soranus. Eastern sun gods generally are known to have underworld connections, as for example the Sun-god Ra with his nocturnal boat journey. This may well explain the frequent connections of Helios with chthonic themes.

The shrine of Apollo was in the precinct of Feronia at the foot of the mountain. The Greeks referred to Feronia as Anthesphorus, Philostephanus, and as Persephone to whom these titles belong. That the Latins gave Feronia the title *Libertas* is also important as the male form *Liber* is a Latin title of Dionysus. According to Pliny a priesthood drawn from the young men of local families performed fire walks at the rites in her precinct, carrying entrails to the altar three times over the glowing embers. These hereditary priests were known as the *Hirpi*, wolves, or to give them their full title *Hirpini Sorani*. Strabo links the lupine priests of Soranus directly with the cult of Feronia, who he calls the underworld mother of wolves, *Lupa*, the she-wolf. The Romans, recognising that the continuation of these important rites required the participation of the local tribes, exempted the *Hirpini* from military service. In earlier times they were likely to have been a warrior society like the *Curetes*, and their chief – the son and lover of Feronia – a wolf king. The solar and underworld associations of Sūri are strongly reminiscent of traditions involving a hero lover and son of a chthonic goddess encountered elsewhere.

The Sibylline Oracles

A very ancient Roman legend concerning a Sibyl has her visit one of the last Roman kings, before the founding of the Republic. She brought with her nine volumes of prophecies, which she offered him for a very high price. Upon receiving a refusal she disappeared, to return after destroying three volumes. She again asked the same price for the six remaining, only to be refused again. She then destroyed three more and repeated her demand for the same sum for the last three volumes. The king was aston-

ished by this method of bargaining, and on the advice of the college of augurs (soothsayers by the flight of birds and other omens) he paid the sum demanded. Thereupon the Sibyl vanished and was never afterwards seen.

These prophecies, which were written in verse, were thereafter carefully preserved, and known as the *Sibylline Verses*. A college of priests known as the Decemviri (council of ten), and later the Quindcemviri (council of fifteen), was placed in charge of them. In such reverence were they held by the Romans that they were preserved from public view. They consulted with the greatest respect, and only on occasion of great danger to the state. The college of priests consulted them with the assistance of Greek slaves, when crisis threatened or when particularly alarming omens were observed. Thus they were consulted in consequence of the Latin wars and the invasions of the Gauls and of Hannibal. After such consultations there were exceptional sacrifices made to the infernal gods, including in 226 BC the burying alive of two Greeks and two Gauls.

Sacrifices and the introduction of cults, to avert catastrophe, were typical of the advice given by consultation of the Sibylline books. At the height of the war with Hannibal this consultation resulted in the bringing of the image of Cybele from her main cult centre at Pessinos in Phrygia. Pessinos was very near to Ancyra, where the Phrygian Sibyl dwelt. Along with the image of Cybele the Romans also brought priests from Pessinos, who at this time were likely to have been ethnic Chalybes.

Although prominent in myth, the Chalybes are a historic race frequently mentioned by ancient geographers and historians. That the Chalybes were originally one with the Chaldeans is a frequent supposition of ancient writers such as Xenophon; as will become clear, the reputations of the two are linked as well as merely confounded. Their home at this time was the south shore of the Black Sea. They were – to say the least – greatly famed iron workers, and the name of King Arthur's sword Ex-calib-er probably derives from theirs.

The result of these arrivals was an upturn in Rome's military fortunes, and a bumper harvest making good the damage done by Hannibal. The bringing ashore of the image of Cybele by a Vestal named Claudia can

be found above under *Phormio*. While her cult had full state support the Romans carefully regulated its expression, including forbidding any Roman citizen to become a priest of Cybele.

In the time of Sulla the Capitol was burned (83 BCE), and the Sibylline books perished. A commission was immediately sent to Erythræ to gather whatever oracles of the Sibyls could be obtained. A thousand were preserved up until the time of Augustus, who is said to have consulted them. They were known before the Romans obtained them from the Cumæan Sibyl or elsewhere. They were first collected on Mount Ida in Phrygia, in the 6th century BCE, and were attributed to the Hellespontine Sibyl. They were kept in the temple of Apollo Gergithius, near Aeolian Cumæ, (an author named Gergitheus wrote concerning the arrival of Aeneas in Italy). This history identifies the Sibyls of both Italian and Aeolian Cumæ, as well as the Sibylla Hellespontica with the Erythræan Sibyl. What became of these genuine Sibylline verses after Augustus is unknown. The surviving texts bearing their name are known to be late forgeries, although their origin, history and influence deserve study.

Sibyls of the Church and later folklore

The Eastern Church, as if in accord with Plato, recognises only one Sibyl: *la Sage Sibylle*. Catholic tradition follows Varro, while calling the Sibyl of Aeolian Cumæ the Sibylla Cimmeria. Accompanying Varro's ten Sibyls in Church tradition are two important later additions, the variously named Sibylla Hebraica, Agrippa or Agrippina, and the Sibylla Europa. Another Christian tradition counts the Queen of Sheba among the Sibyls. In this way among others, the Sibyls connect with Solomonic lore.

There are in addition other lesser Sibyls, more folkloric than theological. The important figure of the semi-pagan Sibylla Apennina is often connected with Solomon, and as we have seen is a strong feature in traditions concerning necromancers and witches. Such additional unofficial Sibyls are reminiscent of unofficial Saints in Mexico and elsewhere: such as Santissima Muerte and the 'narco-saint' Jesus Malverde.

It is in keeping with the Underworld associations of the Sibyls that they are mentioned in the *Dies Iræ*; a famous hymn used in the Mass of the Dead until the reforms of the 1960s. This Mass was of course among the rites of the Church most frequently employed in magic:

*The dreadful day, the day of ire,
Shall kindle the avenging fire
Around the expiring world,
And Earth as Sibyl said of old,
And as the prophet king foretold,
Shall be in ruin hurled.*

A listing follows below of the official Church Sibyls, with attributes in their iconography potentially valuable for magical purposes. If anyone is crying out for adoption by Western magicians, in imitation of the Voodoo use of Catholic figures, these are:

The *Sibylla Cimmeria* prophesied the Crucifixion, and is represented as eighteen years old, with either a cross or a crucifix; a crown is also among her attributes.

The *Sibylla Hellespontica* in Christian lore foretold the Incarnation of Christ, and the Crucifixion. The cross or crucifix and the budding rod are her attributes.

The *Sibylla Libyca* in her Catholic guise foretold that Jesus would manifest himself to the Gentiles. She is represented as twenty four years of age and bearing a flaming torch or taper.

The *Sibylla Persica* in Christian lore is considered to be of the family of Noah and the daughter-in-law of Moses, and predicted the coming of the Messiah. She is represented as old, with a serpent or dragon under her feet and a lantern in her hand.

The *Sibylla Samia* according to Christian legend lived in the time of the prophet Isaiah, her attributes are a reed or a cradle, also a rose.

The *Sibylla Erythræa* in Catholic lore is the prophetess of Divine Vengeance. She is credited with foretelling the Trojan War, and on this

account wields a sword. She also foretold the Annunciation, and in this guise bears a white rose, a horn is also among her attributes. She is represented as an aged woman.

The *Sibylla Delphica* in Christian guise has as her attributes a horn or the crown of thorns.

The *Sibylla Cumana* in her Catholic guise is fifteen years old, and predicted the Nativity in a stable, so her symbol is the manger or cradle.

The Christian role of the *Sibylla Phrygia* is to have prophesied the Resurrection, and her attributes are a banner and a cross.

The *Sibylla Tiburtina* foretold the mocking and faying of Jesus before the Crucifixion. Accordingly she dresses in skins and bears a rod, a dove is also among her attributes.

The *Sibylla Agrippa*, otherwise called Agrippina or Hebraica, appears as fifteen years old, and the scourge or whip is her symbol.



The *Sibylla Europa* foretold Herod's Massacre of the Innocents at the Nativity. She too is fifteen years old, and bears a sword.



Christian Sibyls sometimes each carry a book in which they are reading. On other occasions they bear torches (in unconscious commemoration of Persephone and the Furies), or lanterns. Sometimes they are depicted with a Sun upon their heads; reminiscent of the descent of Hecate, Circe and Medea from Helios.

CONJURING THE SIBYLS

THE MATERIAL THAT FOLLOWS derives from the *The Discoverie of Witchcraft*, Book XV, which I referred to earlier. Much interesting material is contained in this part of the book, of which I present three consecutive sections in their entirety. Their interest lies partly in the appearance of the Sibyl in the principal section, where she is conjured with the assistance of a ghost conjured previously. This ghost is clearly a magical assistant or, to use the Greek term, a *parhedros*; a role that the Sibyl is also to assume, though with some notable differences. The whole procedure is full of interesting detail, involving necromancy, magical eroticism and the survival of pagan themes in later magic. The other two sections are of similar character, relating to other themes relevant to our discussion, namely occult treasure hunting and the role of fairy lore in English grimoires. The third is a close relative of a magical procedure of *The True Grimoire*, withheld for comparative purposes in this volume. This too clearly involves the conjuring of a *parhedros*.

My comments are not interspersed with the text in this case. They appear instead following each of the three sections. This may cause some slight inconvenience, as the first section is of considerable length, but the flow and feel is rather better preserved by this arrangement.

Chapter VIII: An Experiment of the Dead

First fast and pray three days, and abstain thee from all filthiness; go to one that is new buried, such a one as killed himself or destroyed himself wilfully: or else get thee promise of one that shall be hanged, and let him swear an oath to thee, after his body is dead, that his spirit shall come to thee, and do thee true service, at thy commandments, in all days, hours, and minutes. And let no persons see thy doings, but thy fellow. And about eleven o'clock in the night, go to the place where he was buried, and say with a bold faith & hearty desire, to have the spirit come that thou dost call for, thy fellow having a candle in his left hand,

and in his right hand a crystal stone, and say these words following, the master having a hazel wand in his right hand, and these names of God written thereupon, Tetragrammaton ✱ Adonay ✱ Agla ✱ Craton ✱ Then strike three strokes on the ground, and say:

Arise N. Arise N. Arise N. I conjure thee spirit N. by the resurrection of our Lord Jesu Christi, that thou do obey to my words, and come unto me this night verily and truly, as thou believest to be saved at the day of judgement. And I will swear to thee on oath, by the peril of my soul, that if thou wilt come to me, and appear to me this night, and shew me true visions in this crystal stone, and fetch me the fairy Sibyllia, that I may talk with her visibly, and she may come before me, as the conjuration leadeth: and in so doing, I will give thee an alms deed, and pray for thee N. to my Lord God, whereby thou mayest be restored to thy salvation at the resurrection day, to be received as one of the elect of God, to the everlasting glory, Amen.

The master standing at the head of the grave, his fellow having in his hands the candle and the stone, must begin the conjuration as followeth, and the spirit will appear to you in the crystal stone, in a faire form of a child of twelve years of age. And when he is in, feel the stone, and it will be hot; and fear nothing, for he or she will shew many delusions, to drive you from your work. Fear God, but fear him not. This is to constrain him, as followeth.

I conjure thee spirit N. by the living God, the true God, and by the holy God, and by their virtues and powers which have created both thee and me, and all the world. I conjure thee N. by these holy names of God, Tetragrammaton ✱ Adonay ✱ Algramay ✱ Saday ✱ Sabaoth ✱ Planaboth ✱ Panthon ✱ Craton ✱ Neupmaton ✱ Deus ✱ Homo ✱ Omnipotens ✱ Sempiternus ✱ Ysus ✱ Terra ✱ Unigenitus ✱ Salvator ✱ Via ✱ Vita ✱ Manus ✱ Fons ✱ Origo ✱ Filius ✱ And by their virtues and powers, and by all their names, by the which God gave power to man, both to speak or think; so by their virtues and powers I conjure thee spirit N. that now immediately thou do appear in this crystal stone, visibly to me and to my fel-

low, without any tarrying or deceit. I conjure thee N. by the excellent name of Jesus Christ Alpha and Omega, the first and the last. For this holy name of Jesus is above all names: for in this name of Jesus every knee doth bow and obey, both of heavenly things, earthly things, and infernal. And every tongue doth confess, that our Lord Jesus Christ is in the glory of the father: neither is there any other name given to man, whereby he must be saved. Therefore in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, and by his nativity, resurrection, and ascension, and by all that appertaineth unto his passion, and by their virtues and powers I conjure thee spirit N. that thou do appear visibly in this crystal stone to me, and to my fellow, without any dissimulation. I conjure thee N. by the blood of the innocent lamb Jesus Christ, which was shed for us upon the cross: for all those that do believe in the virtue of his blood, shall be saved. I conjure thee N. by the virtues and powers of all the royal names and words of the living God of me pronounced, that thou be obedient unto me and to my words rehearsed. If thou refuse this to do, I by the holy trinity, and their virtues and powers do condemn thee thou spirit N. into the place where there is no hope of remedy or rest, but everlasting horror and pain there dwelling, and a place where is pain upon pain, daily, horribly, and lamentably, thy pain to be there augmented as the stars in the heaven, as the gravel or sand in the sea: except thou spirit N. do appear to me and to my fellow visibly, immediately in this crystal stone, and in a faire form and shape of a child of twelve years of age, and that thou alter not thy shape, I charge thee upon pain of everlasting condemnation.

I conjure thee spirit N. by the golden girdle, which girded the loins of our Lord Jesus Christ: so thou spirit N. be thou bound into the perpetual pains of hell fire, for thy disobedience and unreverent regard, that thou hast to the holy names and words, and his precepts. I conjure thee N. by the two edged sword, which John saw proceed out of the mouth of the almighty; and so thou spirit N. be torn and cut in pieces with that sword, and to be condemned into everlasting pain, where the fire goeth not out, and where the worm dieth not. I conjure thee N. by the heavens, and by the celestial city of Jerusalem, and by the earth and the sea, and by all things contained in them, and by their virtues & powers. I conjure thee spirit N. by the obedience that thou dost owe unto the principal prince. And except thou spirit

N. do come and appear in this crystal stone visibly in my presence, here immediately as it is aforesaid. Let the great curse of God, the anger of God, the shadow and darkness of death, and of eternal condemnation be upon thee spirit N. for ever and ever; because thou hast denied thy faith, thy health, & salvation. For thy great disobedience, thou art worthy to be condemned. Therefore let the divine trinity, thrones, dominions, principates, potestates, virtues, cherubim and seraphim, and all the souls of saints, both of men and women, condemn thee for ever, and be a witness against thee at the day of judgement, because of thy disobedience. And let all creatures of our Lord Jesus Christ, say thereunto; Fiat, fiat, fiat: Amen.

And when he is appeared in the crystal stone, as is said before, bind him with this bond as followeth; to wit,

I conjure thee spirit N. that art appeared to me in this crystal stone, to me and to my fellow; I conjure thee by all the royal words aforesaid, the which did constrain thee to appear therein, and their virtues; I charge thee spirit by them all, that thou shalt not depart out of this crystal stone, until my will being fulfilled, thou be licensed to depart. I conjure and bind thee spirit N. by that omnipotent God, which commanded the angel S. Michael to drive Lucifer out of the heavens with a sword of vengeance, and to fall from joy to pain; and for dread of such pain as he is in, I charge thee spirit N. that thou shalt not go out of the crystal stone; nor yet to alter thy shape at this time, except I command thee otherwise; but to come unto me at all places, and in all hours and minutes, when and wheresoever I shall call thee, by the virtue of our Lord Jesus Christ, or by any conjuration of words that is written in this book, and to shew me and my friends true visions in this crystal stone, of any thing or things that we would see, at any time or times: and also to go and to fetch me the fairie Sibylla, that I may talk with her in all kind of talk, as I shall call her by any conjuration of words contained in this book. I conjure thee spirit N. by the great wisdom and divinity of his godhead, my will to fulfill, as is aforesaid: I charge thee upon pain of condemnation, both in this world, and in the world to come, Fiat, fiat, fiat: Amen.

This done, go to a place fast by, and in a faire parlor or chamber, make a circle with chalk, as hereafter followeth: and make another circle for the fairie Sibylia to appear in, four foot from the circle thou art in, & make no names therein, nor cast any holy thing therein, but make a circle round with chalk; & let the master and his fellow sit down in the first circle, the master having the book in his hand, his fellow having the crystal stone in his right hand, looking in the stone when the fairie doth appear. The master also must have upon his breast this figure here written in parchment,



and begin to work in the new of the Moon and in the hour of Jupiter, the Sun and the Moon to be in one of inhabitants signs, as Cancer, Sagittarius or Pisces. This bond as followeth, is to cause the spirit in the crystal stone, to fetch unto thee the fairie Sibylia. All things fulfilled, begin this bond as followeth, and be bold, for doubtless they will come before thee, before the conjuration be read seven times.

I conjure thee spirit N. in this crystal stone, by God the Father, by God the Son Jesus Christ, and by God the Holy-ghost, three persons and one God, and by their virtues. I conjure thee spirit, that thou do go in peace, and also to come again to me quickly, and to bring with thee into that circle appointed, Sibylia fairie, that I may talk with her in those matters that shall be to her honour and glory; and so I charge thee declare unto her. I conjure thee spirit N. by the blood of the innocent lamb, the which redeemed all the world; by the virtue thereof I charge thee thou spirit in the crystal stone, that thou do declare unto her this message. Also I conjure thee spirit N. by all angels and archangels, thrones, dominations, principates, potestates, vir-

tutes, cherubim and seraphim, and by their virtues and powers. I conjure thee N. that thou do depart with speed, and also to come again with speed, and to bring with thee the fairie Sibylia, to appear in that circle, before I do read the conjuration in this book seven times. Thus I charge thee my will to be fulfilled, upon pain of everlasting condemnation: *Fiat, fiat, fiat; Amen.* Then, the figure aforesaid pinned on thy breast, rehearse the words therein, and say:

✱ Sorthie ✱ Sorthia ✱ Sorthios ✱

Then begin your conjuration as followeth here, and say:

I conjure thee Sibylia, O gentle virgin of fairies, by the mercy of the Holyghost, and by the dreadful day of doom, and by their virtues and powers; I conjure thee Sibylia, O gentle virgin of fairies, and by all the angels of Jupiter and their characters and virtues, and by all the spirits of Jupiter and Venus and their characters and virtues, and by all the characters that be in the firmament, and by the king and queen of fairies, and their virtues, and by the faith and obedience that thou bearest unto them. I conjure thee Sibylia by the blood that ran out of the side of our Lord Jesus Christ crucified, and by the opening of heaven, and by the rending of the [veil of the] temple, and by the darkness of the sun in the time of his death, and by the rising up of the dead in the time of his resurrection, and by the virgin Marie mother of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by the unspeakable name of God, Tetragrammaton. I conjure thee O Sibylia, O blessed and beautiful virgin, by all the royal words aforesaid; I conjure thee Sibylia by all their virtues to appear in that circle before me visible, in the form and shape of a beautiful woman in a bright and vesture white, adorned and garnished most faire, and to appear to me quickly without deceit or tarrying, and that thou fail not to fulfill my will & desire effectually. For I will choose thee to be my blessed virgin, & will have common copulation with thee. Therefore make haste & speed to come unto me, and to appear as I said before: to whom be honour and glory for ever and ever, Amen.

The which done and ended, if she come not, repeat the conjuration till they do come: for doubtless they will come. And when she is appeared, take your censers, and incense her with frankincense, then bind her with the bond as followeth.

I do conjure thee Sibylia, by God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy-ghost, three persons and one God, and by the blessed virgin Marie mother of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by all the whole and holy company of heaven, and by the dreadful day of doom, and by all angels and archangels, thrones, dominations, principates, potestates, virtues, cherubim and seraphim, and their virtues and powers. I conjure thee, and bind thee Sibylia, that thou shalt not depart out of the circle wherein thou art appeared, nor yet to alter thy shape, except I give thee licence to depart. I conjure thee Sibylia by the blood that ran out of the side of our Lord Jesus Christ crucified, and by the virtue hereof I conjure thee Sibylia to come to me, and to appear to me at all times visibly, as the conjuration of words leadeth, written in this book, I conjure thee Sibylia, O blessed virgin of fairies, by the opening of heaven, and by the renting of the temple, and by the darkness of the sun at the time of his death, and by the rising of the dead in the time of his glorious resurrection, and by the unspeakable name of God ✠ Tetragrammaton ✠ and by the king and queen of fairies, & by their virtues I conjure thee Sibylia to appear, before the conjuration be read over four times, and that visibly to appear, as the conjuration leadeth written in this book, and to give me good counsel at all times, and to come by treasures hidden in the earth, and all other things that is to do me pleasure, and to fulfill my will, without any deceit or tarrying; nor yet that thou shalt have any power of my body or soul, earthy or ghostly, nor yet to perish so much of my body as one hair of my head. I conjure thee Sibylia by all the royal words aforesaid, and by their virtues and powers, I charge and bind thee by the virtue thereof, to be obedient unto me, and to all the words aforesaid, and this bond to stand between thee and me, upon pain of everlasting condemnation, Fiat, fiat, fiat, Amen.

A licence for Sibylia to go and come by at all times

I conjure thee Sibylia, which art come hither before me, by the commandment of thy Lord and mine, that thou shalt have no powers, in thy going or coming unto me, imagining any evil in any manner of ways, in the earth or under the earth, of evil doings, to any person or persons. I conjure and command thee Sibylia by all the royal words and virtues that be written in this book, that thou shalt not go to the place from whence thou camest, but shalt remain peaceably invisibly, and look thou be ready to come unto me, when thou art called by any conjuration of words that be written in this book, to come (I say) at my commandment, and to answer unto me truly and duly of all things, my will quickly to be fulfilled. Vade in pace, in nomine patris, & filii, & spiritus sancti. And the holy ✱ cross ✱ be between thee and me, or between us and you, and the lion of Judah, the root of Jesse, the kindred of David, be between thee & me ✱ Christ cometh ✱ Christ commandeth ✱ Christ giveth power ✱ Christ defend me ✱ and his innocent blood ✱ from all perils of body and soul, sleeping or waking: Fiat, fiat, Amen.

The spirit from whom the magician seeks assistance is either a new buried suicide or criminal; both are typical restless spirits in Greek demonology. A significant factor for the necromancer was that burial in consecrated ground was not the lot of either type in the period of the text. As is apparent in the first of the conjurations, redemptive intervention on behalf of the spirit was an incentive to aid the magician. Their relationship is sealed by an oath of mutual assistance, which is to say a pact.

In its assumption that the magician has a confederate the ritual shows itself to be completely in accord with Solomonic magical traditions. Interestingly, this fellow has the role of skryer, in that he bears a crystal and sees visions in it. For reasons that will shortly become evident, the crystal is present when the ghost is first conjured.

The magician bears a hazel wand, a common requirement of the grimoires, including *The True Grimoire*. In my opinion, this is principally a divining instrument though it has properties of conjuration in addition. Necromancy, in which conjuration plays a natural part, is nevertheless a

form of divination as the admonition to the spirit to appear in the crystal clearly shows.

Striking the ground three times before the conjuration of the spirit is strongly reminiscent of the Greek manner of calling upon the god Hades. The spirit receives instructions to obey the magician's will, in particular to fetch Sibylia; the magician swears in return to aid in the ghost's redemption, by offering alms in his name and by prayer. This redemption, due to the nature of Christian eschatology, does not occur until the Day of Judgement; in the meantime, the spirit is in the service of the magician.

It is particularly interesting that the magician bids the spirit appear in the form of a twelve-year-old child. In many traditions, such a child is the ideal skryer. This is strongly reminiscent of occasions in the Hellenistic period where ritual elements – such as the sacrifice of a bull – undergo transferral from the physical world to the visions seen in scaled down ritual (see the Art Armadel in my *True Grimoire*). The reason for the stone's presence at this stage now becomes clear; the spirit is to take up residence in it at this stage of proceedings. The sign that he has done so is a perceived change of temperature of the stone; if it becomes hot, he is in it.

A constraint to the spirit follows this event, in which he receives instructions to appear quickly and to be truthful. There is a rehearsal of the terms of their agreement when he does so, that he resides in the stone and remains there until the magician gives him leave otherwise. The form of the spirit is also to be part of this agreement; he is to assume no other form, particularly of course frightening shapes. Fetching Sibylia, a particularly important part of his role, is included in these instructions. It may be wondered why the magician does not merely conjure her himself; this is certainly a question that requires answering. The answer is straightforward, that the ghost is a resident of this world, while she is a high-ranking inhabitant of another. For the magician to seek her in her own realm would be a much more dangerous enterprise. It is more likely that she would detain him in her world, as Calypso detained Odysseus, than that he would bring her back with him.

This stage of the ritual complete, the magician and his confederate retire from the graveyard to a previously prepared chamber. Two circles

are made, one for the magicians, the other for Sibylia to appear in. This, a striking enough departure from the employment of a Triangle in the *Goetia of Solomon*, is made more so by the instructions not to mark it with any holy names, or place any holy things within it, whereas the triangle in question is routinely fortified with divine names. The magicians take their seats in their circle, with no table; this suggests the mode of skrying involves looking down into the crystal, resembling the Armadel method. The book mentioned in the text can only be the Book of Spirits. A magical breastplate is also part of the ritual apparatus; this is a common feature of much magic of the period.

The astrological conditions of the ritual are interesting; it is to be shortly after the New Moon, the Sun and Moon to be in signs ruled by Jupiter, whose hour is that of the ritual. Whatever the meaning of the peculiar term 'Inhabiters' it is clear that it refers to Jupiter; the signs mentioned being Cancer, his exaltation, and Sagittarius and Pisces which he rules.

The sevenfold repetition of the conjuration is a feature shared with *The True Grimoire* with which these rites have considerable connection. This is a bond to cause the ghost summoned to fetch Sibyl to the circle prepared for her. This, so the text assures us, will occur before the seventh repetition of the conjuration; which I have found to be true also of the procedure of *The True Grimoire*. Although the appointed task of the ghost is to bring Sibylia forth, this does not obviate the need to conjure her. In order to understand this, it is essential to understand correctly the meaning of the term conjure. Conjure does not indicate some kind of recitation intended to cause an appearance, but to *swear together*. Thus even should the ghost cause Sibylia to appear, she is not under any obligation to colude with the magician until after the conjuration with its implicit oath.

The conjuration of Sibylia commences with pronouncing of the words from the breastplate. The breastplate is identical with what Crowley and others refer to as the lamén. The words and symbols inscribed upon a given lamén are central to the particular work in hand. It is presumably for this reason that they take first place in the conjuration that follows.

In many ways, the critical element of this operation is the apparently bizarre demand for sex favours in the penultimate line of the conjuration.

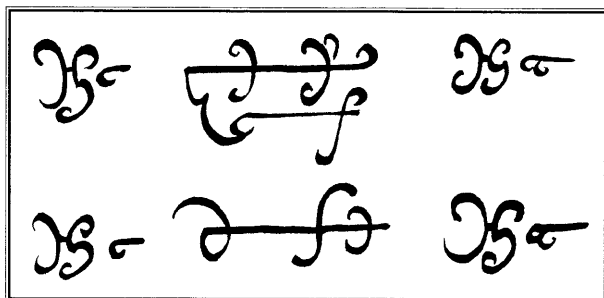
As seen earlier, the sexualised Sibyls emerged in the medieval period, if not before, being identified with the Queen of Sheba and with Venus. This is considerably more than a disapproving theological association of sexuality and paganism. Nor is sexual gratification the only role of the Sibyl; in the context of the journey to Norcia she is clearly an initiator. In this light, her sexuality takes on a quite different aspect. It is in fact critical to the apotheosis of the magician. An examination of the precursors of this powerful theme must await a subsequent part of this study.

As in *The True Grimoire* Sibylia an offering of frankincense attends the appearance of Sibylia. A bond of the spirit follows, in which the magician makes known his requirements, that she offer him good counsel, make manifest hidden treasures and all other things that he might desire of her. In this respect Sibylia is treated much as any other spirit in conventional demonology, even though it is clear enough that she is far more. Nevertheless, the association with treasure hunting connects readily with deeper themes that we have explored elsewhere. It is obviously significant that the process that immediately follows in the 'Sibylian' part of Scot's text concerns magical treasure hunts. This underlines, if you will, the connection of these themes. In the meantime it should be mentioned that the bond of the spirit here is also a special form of License to Depart. This is not a conclusion but a temporary parting, until the magician calls her again. This he will do, as this is evidently but the beginning of their relationship and work together.

The status of the Sibyl appears lessened in the context of this rite, compared to her position in the Norcian legends. Among the details that have apparently diminished is her ability to consecrate and confirm the power of the Book of Spirits, which nevertheless plays a significant part in the ritual. Nevertheless, the rite retains some very significant details. Of these, the sexual nature of the magician's relationship with her is certainly one. Implicit too in her ability to act as counsellor is a far higher status than that of a simple divining spirit. This reminds us that the Sibyl encountered in the mountains of Italy was an instructor in magic, whose authority exceeded that of the magician. This is a most potent indicator of her original role in older traditions.

Chapter X: To know of treasure bidden in the earth

Write in paper these characters following, on the Saturday, in the hour of Moon, and lay it where thou thinkest treasure to be: if there be any, the paper will burn, else not. And these be the characters.



This brief magical instruction falls between the Sibylla ritual and another lengthier text. There is not a great deal to say about it, as I have already given my hypothesis regarding the origins of treasure hunting. I am of course aware that magical treasure hunting in the literal sense took place, as well as being used as a basis for confidence tricks. This last is the meaning of Scot's marginal note: *this would be much practiced if it were not a cousening knacke*. Nevertheless, I feel that my interpretation of the origins of such rites is correct; the juxtaposition of these three magical procedures supports this thesis to a considerable degree.

The next process quoted in Scot, which plainly comes from the same source, is concerned partly with fairy lore, as is the Sibylla rite. Among their various roles, such subterranean spirits – being associated with pre-historic burial mounds and the like – are natural guardians of magical treasures.

This is the way to go invisible by these three sisters of fairies.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy-ghost

First go to a fair parlour or chamber, & an even ground, and in no loft, and [away] from people nine days; for it is the better: and let all thy clothing be clean and sweet. Then make a candle of virgin wax, and light it, and make a fair fire of charcoals, in a fair place, in the middle of the parlour or chamber. Then take faire clean water that runneth against the east, and set it upon the fire: and before thou washest thy self, say these words, going about the fire, three times, holding the candle in the right hand

✱ Panthon ✱ Graton ✱ Muriton ✱ Bisecognaton ✱ Sisston ✱ Diaton ✱ Maton ✱ Tetragrammaton ✱ Agla ✱ Agarion ✱ Tegra ✱ Pentessaroon ✱ Tendicata ✱

Then rehearse these names:

✱ Sorthie ✱ Sorthia ✱ Sorthios ✱ Milia ✱ Achilia ✱ Sibylia ✱ *in nomine patris, & filii, & spiritus sancti, Amen. I conjure you three sisters of fairies, Milia, Achilia, Sibylia, by the Father, by the Son, and by the Holy-ghost, and by their virtues and powers, and by the most merciful and living God, that will command his angel to blow the trumpe at the day of judgement; and he shall say, Come, come, come to judgement; and by all angels, arch-angels, thrones, dominations, principates, potestates, virtues, cherubim and seraphim, and by their virtues and powers. I conjure you three sisters, by the virtue of all the royal words aforesaid: I charge you that you do appear before me visibly, in form and shape of faire women, in white vestures, and to bring with you to me, the ring of invisibility, by the which I may go invisible at mine own will and pleasure, and that in all hours, and minutes: in nomine patris, & filii, & spiritus sancti, Amen.*

Being appeared, say this bond following.

O blessed virgins ✱ Milia ✱ Achilia ✱ I conjure you in the name of the Father, in the name of the Son, and in the name of the Holy-ghost, and by their virtues I charge you to depart from me in peace, for a time. And

Sibylia, I conjure thee, by the virtue of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by the virtue of his flesh and precious blood, that he took of our blessed lady the virgin, and by all the holy company in heaven: I charge thee Sibylia, by all the virtues aforesaid, that thou be obedient unto me, in the name of God; that when, and at what time and place I shall call thee by this foresaid conjuration written in this book, look thou be ready to come unto me, at all hours and minutes, and to bring unto me the ring of invisibility, whereby I may go invisible at my will and pleasure, and that at all hours and minutes; Fiat, fiat, Amen.

And if they come not the first night, then do the same the second night, and so the third night, until they do come: for doubtless they will come, and lie thou in thy bed, in the same parlour or chamber. And lay thy right hand out of the bed, and look thou have a fair silken kerchief bound about thy head, and be not afraid, they will do thee no harm. For there will come before thee three faire women, and all in white clothing; and one of them will put a ring upon thy finger, where-with thou shalt go invisible. Then with speed bind them with the bond aforesaid. When thou hast this ring on thy finger, look in a glass, and thou shalt not see thy self. And when thou wilt go invisible, put it on thy finger, the same finger that they did put it on, and every new Moon renew it again. For after the first time thou shalt ever have it; and ever begin this work in the new of the Moon, and in the hour of Jupiter and the Moon in Cancer, Sagittarius or Pisces.

The dramatis personæ of this ritual, along with the astrological conditions required, the names invoked and so forth, show it to be a close relation of the Sibylia rite. There are various other things to note regarding this ritual, first it should be noted that it is related to a ritual from *The True Grimoire* (omitted from Volume I to appear below), and probably represents an older form of the rite.

As Ioannis Marathakis notes in his survey of invisibility spells, the *Verum* form has been adapted to involve other purposes besides invisibility. Another point made by the above author, and elaborated here, is

that the history of such spells derives from high antiquity. I quote here the relevant passage from Plato's *Republic*, Book II, in the translation by Benjamin Jowett:

According to the tradition, Gyges was a shepherd in the service of the king of Lydia; there was a great storm, and an earthquake made an opening in the earth at the place where he was feeding his flock. Amazed at the sight, he descended into the opening, where, among other marvels, he beheld a hollow brazen horse, having doors, at which he stooping and looking in saw a dead body of stature, as appeared to him, more than human, and having nothing on but a gold ring; this he took from the finger of the dead and reascended. Now the shepherds met together, according to custom, that they might send their monthly report about the flocks to the king; into their assembly he came having the ring on his finger, and as he was sitting among them he chanced to turn the collet of the ring inside his hand, when instantly he became invisible to the rest of the company and they began to speak of him as if he were no longer present. He was astonished at this, and again touching the ring he turned the collet outwards and reappeared; he made several trials of the ring, and always with the same result - when he turned the collet inwards he became invisible, when outwards he reappeared. Whereupon he contrived to be chosen one of the messengers who were sent to the court; where as soon as he arrived he seduced the queen, and with her help conspired against the king and slew him, and took the kingdom.

A variant of this story appears in Herodotus, who in turn received it from the *Satires* of Archilochus. The identification of Gyges as a shepherd is fairly obviously a convention which recurs in regard to several characters in this study; in historical reality he was a Lydian nobleman just as Epimenides was a high ranking priest and so on. So strong are the folkloric themes surrounding Gyges that the likelihood is that the legend represents an accumulation of religious traditions around a historical character. These traditions appear to reflect the mysteries of Cybele

and the royal hero Mēn; this parallels her role in the dynastic myth of Phrygia. The descent into the earth is not dissimilar from the cave theme involving other mythic shepherd kings and priests, and the inhumation of a body *more than human* might be compared with the mysteries of the birth and death of Dionysus or of Zeus in Crete. As an underworld journey the myth has parallels in the accounts of Greek gods. Hades king of the Underworld possessed a helmet of invisibility, frequently seen worn by Hermes as guide of souls. It has also been suggested that Hades and Hermes Kthonios are older and younger forms of the same god.

In this regard it is important to note that the ritual is preceded by a talisman for treasure hunting, which I have already connected with the Cave of the Mysteries, in fact the two rituals form the whole contents of the chapter in question. Lydia itself is of course the home of a Sibyl as described earlier, as well as recurring several times in connection with Thracian and Phrygian mysteries throughout the volume. The rite thus brings us more or less full circle from Mystery religions, ancient Lydia and its Sibyl to a conjuration of Sibylline fairies in Renaissance England. The connection of invisibility with shamanic initiation (and with caves) is also underlined by this circular journey.

The *Verum* form of the ritual now follows. No comment is really required other than to point out that the provision for a female operator is an indicator of the comparative modernity of the ritual.

To send for three Ladies or three Gentlemen to your room after dining.

Preparation

It is necessary to be three days chaste, and you will be elevated. On the fourth day, clean and prepare your room early in the morning, as soon as you are dressed, the whole time fasting. But see you do it such that it won't be spoilt the remainder of the day. Note there must be nothing hanging or on hooks, such as tapestries, clothes, hats, bird cages, bed curtains, etc. and above all, there should be a white sheet on your bed.

Ceremony

Having finished your supper, go in secret to your prepared room, prepared as described above; light a good fire, place a white tablecloth on your table, three chairs around it, and before the seats place three wheat rolls and three glasses full of clear, fresh water. Then put a chair or armchair next to your bed. Then retire to your bed, saying the following words:

Conjuration

Beſticitum conſolatio veni ad me vertut Creon, Creon, Creon, cantor laudem omnipotentis et non commentur. Stat superior carta bient laudem omvieſtra principiem da montem et inimicos meos ôô proſtantis vobis et mihi dantesque paſſium fieri ſuicisibus.

The three persons having arrived will sit near the fire, drinking, eating, and then will thank the one who has entertained them. For if it is a lady who performs this ceremony, three gentlemen will come; and if it is a man, three ladies will come.

These three persons will draw lots to determine which one will remain with you; she will sit herself in the armchair or chair that you have placed for her near your bed, and she will remain and chat with you until midnight, and then she will leave with her companions, without needing to be dismissed. With regard to the other two, they will remain near the fire while the first converses with you; and while she is with you, you can question her on any art or science, or anything that you wish, she will immediately reply to you with a positive response. You can also inquire if she knows of any hidden treasure, and she will reveal the place to you, as well as the proper hour for retrieving it, and will even go there with her companions to defend you against any infernal spirits that are defending it. And when she goes to leave you, she will give you a ring which will bring you luck in gambling. And if you put it on the finger of a woman or girl, you may have your will with her on the spot.

Note. You must leave your window open so they can enter. You can repeat this same ceremony as often as you wish.

THE GEOGRAPHY OF HADES



IT IS NECESSARY, as well as interesting, to give a descriptive account of the Greek Underworld, and to a degree its afterlife. It is necessary because ritual actions and other aspects of magical theory and practice involve the geography of Hades. Additionally, a great transformation in ancient eschatology is to be detailed in Book Three. This will be easier to follow preceded by an outline of underworld geography. It is, in part, a composite, drawing on variant traditions, some of different dates. This approach follows classical precedent, wherein various mythic sources were harmonised. This suits practical magical purposes better than separating supposed historical layers; I nevertheless, briefly acknowledge and question these.

Let us begin with the moment of death, and follow the soul on its journey. After death, the god Thanatos cut a lock of hair from the deceased, following this Hermes came to guide them to the Underworld. The main approach – following the route of Odysseus – was from a grove of black poplars, next to earth encircling Oceanus. This world ocean was in many respects as major a part of Underworld geography as of earthly. Later authors than Homer credit other entrances to Hades: at Colonus, sacred to the Erinyes and Prometheus, alongside other dedications; at Cumæ in Italy, where the Sibyl led Aeneas to the Underworld; at the Alcyonian Lake at Lerna near Argos, where Demeter's Mysteries were celebrated and Dionysus entered Hades to deliver his mother from the Underworld; at a cave on the Cape of Tænarus near Sparta, where Heracles is said to have entered in quest of Cerberus and of Alkistis.

Still other Charonian caves and lakes were also associated with entrance to the Underworld. The principle of elastic mythic geography is perhaps more realistic than following a single venerable author. These local traditions, some perhaps as ancient as Homeric precedent, have an authenticity of their own.

Crossing the River

Hermes brought the soul to the banks of the river Styx across which souls traversed to enter Hades. This river marks the Western boundary of the kingdom. It is the principal river of the Underworld, indeed the *Iliad* mentions no others; it is said to encircle Hades seven times. The gods swore their most solemn oath on the waters of Styx. Iris fetched a vessel of water from the Underworld, which the god poured out while swearing their oath. A river of the same name in northern Arcadia plunged, like the mythic river, from a high rock. The location of the ravine is wild and gloomy, a natural site for the evolution of underworld traditions.

Those who were unburied could not cross the river. To cross the river the deceased must also pay the ferryman, Charon, a coin known as an *obulus*, or wander forever on the Western side. This coin was not extant in Homer's time, and he does not mention Charon. Greek folklore however remembers him to this day as an angel of death, and again the tradition may be separate from, rather than later than Homer. Those who lacked burial rites (which naturally meant they also lacked the obulus) remained on the far bank, as Virgil expresses it:

*'Son of Anchises, offspring of the gods,'
The Sibyl said, 'you see the Stygian floods,
The sacred stream which heav'n's imperial state
Invokes in oaths, and fears to violate.
The ghosts rejected are th' unhappy crew
Depriv'd of sepulchers and fun'ral due:
The boatman, Charon; those, the buried host,
He ferries over to the farther coast;*

*Nor dares his transport vessel cross the waves
 With such whose bones are not compos'd in graves.
 A hundred years they wander on the shore;
 At length, their penance done, are wafted o'er.*

Cerberus and the Asphodel Meadows

On the other side of the river the dead encountered Cerberus, as you gentle reader will do in Book Six. His history is long, reaching back into Vedic religion, where he was originally associated with a celestial afterlife, rather than the Underworld. Ups and downs of this kind have occurred to many individual gods throughout history. They reached epidemic proportions from the Classical period onwards. Offerings of cakes for Cerberus were common in necromantic rites. They were portrayed both as offerings and as a ploy; again Virgil illustrates this well. His hero, escorted by the Sibyl having cross the Styx:

*No sooner landed, in his den they found
 The triple porter of the Stygian sound,
 Grim Cerberus, who soon began to rear
 His crested snakes, and arm'd his bristling hair.
 The prudent Sibyl had before prepar'd
 A sop, in honey steep'd, to charm the guard;
 Which, mix'd with pow'rful drugs, she cast before
 His greedy grinning jaws, just op'd to roar.
 With three enormous mouths he gapes; and straight,
 With hunger press'd, devours the pleasing bait.
 Long draughts of sleep his monstrous limbs enslave;
 He reels, and, falling, fills the spacious cave.
 The keeper charm'd, the chief without delay
 Pass'd on ...*

Beyond the Styx and past Cerberus lays the Asphodel Fields or Meadows; here souls of the dead wander aimlessly, inarticulately twittering like bats. The heroes of legend are more distinct than the other ghosts, who are generally insubstantial. This, in the general testimony of scholars, is the earliest Greek conception of the afterlife. However, while it is certainly a Homeric vision it is not its limit, as in *Odyssey* 4: 561 Menelaus is given a privileged place in Elysium. Nevertheless, these meadows feature in the 24th book of the *Odyssey* and it is plain enough that this is the fate of most mortals:

Hermes of Cyllene summoned the suitors' ghosts... when they had passed the waters of Oceanus and the rock Leucas, they came to the gates of the sun and the land of dreams, whereon they reached the meadow of asphodel where dwell the souls and shadows of them that can labour no more.

Erebus

According to later thinking, there are recent arrivals in the Asphodel Meadows and others much older, spirits awaiting judgement, and those whose sentence is to stay here. Further to the East is the region of Erebus and the palace of Hades and Persephone. To the left of this is the pool of Lethe (*forgetfulness*). Ghosts drinking from this pool forget their former lives, and Orphic initiates were instructed to avoid it.

There is then a fork in the road, near where the Judges of Hades hold court. Here Rhadamanthus judges Asiatics and Aeacus Europeans, referring special cases to Minos, the supreme judge. This Y shaped junction powerfully resembles the archetypal place of Hecate, where three roads meet. So too in some ritual contexts they are nigh indistinguishable. Back the way you came returns to the Asphodel Meadows, left leads to Tartarus prison and right to the fields of Elysium. These three directions mirrored the three verdicts the Judges could reach: back for further wandering in the Asphodel Meadows for those neither wicked nor too good, left for the

punishments of Tartarus, or right towards Hades palace, and beyond for the rewards of Elysium.

Erebus then is a dark immensity filled with ghosts. Black or twilight emptiness is everywhere, yet within it are the main features of Hadean geography. In Erebus, where Odysseus never ventured, are the forked road and the pools of Lethe and Mnemosyne. Here also is the palace of Hades and Persephone, and those who compose their court. It is Erebus too that you must traverse to reach Elysium, or indeed Tartarus.

Tartarus

*Tis here, in different paths, the way divides;
The right to Pluto's golden palace guides;
The left to that unhappy region tends,
Which to the depth of Tartarus descends;
The seat of night profound, and punish'd fiends.*

This, Tartarus, was a region of the Underworld veiled thrice in darkest night, where the most impious and guilty were incarcerated. Its entrance was an enormous tower, its gates sealed with adamantine columns, impenetrable to men and gods. It was surrounded by walls of brass, three of them by Virgil's account, and he describes the fiery river Phlegithon encircling it. Hesiod makes it a brazen gated prison, Homer's gates are iron, but the threshold brass. Both place it as great a distance beneath the world of men than they from Heaven. Hesiod is specific: an anvil of bronze falling from one to the next would fall for nine days, and land on the tenth.

While Tartarus is very much a separate prison, its location is compatible with the subterranean geography of Hades; Virgil clearly envisaged a further descent from Hades to Tartarus that conforms to it. While fearsome, it was not a hell for mere sinners; the incarcerated villains are a select few. In Homer only the Titans are imprisoned there, and in most respects these so-called elder gods are too indistinct and monstrous to interest us. The later additions are essentially four: Tantalus, Ixion, Tityus and Sisyphus. A part-time inhabitant of Tartarus who does deserve at-

tion is the fascinating figure of Kronos; but this is not the place to discuss him. For now, what these details illustrate is that Tartarus was not, initially at least, a part of human expectation of the afterlife. However, this was to change, as can be read in Plato's *Gorgias*:

Now in the days of Kronos there existed a law respecting the destiny of man, which has always been, and still continues to be in Heaven – that he who has lived all his life in justice and holiness shall go, when he is dead, to the Islands of the Blessed, and dwell there in perfect happiness out of the reach of evil; but that he who has lived unjustly and impiously shall go to the house of vengeance and punishment, which is called Tartarus.

By this account, the wicked go to Tartarus, and the good to the Isles of the Blessed. In the fully developed form of this eschatology, there is a probationary phase prior to arrival at these Islands. This involves the realm of Elysium.

Elysium

The Pool of Mnemosyne (Memory) lay near the entrance to Elysium on the right hand road. Here the Orphic initiate drank before entering Elysium. This was the reward of the just; Orphic initiation and the moral Pythagorean life aimed at obtaining it. Virgil describes it as follows:

*The verdant fields with those of heav'n may vie,
With ether vested, and a purple sky;
The blissful seats of happy souls below.
Stars of their own, and their own suns, they know;*

Homer, according to the common interpretation, does not place Elysium in Hades, but in the distant West. This need not really be in conflict, since the entrance to Hades lies in the same direction. Existence in Elysium is in marked contrast to the gloomy afterlife seen by Odysseus; there:

... life is easiest for men. No snow is there, nor heavy storm, nor ever rain, but ever does Ocean send up blasts of the shrill-blowing West Wind that they may give cooling to men ...

Hesiod in his *Works and Days* describes five ages of man, each with their own relation with the afterlife. This is deeply instructive, as regards chthonic spirits and other matters. The first golden race lived carefree lives without labour or old age, but, when their era ended, they were hidden beneath the earth, where they became holy and good guardians from danger and givers of wealth. The second silver race was inferior to them; in time, they too became honoured earthly spirits. So far, this does not sound much like a cold and gloomy afterlife, and Hesiod may be describing Elysium though he does not use the term. The third race however, that of bronze, when they too were despatched, abided in Hades' chilly house.

Pindar was born 518 BCE in Boeotia, and educated in Athens. His religious convictions were complex and moralistic. They involved both conservative Olympian cult on the one hand, and elements of Pythagorean and Orphic eschatology, in which reincarnation was a notable feature, on the other. In his works he distinguishes Elysium, a place of rest for the virtuous, from the Isles of the Blessed. As Socrates says of him in Plato's *Meno*:

Priests and priestesses ... and poets ... like Pindar ... say that the soul of man is immortal, and at one time has an end, which is termed dying, and at another time is born again, but is never destroyed. And the moral is, that a man ought to live always in perfect holiness. For in the ninth year Persephone sends the souls of those from whom she has received expiation of the ancient crime back again from beneath into the light of the sun above, and these are they who become noble kings and mighty men and great in wisdom and are called saintly heroes in after ages.

The Isles of the Blessed

The Isles of the Blessed, to all intents and purposes, lay beyond Elysium. Hesiod describes them as the abode of the heroes of the fourth age, that preceding our own. It is worthy of note that he calls these heroes demi-gods, and names Kronos as their ruler. Pindar also sees Kronos as the ruler of these Isles, with Rhadamanthus the Judge. In Orphic eschatology, and the philosophical and magical lore that connects with it, it is there that those *thrice born and thrice come to Elysium* go to obtain their reward.

The God Hades

The main pagan elements in the portrayal of Satan were derived from the Lord of the Underworld, as well as from fertility deities such as Pan and Priapus. The god known as Hades or Pluto to the Greeks in Classical form is generally and most correctly represented holding a staff or sceptre with two teeth, with which – like Hermes – he drove shades into the Underworld. The teeth of this staff, so reminiscent of the pitchfork of Christian devils, specifically and quite deliberately represented the number Two. This number was considered inauspicious by the Greeks, and was sacred to him. It also represents his share of the division of the world with his brothers Zeus and Poseidon. In this threefold division Zeus as Sky god received the first portion, represented by his single sceptre (also a heavenly spear, in the form of his thunderbolt); Hades as Lord of the Underworld received the second, represented by his twin-toothed sceptre; Poseidon Lord of the Sea, bore a trident (literally *three-teeth*) representing the third. Hades also carries keys, to show that whoever enters his realm can never return.

The character of Hades in the Olympian religion is described as grim, dismal, fierce and inexorable, *and of the gods he was most hated by mortals*. It is occasionally said that his name of Pluto – giver of wealth – is euphemistic, and used out of fear of naming the god of Death. While there may be some truth in this, it is not strictly accurate, as in the tripartite division of the World he had lordship over all the treasures beneath the earth.

The name of Pluto or Plutos refers to his benign persona in the Mysteries of Eleusis and elsewhere, which accounts for the paucity of information regarding him. The association with riches connects him with the older conceptions of the mysteries of death as an aspect of rites of fertility. The Olympian state cult, of which Hades as brother of Zeus and Poseidon was a part, had partially displaced but never erased the older cults. In the Mysteries of Eleusis, his bride Persephone (with her mother Demeter and companion Hecate) exemplifies this connection more than Pluto himself. Nevertheless, the name originates in this deeper level of mythology.

Also owned by Hades was the celebrated helmet of invisibility, which he occasionally lent to other gods, and to heroes. In works of art, he closely resembles his two Olympian brothers, except that his hair falls over his brow and that his appearance is dark and gloomy. According to some of the ancients Pluto sat on a throne of sulphur from which issued the infernal rivers Lethe, Cocytus, Phlegethon and Acheron. The sulphurous qualities of the Christian devil undoubtedly derived from such pagan origins.

Orphic Hymn to Hades

*Hades, magnanimous, whose realms profound
 Are fix'd beneath the firm and solid ground,
 In the plains of Erebos remote from sight,
 And wrapt forever in the depths of night;
 Zeus Chthonios, thy sacred ear incline,
 And, pleas'd, accept thy mystic's hymn divine.
 Earth's keys to thee, illustrious king belong,
 Its secret gates unlocking, deep and strong.
 'Tis thine, abundant annual fruits to bear,
 For needy mortals are thy constant care.
 To thee, great king, Avernus is assign'd,
 The seat of Gods, and basis of mankind.
 Thy throne is fix'd in Hades dismal plains,
 Distant, unknown to rest, where darkness reigns;*

*Where, destitute of breath, pale spectres dwell,
 In endless, dire, inexorable hell;
 And in dread Acheron, whose depths obscure,
 Earth's stable roots eternally secure.
 O mighty dæmon, whose decision dread,
 The future fate determines of the dead,
 With captive Persephone, thro' grassy plains,
 Drawn in a four-yok'd car with loosen'd reins,
 Rapt o'er the deep, impell'd by love, you flew
 'Till Eleusina's city rose to view;
 There, in a wond'rous cave obscure and deep,
 The sacred maid secure from search you keep,
 The cave of Attis, whose wide gates display
 An entrance to the kingdoms void of day.
 Of unapparent works, thou art alone
 The dispensator, visible and known.
 O pow'r all-ruling, holy, honour'd light,
 Thee sacred poets and their hymns delight:
 Propitious to thy mystic's works incline,
 Rejoicing come, for holy rites are thine.*



IMPLICATIONS FOR
MODERN PRACTICE



Our tradition and learning from others

SOME FURTHER REMARKS ARE REQUIRED in the wake of recommending the adoption of the Sibyls in Catholic guise, in emulation of Voodoo practice. My appreciation of African Traditional Religions involves the recognition – as a Western magician – that for various reasons our tradition remains at present in the process of revival. As such, we have a great deal to learn from living traditions, of which the ATRs are major examples worthy of our utmost respect.

The purpose of this proposed dialogue is to lift our occult revival to the status of a living tradition; serving and being served by our own gods and spirits. I do not advocate the appropriation of elements of other cultures in an ill-informed mish-mash; rather, on the contrary, respectful appreciation of them as a revitalising influence on our own traditions. This I approach as a dialogue, between goetia as my legitimate cultural inheritance and the traditions of the New World as someone else's. The adoption of *Grimorium Verum* spirits in Quimbanda, as syncretic counterparts of the Exus, has been enormously helpful in this respect. This spectacular synthesis, by involving spirits from my own work in the context of a New World tradition, has enabled me to compare notes and approaches on an equal footing, with Houngans, Paleros and Quimbandistas. While I am deeply appreciative of my contacts in the African Traditional Religions, it is absurd for critics – generally white – to insist that as a non-initiate into this tradition or that, I have no rights in this ongoing dialogue. Even more absurd since their perceptions of the gods and spirits of Western traditions are so hidebound by antagonistic conditioning and psychological theorising.

In short, what I advocate is forming a similar relationship to the spirits of our magical traditions to that of our counterparts in other cultures. This is quite simply the most substantial means of revitalising western magic available; infinitely preferable to the despicable procedures of the *Goetia of Solomon*, which simply reflect the spirit-negative attitudes of an outdated theology.

The great majority of my proposals are not lacking in precedent in the history of Western magic, even if unfamiliar to those with a more contemporary bias. Working with the dead, evolved souls and 'evil spirits' alike, has substantial precedent in our own culture. Far from being alien to our magic, their present exclusion is what makes no sense. On the other hand the most controversial of my ideas in the current book, where the inspiration of the African traditions is most evident to those with eyes to see, will likely go unnoticed. Even so, the background by which I suggest we incorporate this innovation into modern practice derives from ancient Western sources still present in our traditions.

Some say that my methods, which I see little sign they fully understand, are not entirely safe. To this, I would be the first to agree; they are not safe, because they are not a placebo or a static acceptance of our tradition's current limitations. The magician who avoids burning their fingers does not progress personally, still less advance the art for future generations. Magic is not a no-risk vocation. To encourage this avoidance in others is at best futile, and at worst a betrayal. Understand me well; I have very little respect for the majority of magical Orders, let alone grades, titles, aprons and collars. Initiation into these is more an encumbrance than an advantage. Real magic – so to speak – is not on the square but in the circle.

Certainly, the living traditions I have mentioned offer initiation, and those who seek it will receive no discouragement from me. Most Western magical groups are presently in no position to offer any such meaningful adventure; as a result, the much disparaged term self-initiation has more value and meaning in this context. That initiation has certain typical features; immersion in the work from a relatively young age, often attended by lack of discrimination but also the ability to absorb information and learn from experience. Madness or other disasters may threaten; even de-

stroy the unprepared magician who loses the golden thread. However, as a notorious magician once said, an initiatory ordeal that has no risk of failure is not an ordeal. Survival on the other hand brings real knowledge and power, as the magicians disencumber themselves of useless or unhelpful learning, while retaining whatever has proven itself valuable.

This, in the near absence of authentic Western Mystery schools and the presence of so many pretenders, is the true path of initiation offered the modern magician.

Alongside this is another, more coherent form of self-initiation, the practice of goetic magic. For of all the mystical experiences of the Western Mysteries, the ritualised descent into the Underworld is by far the most enduring and significant. This goetic magic achieves, for in its performance the magician simultaneously occupies the prepared ritual space and the evoked realm of Hades. The rituals of goetia are an authentic Mystery; a Mystery communicated by direct experience and assimilated as one proceeds.

Visiting the Underworld

Invisibility is a very common theme in magical literature, frequently listed among the powers that various spirits can confer upon the magician. As said elsewhere, this had less to do originally with covert operations in the world of the living than with safe travel in the underworld. It is significant for example that the helmet of invisibility was the attribute of the King of spirits himself, the god Hades. A little heard detail regarding this helmet was that it was in some way connected with wolves, and was perhaps made of wolf skin. The wolf was also a symbol of Apollo, who also originally had pronounced underworld roles – as well as being the pre-eminent deity of the original goetes. In any case, the ability to travel through the underworld is the reason for the emphasis on the power of invisibility. It also explains the origins of other powers, such as the ability to travel speedily or instantaneously. Such powers are at root shamanic.



Hades





Thracian Girl Carrying the Head of Orpheus on his Lyre

opposite page
The Isle of the Dead





Herakles fetching Cerberus from Hades

*opposite page above
Cybele*

*opposite page below
Persephone and Hades*



Tiresias appears to Odysseus during the Sacrificing



Saturn devouring his Son



The Theft of the Golden Fleece

This said then, the magician who wishes to pursue the ideas raised in this book would do well to consider organising a visit to Hades for their self. Besides the options of arranging a vision quest along various lines, the involvement of traditional ritual adjuncts is a worthwhile consideration. These could include talismans bearing the names and sigils of the spirits who are able to confer the gift of invisibility. The magical use of the famous Sign of Silence would be appropriate. This was not – of course – the invention of the Golden Dawn, but a Hellenistic interpretation of the gesture of Harpocrates. As mentioned in the course of this Book, particular rituals from the grimoire literature, those ostensibly for finding treasure, are also readily adapted to the purpose of an Underworld journey.

Modern Necromancy

One aspect of the hero cult in ancient Greece which has striking implications in modern Western culture is the cult of war dead, who often were collectively heroised and honoured with a monument at which they could be contacted. Various aspects of this are striking for several reasons, which modern occultists have been slow to recognise.

The war dead of World War One are remembered in many countries on 11th November. This date is very close to All Hallows: when the Sun is in Scorpio (the Zodiac sign corresponding to the eighth house, the house of death). In England and elsewhere national commemorations take place at the Cenotaph, this is very similar to a form of hero shrine in ancient Greece (distinct from a tomb or mound in that the body is absent, which is not to say the spirit or spirits have no connection with the place). Local war memorials often have the exact form of this monument, and bear the same title.

More striking still is the symbolism of the poppy – the flower of Persephone – used in wreaths and worn singly. These are also often placed on the graves of servicemen by relatives, as well as at monuments.

Noted spiritualist Wellesley Tudor Pole had a good deal to do with the formulation of this commemoration, as well as his better known involve-

ment with the founding of Glastonbury as a modern New Age centre. These ceremonies and their symbols have strong classical precedents for necromantic work. I strongly support the co-opting of these elements of modern culture for magical purposes, honouring the dead as well as contacting and enlisting their support in magical work. This can take many forms, not least the placing of poppies on shrines to the ancestors. Discreetly placing talismans or other symbols at war memorials, hidden within a floral offering for instance, is a potent return to classical practice. Cleaning the steps of a memorial also presents opportunities for magical work with the dead, the magical implications of Cenotaph dirt hardly requires expounding.

Such work neither glamorises nor supports warfare, nor does it imply any unduly jingoistic perspective. It is simply a recognition of continuity with ancient practice wherein lies an opportunity for magical work within the present culture.

GOETIA AND THE IDENTITY OF THE MAGICIAN



PLATO, THE MOST INFLUENTIAL WESTERN PHILOSOPHER of all time, lived from approximately 428 to 348 BCE. He mentioned *goen* in company with *pharmaceus* – an enchanter with drugs – and the professional rhetoricians known as sophists; all used in the derogatory sense of cheats. The references in his writings to such magicians are very significant, in that they dovetail with the earliest references in connecting them with Orphic books prefiguring the grimoires.

Aeschines was an Athenian orator who flourished about 342 BCE; in his speech impeaching Ctesiphon he linked the terms *goen* and *magos* in a derogatory sense. On occasion this usage is a rhetorical device, critical of unfair persuasive techniques. In modern times the methods of a high profile lawyer might still be described as wizardry or voodoo. With other authors the sense is stricter, applying only to religious and occult contexts. It is significant that Aeschines' usage does not distinguish magic and goetia, but goetia was undoubtedly the more devalued term, rarely having a positive sense. That devaluation of the term *magia* is both later and lesser is well established, but such respectability as it enjoyed in some quarters was never universal. In addition a harder and more specific refusal to distinguish theurgy from goetia, fully recognising that some do distinguish them, appears in the writings of Saint Augustine.

Josephus Flavius, the famous Romanised Jewish historian who died in 93 CE, mentioned *a certain goes*, whose name was Theudas, who *persuaded a great part of the people to take their effects with them and follow him to the river Jordan, for he was a prophet, and would by his command divide the river and afford them passage over it*. He also used the term of a Jewish magician called Simon. He used similar terms to describe numerous unnamed false prophets. This term is often translated impostors, but at the same time the Jewish nationalist zealots are described as robbers; Josephus was, after all, writing for a Roman audience.

The use of *goen* in the same sense is found in the New Testament (*The Second Epistle of Paul the Apostle to Timothy* 3:13), translated in the King James as seducers, leading souls astray from the teachings of the Church. The term false prophet, even though used in a derogatory sense, is nonetheless significant. The ability to prophecy, often through ecstatic states, was originally a power associated with the archaic *goetes* and their successors.

Lucian (died 180 CE) and Plutarch (died 140 CE) linked the term *goetas* with *apatonas*, meaning cheats. Celsus, an Epicurean philosopher of the second century CE, wrote a polemical treatise *Against the Christians: these are obviously the teachings of a man [Jesus] who is a goen, a trickster trying to discredit in advance his rival claimants and rival beggars*. Origen, a Christian theologian born at Alexandria who lived from 185 to 254 CE, wrote *Contra Celsus*, complaining that Celsus put the miracles of Jesus *on a level with the works of the goetes*. He enumerates these as driving out demons, curing diseases, raising the dead, producing miraculous feasts, &c. All of which were performed by magicians as well as Jesus.

From these references it can be seen that in the Classical and Hellenistic period the devalued status of the term *goen* has become comprehensive; it is used by magicians and miracle workers, or their apologists, to describe 'the other guy's magic', as well as by sceptics and satirists to describe magic and miracles in general. The historical devaluation of the term left no room for the impartial observation that formerly *goetia* represented approved practices and persons, comparable with similar figures of other times and cultures. That recognition demanded the modern developments of scientific historical techniques, including philology and anthropology.

Thus a combination of negative image, misleading associations and confused semantics has prevented the historical identification of goetia as the original core, and the earliest designation, of Western magic. The term magic is associated with the Persian *magus* which entered Greek usage as a loan word no earlier than 600 BCE, while the term *goetia* is Greek and originally referred to older Greek customs and beliefs. Neither term was originally derogatory, though both have suffered historical devaluation; rather more in the case of *goetia*. Accordingly, to understand the original meaning and appreciate its significance, associations deriving from its later history must initially be put aside.

The modern analysis of these references is primarily focussed on the Greek shamanism controversy. It remains for occultists such as myself to delineate what these findings imply for the history and development of Western magic, and the possible significance of *goetia* to post-modern magic. The academic world has performed a signal service by establishing that the term *goetia* has a very long and chequered history, the origin of which lays in the ancient Greek word, *goen* or *goeten*. One important finding that has emerged is that this root refers not to the arts practiced, but to the individual practicing them. It is from the *goen* that such arts take their name, rather than the other way round; *goetia* is what a *goen* does. The original identity of this individual is thus more critical than any secondary definition of the arts associated with them. Who they were, and what their role was, are among the most decisive questions in the history of Western magic.

In addition, the etymology of *goen* connects with other Greek words signifying lamentation, particularly a lament for the dead. The *goen* was *one who performs a lament* in the funerary rites of early Greek religion. Eustathius, a highly esteemed Greek commentator on Homer flourishing at Constantinople in 1170 CE, derives *goen* from *goos*: to moan, a mournful sound. He defines the *goen* as *ton meta goon epadonta*: one who utters his incantations or spells in a mournful tone.

GREEK	MEANING
<i>Goao</i>	Wail, groan, weep; to lament, mourn or weep for.
<i>Goen, Goeten</i> (pl.)	Wizard; enchanter with lamentations.
<i>Goetes</i>	A wailer, mourner.
<i>Goetis</i>	(fem) Witch, sorceress.
<i>Goeteia</i>	Witchcraft, sorcery.
<i>Goeteuo</i>	Spellbinding or enchanting something.
<i>Goos</i>	Weeping, wailing, groaning.

The goen, who for various reasons cannot be termed he, was originally quite distinct from the anti-social and marginalized sorcerer. On the contrary, the arts of the goeten were performed openly on behalf of the community. Later on the term came to be loosely interchangeable with others, such as the *pharmacoi* who took their name from the drugs employed, and so on. Whereas these neuter terms refer to the arts practiced, the etymology of goetia is the goen, a person. It is not the arts practiced that define the goeten and their abilities, but personal inner resources (what might be termed their goet-ness' or 'goet-hood'). This is only to be expected from a phase of culture wherein magic is not perceived as a specialised or marginalized sphere of activity, but permeates the whole of existence.

In literary sources this lamenting magician was also called a *psychogoge* or guide of souls, a term which had the additional meaning of necromancer. In the play *The Persians*, by Aeschylus (died 456 BCE), the works of the psychogoge and the magical effects inherent in the act of lamenting (*gooin*) are usefully portrayed. There is a dramatic scene where the shade of the Persian Emperor Darius is summoned by the rites of a royal hero cult, which is highly illustrative:

... and you around my tomb
 Chanting the lofty strain, whose solemn air
 Draws forth the dead, with grief-atemper'd notes
 Mournfully call me:

The context is important too, a great disaster had overtaken the Persian invasion of Greece. Senior Persian nobles wished to consult the former Emperor's shade, since he was assumed to have foreknowledge of what was to follow. Cicero in his work *On Divination* remarked that: *none among the Persians did enjoy the Kingdom but he that had first learned magic*. In reality even though Aeschylus' play portrays the Persians as adept in magic, by comparison with other evidence it is certain that the rites portrayed represent Greek beliefs and customs, wherever they may have obtained them.

It also cannot be overlooked that the ritual is performed by nobles; of the family and peer group of the deceased. This equates with the evocation performed by Odysseus in the eleventh chapter of the *Odyssey*, and is by no means unique. Among the Greeks and other nations, soothsayers and other skilled individuals routinely accompanied military expeditions. They were of the same social class as the chiefs and their staff, and often led contingents of their own. In addition, in Greece and Persia alike, aristocrats and rulers officiated in rituals of state, of temples and of the palace. These rites involved special knowledge as well as particular status.

While valuable it is a fact that the literary evidence tells us comparatively little about magical specialists. All the same, it is clear that the beliefs such arts represented were common to the culture as a whole. An extensive comparison of the sources also provides many valuable details, no matter how complex and varied they might be. There are great complexities in unravelling the social status of various strands of magical practice. To a degree however Aeschylus and others simply show us that such rites and practices formed part of the overall culture.

Bearing in mind that the rites of mourning were seen as possessing the power of evocation, it is also a known fact that mourners could be hired. Certain backgrounds could also recommend particular individuals for the role, such as Mysian origin. There is also no doubt that full-time specialists in evocation existed (on the staff of a necromanteion for example).

Such rites and such magicians had the power to guide souls to the underworld, and to summon them at need to the world of the living. Indeed, they formed a bridge between the worlds in their own person. Such a guide of souls was personified by the god Hermes, who became a pre-

eminent deity of magicians. He was able to travel vast distances at speed, and to visit and return from the Underworld. In Classical times there was a sacrifice to honour the dead the day after their demise; a further rite was offered to Hermes a month later.

Plato often speaks scathingly of such practices, describing the officiants as *mendicant prophets*. In the *Symposium* when speaking of the power of the Daimon called Love, who is intermediate between gods and men, he says: *in him all is bound together, and through him the arts of the prophet and the priest, their sacrifices and mysteries and charms, and all, prophecy and incantation [the word used is goetia], find their way*. From these references it is plain that very often those he speaks of as *goen* were priests of permitted religions. This included both wandering priests connected to the Orphic tradition, and those of temples and oracles in general. He says of them that they: *go to rich men's doors and persuade them that they have a power committed to them by the gods of making an atonement for a man's own or his ancestor's sins by sacrifices or charms, with rejoicings and feasts*. Also that: *they promise to harm an enemy, whether just or unjust, at a small cost; with magic arts and incantations binding heaven, as they say, to execute their will*.

There are striking resemblances in his language to what was later said of medieval and Renaissance magicians, of whom many were priests. For example: *they produce a host of books written by Musæus and Orpheus ... according to which they perform their ritual*. One has only to alter the names of the putative authors to put this in the mouths of later critics of what Cornelius Agrippa called Goetians and Necromancers with their books of Solomon, Enoch and so forth. Indeed, there is evidence suggesting that the grimoires called Books of Moses were originally inspired by Books of Musæus.

In what appears to be a reference to Epimenides and others he adds that they: *persuade not only individuals, but whole cities, that expiations and atonements for sin may be made by sacrifices, by magicians who are equally at the service of the living and the dead; the latter sort [of ritual] they call Mysteries*. The dead were referred to as *Demeter's people*, and the Mysteries of Eleusis were in honour of Demeter. From Plato's critique, along with

archaeological and other evidence, a clear picture emerges. Despite an ongoing process of devaluation in the Classical period, the goen and the necromantic arts were initially a respectable part of archaic religion. With or without the approval of Plato and supposedly rational philosophy, many aspects of this archaic religious magic continued throughout the Classical period. Indeed they survived into the Christian era. Eventually it was to be perpetuated, at least in part, by elements of the Christian clergy. This was the clerical underground who composed the grimoires, adapting Byzantine and Arab texts based on Græco-Roman models to a more acceptable theology.

A clear and solid fact emerges from the complex and incomplete evidence available. The most spectacular aspect of the activities of the goeten was associated with the dead. The association of goetia with necromancy has been a consistent part of its identity, long after its ancient origins were forgotten. In ancient times – as now – rites for the dead were an essential aspect of religion. The role of the lamenting priest in relation to death had several aspects. One of these involved guiding the soul of the departed to the underworld. This served the purpose of ensuring their safe arrival in the afterlife. On the other hand a spirit for whom such rites had not been performed was all too likely to return seeking revenge. This is Cornelius Agrippa's meaning when he says:

... the Ancients ordained expiations of Carcasses, that that which was unclean might be sprinkled with holy water, perfumed with incense, be conjured with sacred orations, have lights set by, as long as it was above ground, and then at length be buried in a holy place. Hence Elpenor in Homer: *I beseech thee (saith he) Ulysses, be mindful of me, and leave me not unburied; lest being unburied I become an object of the Gods wrath.*

Dependent on circumstances the repertoire of the goen included two options: cure or prevention. Thus the laying of ghosts was a natural extension of their role; as also the prevention of such an eventuality in special circumstances. These circumstances include deaths at sea, or in distant places. Elpenor was such a figure; unknown to Odysseus prior to sailing

on his necromantic adventure Elpenor had died accidentally in a fall from the roof of Circe's house, and lay unburied. He thus had two reasons to be a restless spirit, an untimely death and lack of due burial. Indeed, he was an ideal spirit for necromantic work as depicted in the papyri. His presence in the narrative may represent a variant tradition in which Elpenor rather than Tiresias was the guide or intermediary.

The role of the lamenting priests, and beliefs and practices concerning them, can be traced back into the archaic period of Greek religion. Excavations at one Mycenaean shaft-grave at Dendra revealed no human remains. In their place was a sacrificial altar complete with knife. Besides this were found a hearth and three sacrificial pits. In one of these pits animal bones were discovered. Most impressive of all were two monoliths, each shaped to resemble a human outline. These appear to have served either as surrogates for the absent deceased, or possibly a habitation for them during the rites performed here.

In other Mycenaean tombs, where burials had taken place, were found pits never used for burials but for burnt offerings. Into these would have been poured blood from sacrifices, also other libations, of wine, honey and milk. Nor did these offerings cease with the burial. The evidence for subsequent offerings is strong in excavated Mycenaean burials, including sacrificial pits sited over graves, and animal bones at the entrances of tombs. Deducing from the practices of later Greek religion, such offerings took place on the third, ninth and thirtieth days after death, and thereafter each succeeding year. Such rites were of course intended to honour the dead, but also to appease and consult them. The discovery of pottery in Mycenaean graves which dates from the later Classical and Hellenistic periods is significant physical evidence of long enduring hero cults.

It cannot be certainly stated that these cults were continuous; revivals may have been inspired – somewhat ironically – by the prestige of Homeric heroes in later times. Such caution is important to a reconstruction of Greek history. It is clear too that originally the Mycenaean tomb cults were family cults, whereas the later hero cults were associated with cities and shared by the general population. This aside, it has become clear as archaeology has proceeded that the Classical Greeks were the heirs of

the Mycenaean past, just as early modern Western culture was the heir of Classical Greece. Also, whether continuous or revived, the important place of the cult of the dead is a vital element of this study. It has enormous importance to the history of goetia, from the Greeks to the grimoires. The funerary and necromantic rituals performed by Odysseus in both the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* clearly have connections with Mycenaean practice, and that in the *Odyssey* was also a model for later necromantic practice, regardless of the changes from one cultural era to the next. Regardless, in particular – to anticipate ourselves a little – of where exactly the Underworld was from one era to the next.

Homer and the Magical Tradition

Meanwhile, traces of authentic Mycenaean practices are to be found in Homer's epics, with important omissions. There are distinct difficulties in relying on Homer. For example, it is notable that the burial rites of the Greeks in Homer are performed by comrades and family. The one and only occasion where we meet dirge-singers participating in funerary rites is the funeral of Hector, champion of the Trojans, a detail Homer swiftly passes over (*Iliad* 24: 721).

In the *Odyssey*, Odysseus and his men are forced to flee the land of the Cicones after a fight by the ships, without proper burial rites being performed for the slain. Before sailing away a lament and three ritual cries are made for each man lost (*Odyssey* 9:65–6). Such also was the custom at later Greek funerals, to invoke the name of the departed three times. The custom is referred to in Aristophanes comedy *The Frogs*. In this play Bacchus disguises himself as Heracles in order to travel to the underworld. The purpose of his disguise is that Heracles had gone there and – more importantly – returned.

When Odysseus and his men are portrayed as first raiding Ismarus, city of the Cicones, it is as legitimate enemies on account of their support for Troy. Against Odysseus' advice his men stay and feast on looted livestock, and their enemies have time to summon fiercer allies and counter attack. There is, apparently, nothing particularly mysterious about the encounter.

Contrast this with the non-Homeric epic traditions concerning the Argonauts, depicting a period which Homer and later tradition saw as only a generation before the Trojan War. Jason's adventures in this same area are full of mythic detail relating to the Mysteries, as well as recording traditional grievances, for instance between Cyzicus and the Pelasgians. Yet in Homer there is no mention of: *the initiatory rite which is celebrated by the Athenians at Eleusis... and that of Samothrace, and the one practiced in Thrace among the Cicones, whence Orpheus came who introduced them* (see Diodorus, flourished 44 BCE). The city of Ismarus was at the very mouth of the Hebrus River. From here floated to the sea the singing head of Orpheus, divine father of poetry, whom the Ciconian women had dismembered. Homer, the author of the supreme epic poetry of the Greeks, who some traditions saw as a descendent of Orpheus, does not so much as mention it. This may be due to the later appearance of the Orphic reforms of the Dionysian religion. Equally however, the limited role of Dionysus in the Homeric epics may have a good deal more to do with Homer's attitudes – and those of a purely aristocratic epic – than the contemporary status of Dionysus.

Also omitted by Homer is any mention of the common practice of seeking prophetic dreams at temples, oracles and *necromanteia* (oracles of the dead), termed incubation or oneiromancy. So too are many other aspects of Greek religion and culture. Before we assume these are all later developments, consider that there is also no mention of the more primitive aspects of the gods' behaviour, such as divine incest, castration of predecessors or eating their children. In like manner few traces remain in his epics of sorcery or homosexuality, although both were common in the Greek world. Homer had his own agenda, and often wrote from what might be termed an aristocratic and humanist perspective, productive in Classical times of tendencies in Greek society where the magical is increasingly diminished, even suppressed.

It was not philosophical rationalism that led to the decline in status of the goen, from the centre of religious tradition, to a sorcerer at the margins of society. Indeed, Greek philosophy has many irrational elements, and some of its key figures can be linked to the very traditions discussed

in this volume. The fall in status of the goen has its roots in the rise of Homeric Olympian religion and the decline of the old clan culture. These roots are co-emergent with the rise of the city, or to use its Greek name, the *polis*; though, paradoxically, goetia first appears in the literary record simultaneously with this urban experience. This point is the dividing line between historical goetia and such predecessors as historiography can discern.

In the city the collective identity of earlier times was eroded by the rise of a new collective of individuals, its religion administered by officials and functionaries rather than family members, be they Pelasgians or females. The new culture of the polis and the traditional world outside it and within it were to conflict dramatically. The social fabric faced problems which were to become critical, problems with which the genius of Plato struggled without success. There were contradictions, in that the humanist individualism made possible by the polis was largely the preserve of male citizens, in a society which depended on a near equivalent population of slaves. There was also a problem and a contradiction for the magician. The goen was, from the beginning, an individual and a non-conformist distinguished from the collective by unusual talents. In 'primitive' society these talents were useful to the collective, and the individualistic magician was a respectable figure. With the rise of urban individualism organised into a community in the new social model, the first individual – the goen – increasingly became a marginalized figure.

Did the devaluation of goetia commence in the identification of the goen as a threat to the new status quo? Probably not, though it is possible to get this impression from Plato. In reality however many of Plato's barbs at magicians are actually aimed at religious and political targets. In other words many such attacks are not aimed at marginal figures, but the status quo itself. Certainly this involved a critique of superstition, and there was a divide between the old beliefs and the sophistication of the Greek city state. That there were itinerant magicians is undoubted, and Plato used negative descriptions of these magicians to criticise other targets. Disregarding the purely political aspect, it cannot be ignored that some of these critiques involved the magical side of established religion.

The goen had been a central figure in this religious framework, and many themes related to goetia were still central. Indeed the very itinerant magicians of whom Plato speaks were religious figures. Unpopular with some of the aristocratic intelligentsia, they were nevertheless an authentic part of Greek religious life.

All this complicates the task of drawing conclusions from Plato, and indeed classical literature generally. Plato's writings do not represent a cause of magic's declining status, but a response to such causes. There was a far more important causal literary contribution to the cultural divide that was ultimately to marginalize the magician; and it was not Platonic but Homeric.

The changes that produced this diminution primarily involved the beliefs of the past, where magic and religion had been indistinguishable. It appears obvious to consider ancient religion as concerning the gods, which suggests changes in portrayal of the gods is of primary concern. The gods certainly play a prominent part in Homer's epics, and in large degree they have been utterly transformed from their older selves. Homer, himself an aristocratic product of city state culture, projected his world back upon the old gods. In the process the gods become more human and civilised, and far less other. Through his tremendous influence, and the transformations in society represented by the polis, the gods increasingly became detached from the context of traditional rites and beliefs. The primitive elements of magical religion began to lose their meaning in consequence. That this was a very gradual process does not diminish the role of Homer as a causal influence.

Homer's influence had a still greater impact upon another aspect of traditional belief. While Homer's gods remained larger than life, the mighty dead were infinitely reduced. This impact is all the more ironic since in his works, while the gods appear on almost every page, the mighty dead appear in almost every sentence. They are the heroes; portrayed in life as powerful, tragic, majestic and above all human, but in death as powerless and pitiable. Yet in Mycenaean and Classical Greek religion the dead hero was a far from pathetic figure. On the contrary, in mainland Greek culture – and often outside it – they were worshipped, and often consulted at

oracular shrines. With interruptions and transformations, hero cults can be identified from at least the late Bronze Age, through the Classical era, into Hellenistic and Roman times.

The subject of this work is of course goetia, not Homer or the evolution of Classical civilisation. Even so, it is important to be aware that he omitted or under-stated many aspects of Greek religion, which remained strong despite his huge influence. Hesiod, a near contemporary of Homer, and of almost equivalent status, portrays the heroes quite differently. He calls them demi-gods; a title they retained centuries later in the writings of the Theurgists. As demi-gods, often in otherworldly serpent form, the heroes were possessed of more than human knowledge and power. Their power was not decreased by death, but greatly enhanced.

The new Olympian religion of Homer contained, in essence, the seeds of its own destruction; as also that of the traditions it sought to absorb or supplant. The humanising of the gods was to have powerful long term consequences even upon the city state society that produced it. The diminution of the dead had a much more direct impact. This, perhaps more than anything else, was to subvert the position of the 'goen', and was a major cause of the devaluation of goetia. The magical elements within Greek religion had suffered a powerful blow, and without magic it lacked the power required to give it meaning.

In direct consequence of these changes there were important philosophical efforts to restore meaning to religion, even to recover magic. There were efforts to transform and reintegrate the fractured Classical world: Pythagoras and his influential school; Plato and his successors, the Neoplatonists and Theurgists, endeavoured or aspired to do just that. There were also responses to the crisis within Classical society that were more geared to the resulting needs of individuals and groups. Both will necessarily play a secondary part in this study; the central and primary purpose of which is to reveal the goen. This requires an examination of the magic that preceded these changes, and which survived long after them. By providing glimpses of the old goen, it is hoped to provide new insights into the legacy of goetia in later magical traditions.

GOETIC GALLERY: NECROMANTIA

IN THIS SECTION OF THE GOETIC GALLERY are included a magician who became a judge of the Underworld, along with a seer and a hero, both of whom represent necromantic rites in their earlier context. Integrated with these is a discussion of Homeric and Classical necromancy.

Acacos

Aeacus is an extremely ancient figure of Greek tradition, predating the composition of the Homeric epics. In Classical mythology he was the son of Zeus by the Nymph Aegina, the daughter of the river god Asopus. He was king of the island of Oenopia which he called after his mother's name, and the grandfather of great Achilles. He saved Athens and all Greece from a most severe drought; sent by the gods in anger at a murder committed by Pelops. In the Classical account of this miracle Aeacus saved Greece by climbing a mountain and praying to Zeus. Graves suggests the actual method more likely resembled that described in the *Account of Marvellous Things of Antigonus of Carystus*, involving a sacred chariot bearing brazen vessels that clanged and spilt water. Other traditional rainmaking methods included rattling pebbles in a gourd and use of a bullroarer; another, involving dancing and the beating of shields, is reminiscent of the Corybantes. These, guardians of the infant thunder-god, besides being mythological figures were also personified by Phrygian and Cretan ritualists. He also magically re-peopled the island of Aegina after its desolation by a pestilence, this he achieved by interceding with Zeus who transformed the ants in an old oak tree into men (the Myrmidons). Others say the island was uninhabited at his birth, and was then populated miraculously in that manner. Such was his integrity, renowned as he was for his justice and piety throughout Greece, that after his death he became one of the three judges of the Underworld, and keeper of the gate of Hades. In this guise he appears in the *Magical Papyri* (Aiakos, PGM IV

1465, and see footnote 195). The Infernal Judges can latterly be found in Cornelius Agrippa's *Scale of the Number Three*. In this way Aeacos makes the transition from ancient origins, through the syncretic magic of the Græco-Roman period in Egypt, to modern ceremonial magical traditions.

Tiresias

One of the most renowned soothsayers of the ancient world, his career runs like a thread through almost every event of Greek mythology. There is no need to detail his role in all of these, especially as other factors in his identity deserve more attention. Before moving on to Tiresias however, it is necessary to look at his mysterious ancestry. Seemingly little is known of his reputed father Everes; while his mother is a far more substantial character. Her name was Chariclo, a Nymph as one might expect, whose interesting myth also connects several themes relating to this study. At first glance Greek myth appears to know of more than one Chariclo. However, these are not as separate as appears, various traditions connect them all. This circumstance may cast some light on the apparent anonymity of the father of Tiresias.

One Chariclo is said by some to be a daughter of Apollo, and by others to be the daughter of Oceanus. These accounts agree that this Chariclo was the wife of the centaur Chiron (strictly the transliteration should be Cheiron, meaning hand). Chiron was an immortal, and while most of the Centaurs were dangerous and savage, he and another named Pholos were friendly, hospitable and wise. A common feature in the history of many major heroes, including Achilles and Jason, is being raised by Chiron.

Another Chariclo was the daughter of Cychreus; his story also involves contradictory elements. In one he slays a serpent which was ravaging the island of Salamis, and was rewarded with the throne. In the other he rears the serpent by hand, and it is later driven to Eleusis. This was the home of the Mysteries of Demeter, and there the serpent became an attendant of the goddess. A serpent was in fact among the sacred objects involved in the rites. At a famous naval victory off Salamis a great serpent was seen among the Greek ships. The Delphic oracle subsequently identified

this serpent as Cychreus himself. If not a god originally, Cychreus was certainly a deified hero; this story implies that like others he possessed a serpent form, which was likely to have been oracular.

The daughter of Cychreus married another ambiguous character, named Sciron (note the resemblance to Chiron). Sciron is portrayed as a monstrous villain in the legend of Theseus. A quite different story at Megara was that he was the kindly husband of Chariclo. She bore him a daughter, Endeis, who in turn married the important figure Aeacos (for whom see above). They in turn produced Telamon, who became male heir to Cychreus, and also – it almost goes without saying – an Argonaut.

Another Chariclo, identified by some with the first but perhaps the same as both the above, is portrayed as the favourite attendant of Athena. Before turning to her, and returning to Tiresias, consider the detail involved in the account briefly outlined above. There is a good deal more for each and every character named: who ruled where, how they feature in other stories, and so on. Yet Evers the supposed father of Tiresias, a son who is encountered in very numerous myths, seemingly appears in none of them.

Returning now to Tiresias, he lived to a great age, seven or nine generations; and was also blind. How he came to live so long and why he was blind is explained by two stories which will follow in their place. There is a Mount Cyllene in Arcadia where it is said Hermes was born, as a child Tiresias was on top of this mountain when he saw two inter-twined serpents. On trying to separate them with a stick, he suddenly found himself transformed into a girl. Returning there seven years later he again saw the serpents twining together, and attempting to separate them again he regained his former sex. The alert reader will suspect that the staff and serpents connect with the caduceus of Hermes, on whose birthplace these events occurred.

In the meantime Tiresias had been married. He received a visit after returning to his original gender, from Zeus and Hera, King and Queen of Olympus. The gods had been disputing whether men or women experienced more pleasure from sex. Since Tiresias was the only person who could possibly know, they put the matter to him. Tiresias answered that if

the enjoyment between them were divided in ten, the woman would possess nine of them. This reply delighted Zeus, and infuriated Hera, who struck him blind. Zeus, to mitigate this harsh punishment, granted him life to seven generations and the gift of prophecy. Such, in any case, is the story according to Ovid and others. It is an amusing tale, but lacks credibility as a genuine myth.

This story is flatly rejected by Apollodorus, Callimachus and others, who give a more interesting explanation of his blindness. The mountain in this story is Mount Helicon, the original home of the Muses before they became civilised and moved to Delphi. Athena was bathing there, accompanied by Chariclo, when Tiresias accidentally laid eyes on her divine form uncloded. Kronos, the former king of the gods, had laid down blindness as the punishment for mortals who looked upon naked goddesses uninvited. Athena accordingly blinded Tiresias, to the protests of Chariclo, his mother.

Athena is generally a friend to heroes, and there is nothing villainous about Tiresias. To make amends to both Chariclo and the stricken Tiresias, she conferred on him a staff that would guide his steps as well as if he had eyesight, and made him a prophet.

Incidentally, Kronos was father to between five and seven of the twelve Olympians, mostly by the Cretan goddess Rhea; for the Earth is the mother of the gods as well as of oracles. Normally included are Zeus, Hera, Poseidon, Hestia and Demeter; some traditions credit him with fathering Hephæstus upon Hera; he is also an alternative father of Aphrodite. He and Rhea were also the parents of Hades, who while not Olympian in the strictest sense, shared the rule of the whole world with Zeus and Poseidon. Finally, in Thrace, seducing the nymph Philyra in the form of a horse, he sired Chiron the Centaur.

So Chiron and Chariclo, who fostered many heroes, raised Tiresias. He was certainly the son of Chariclo, and probably also son of Chiron. Chiron's human alias may have been Sciron. In any case, Tiresias could not hope for a better family background. He was related to Apollo on his mother's side, and possibly to the king of the gods in the pre-Olympian age on his father's. Also, while Chiron could certainly teach warriors like

Achilles about spears, in addition he knew music, hunting and medicine. His other skill was ethics, making Chiron himself sound curiously Pythagorean. Chiron's medicine is curious too, he apparently replaced Achilles' ankle bone with that of a giant. This suggests a role as an initiatory spirit or god in a ritualistic ordeal.

This account of Tiresias has dwelt on the lesser known aspects of his legend. There is no need to consider his various prophecies here, or his role in many Greek myths. There is one more aspect of his legend to mention, which is one of the most interesting. His gift of prophecy was retained after death, along with his staff, which like that of Hermes was golden. Whereas in Homer most of the departed are shadows of their former selves until temporarily revived by offerings of blood, Tiresias alone retained his full powers at all times. When Odysseus visited the outskirts of Hades to conjure spirits and learn his way home, it was to Tiresias he particularly wished to speak. For this reason he held his sword over the blood of the sacrifice, to keep the other spirits from it, until Tiresias had revealed what he wished to know.

HOMERIC NECROMANCY

CORNELIUS AGRIPPA CALLED THE ELEVENTH BOOK of the *Odyssey* the *Necromancy of Homer*. The grimoire known as the *Arbatel of Magic* refers to his *Psychagogia* (Aphorism 48), and credits his knowledge to necromantic spirits. Respected modern editors have given it the title of the *Book of the Dead*. It is by far the oldest, most prestigious account of necromantic processes in Classical literature. It has much in common with other accounts of necromantic ritual, despite Homer's distinctive view of the dead, and deserves attention here. Despite what I consider Homer's reduction of the power of the dead, and the apparent absence of human magicians among his cast, his account plainly contains authentic traditions. In fact a necromantic process on Homeric lines can be readily extrapolated from the text. There are detectable resemblances to the processes of the grimoires; whether as a result of long tradition, of direct literary influence, or – as seems most likely – of both.

Odysseus as necromancer, like all necromancers, is a seeker after knowledge. His motive is to discover how to return to his homeland and family, overcoming the enmity of the sea-god Poseidon; his divination by the dead is required to accomplish this. His qualifications derive from his aristocratic rank, which conferred religious status, and his heroic nature. He also has the advice of Circe (*Odyssey* 10: 480–540), who is at once a goddess and a witch or sorceress. In this Circe is comparable to the female Dactyls, who are both sorceresses and divinities.

The relationship between Odysseus and Circe is also capable of a religio-magical interpretation. The status it confers is at once royal and priestly. In effect it makes him an equivalent figure to a Thracian king, or dynastic hero; the mortal consort of the goddess. While the kingly hero is mortal, and the goddess is divine, theirs is a sexual relationship. An obvious comparison is the equivalent relationship of Jason and Medea, who is Circe's kinswoman. This heroic love also contrasts with Odysseus' quite distinct relationship with Athena, and that of Jason with Hera. From this emerges a more primitive, or, rather, a more magical Odysseus.

As Circe informs him, in order to perform his necromantic evocation Odysseus has to travel to a suitable location; the limit of Ocean in the land of the Cimmerians. Reading the *Odyssey* as literature the location of the evocation can be interpreted as purely mythical, but despite the mythical elements in Homer's geography the site is an actual place. In fact there are two possible locations, both of which were accepted at various points in the Classical period. The first is the necromanteion of Thesprotia, on the West coast of Northern Greece at Parga. The other is its counterpart at Baiae; the oldest Greek colony in Italy, which again is situated on the West coast. Both of these were sanctuaries of Hades and Persephone, and their locations strongly connect with the mythical geography of the Greek underworld. The description in the *Odyssey* places the site at the limits of Ocean, lending itself to the later interpretation which placed the episode on the far coast of Italy. It is close to the coast, appropriate to both in equal proportion, and their Western location also suits details given in the text. It is found where two infernal rivers pour thunderously into the Acheron. While the Greek necromanteion is near to the physical location of these rivers, the Italian site is situated at Lake Avernus, essentially identified with the Acheron. Homer could have been acquainted with either of them, at least by repute. It is important to note however that Homer completely omits to mention that Odysseus is visiting a site dedicated to divination by the dead. It is not uncommonly supposed that hero cults are later than Homer due to precisely such omissions.

The ritual Odysseus performs according to Circe's instructions, which is mirrored in known Greek ritual, involves digging a trench the length and width of a man's arm. Odysseus moves around this trench pouring offerings to the dead. These consist of a mixture of honey and milk, followed by sweet wine, and lastly water. Over these is sprinkled white barley, after which the spoken evocation of the dead is made. A promise is then made to the dead that, upon his safe arrival home, a barren heifer will be sacrificed to the dead. The pyre for the burnt offering is to include a mass of precious materials, and there is to be a separate sacrifice of a fine black ewe for Tiresias.

There are several resemblances in these procedures to the magic of later periods. In physical terms these resemblances consist of the circumambulations and the offerings. In addition however there is the promise of a gift to the spirits when what is required of them has been realised. This is all the more interesting, as superficially Odysseus is only seeking directions, and not of all the dead, but of Tiresias alone. This promise however makes the rite specifically magical; the spirits are being asked for something, whether explicitly or otherwise. The ritual then proceeds with the sacrifice of a ram and a black ewe:

*Seizing the victim sheep I pierced their throats;
Flowed the black blood, and filled the hollow trench;
Then from the abyss, eager their thirst to slake,
Came swarming up the spirits of the dead.*

An important detail is that at the slaying of the animals their heads are held down, towards the underworld, while Odysseus turns his head aside, towards the Ocean. Such averting the eyes is a constant feature of underworld rites, for instance sacrifices to Hades and Hecate. It also identifies the position of the magician, in this case Odysseus: he is standing to the West of the trench, which forms a reservoir for the blood of the sacrifice. At this stage the dead appear in their multitudes. Here too there is a resemblance to goetic rituals appearing in the grimoires. The conjurations of the *Key of Solomon* bring forth not one spirit, but great armies of spirits in order of rank, appearing from all sides. Such a vision of countless spirits surrounding the circle forms a part of Benvenuto Cellini's eye witness account of grimoire processes; in other words it accords with both the Solomonic and the Homeric traditions.

Odysseus now, following the advice of Circe, brandishes his sword over the blood to keep the ghosts from it until Tiresias has appeared and spoken to him. This use of the sword involves a theme exhibited throughout the grimoires. As Cornelius Agrippa expresses it:

[spirits] fear swords, and knives. These [weapons] without doubt Homer seemed to be sensible of, when in the eleventh book of his *Odyssey*... he [Odysseus] with his sword drawn did keep off ghosts from the blood of the sacrifice.

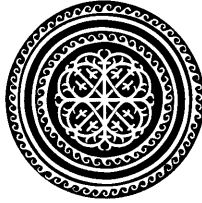
At this stage there is a task for the men who follow Odysseus, who equate with the Companions of the Magus in the *Key of Solomon*. They are to flay and prepare the bodies of the sacrificed animals for the pyre, make the burnt offering and pray to (invoke) Hades and Persephone. Odysseus meanwhile stays seated and motionless; with his sword in his hand preventing the dead from approaching the blood until Tiresias appears and speaks to him. When Tiresias arrives and recognises him he bids Odysseus step back from the trench, withdrawing his sword, so that he may approach the blood.

The seer Tiresias is the object of the evocation; in other words the ritual is effectively a conjuration of Tiresias. Other spirits appear first, a great many of them, appearing in order of rank. The theurgic concept of ritual, based on interpretations of existing lore and practice, also anticipated the appearance of spirits in order of rank and status. So too do the grimoires. Homer's necromancy is certainly no exception. Prior to the appearance of Tiresias, the spirit Odysseus sees first is a foolish man, the most recent of his crew to die. Among the nameless horde that appears at this time he also identifies his own mother. After the conversation with Tiresias other spirits are identified. A somewhat chauvinistic concept of rank appears to be at play here. Odysseus speaks with his mother, and then sees or identifies the womenfolk of other great men; after these he sees heroes of the Trojan War, and after them divine and mythical figures: Minos, judge of the dead; Tityus, an important figure to be described later; Tantalus and Sisyphus, both conspicuous figures in the Classical underworld; finally Heracles, though this is not a true ghost, as this hero is not resident in the Underworld but on Olympus, while his phantom dwells below. Odysseus could have seen many more famous residents of Hades. However, with his objective obtained, and with thousands of spirits pressing from all sides,

the 'magician' and his companions decide enough is enough, and retire to their ship.

Note also that the site of the ritual is under the dominion of Hades and Persephone, and they are prayed to, but not expected to appear. In other words their assistance is invoked, since they are the superiors of the spirits, but they are not conjured themselves. This too accords well with grimoire practice, where the names of the superiors of the desired spirit are invoked. In terms of the grimoires Tiresias is the spirit being conjured. In Greek terms this spirit is an oracular hero, Tiresias is the voice of the oracle. Incidentally there are some curious features regarding this chapter of the *Odyssey*, which Ogden comments on; although the chapter is among the oldest parts of the *Odyssey*, there are some inconsistencies in it, which may support the idea that Elpenor played a more important role in an alternative, possibly earlier version. By this reading Elpenor would have been conjured and asked to mediate with other Underworld entities, much as the ghost of the suicide did in the conjuration of Sibyllia examined in Book Two.

CLASSICAL NECROMANCY



UNTIL RECENTLY MANY SCHOLARS OF CLASSICAL LITERATURE used to say that necromancy was not a common method of divination among the Greeks. Although never fully accepted, in recent years this position has, to say the least, been strongly challenged. However, it is important to understand how the position arose in the first place. One cause was the long established preference for viewing the Greeks as a rational culture, and the darker aspects of magic as irrational and hence incompatible. While this position has been steadily eroded by modern scholarship, another cause, perhaps equally strong, has not been examined. This is the modern tendency to departmentalise ideas. Along with this there has also been a tendency to assume the author knows what necromancy is in the first place. The image in their minds has usually been drawn from late Classical and even medieval sources. The expectation has consequently been that necromancy is always gruesome and grotesque.

The notion that necromancy always involves sensationalist activities by marginal figures, combined with a rigid departmentalisation foreign to Greek ideas, ignores major and central aspects of Greek divinatory practice. One principal area has been overlooked consistently. Greek and Roman divination frequently involved observation of signs attending religious rites. Alongside this must be considered the prevalence of hero cults, wherein sacrifices and other rites are offered. Observing signs attending such a rite is necromantic in nature. Among the Romans the dead

were known as the Manes. The word has a complex meaning; it represented the disembodied deceased, much as the word *psyche* as used by Homer indicates a ghost. In addition the Manes were reckoned among the deities of the underworld, presiding over tombs, cenotaphs and burial grounds. The Roman augurs, who were the official diviners of Rome, used several methods of obtaining omens. Although none of their methods was necromantic in the limited sense often understood, they preceded their observation of signs with an invocation both to the Manes and to the gods. The number three was sacred to the Manes, and invocations were consequently repeated three times.

The Classical traditions regarding the evocation of the dead for divination are, without doubt, the principal source for European ideas on the subject. Biblical episodes are frequently quoted in accounts of necromancy in the ancient world, such as the evocation of Samuel by the Witch of Endor. However, the influence of Greek and Roman literature is more extensive, and often fleshes out studies of the Biblical material. The Greek world, both on the mainland and in Asia Minor and Italy (*Magna Græcia*), contained numerous Oracles dedicated specifically to the evocation of the dead. Some titles of these places are found in the table following. It has even been suggested that originally all Oracles were of this type, and were dedicated to Hades and Persephone. These may be Olympian substitutes for various chthonic gods and goddesses, rather than the original names of the deities concerned. Other than that, the suggestion has considerable merit.

It is a fact that the Greeks had an extensive vocabulary for describing necromancy in all its facets. Such a vocabulary in itself demonstrates the degree to which necromancy was an accepted part of the Greek religious world. The Romans also possessed a considerable tradition regarding the evocation of the dead, some of it undoubtedly inherited from Greek colonies in Italy, as well as from the Etruscans, who made a substantial contribution to other aspects of Roman divination, magic and religion. Before examining literary and archaeological evidence for the form and extent of these traditions, the vocabulary mentioned deserves attention. The following table is by no means exhaustive.

GREEK	MEANING
<i>Necr-angelos</i>	Messenger to the dead.
<i>Necragogeo</i>	To conduct the dead (to Hades).
<i>Necragogos</i>	Conducting the dead.
<i>Necropompos</i>	Conducting the dead; ferrying the dead over the Styx. Applied both to Hermes and Charon.
<i>Nekyodaimon</i>	The spirit of a dead person useful in magic.
<i>Necyomanteion</i> , <i>Necromanteia</i>	An oracle of the dead, a place for the evocation and questioning of the dead.
<i>Psychagogeo</i>	To be a conductor of the dead to Hades (see <i>necragogeo</i>); to evoke or conjure the dead by sacrifices and incantations.
<i>Psychagogia</i>	An evocation of the departed spirit from Hades.
<i>Psychagogos</i>	(Who) leads the dead to the Underworld (a title of Hermes), compare <i>psychopompos</i> ; conjuring or evoking the dead; a necromancer.
<i>Psyche</i>	In Homer it means a ghost; otherwise the soul or spirit.
<i>Psychomantia</i> , <i>Manteia</i>	An oracle of the dead, as <i>necyomanteia</i> . (Latin: <i>Plutonium</i> , <i>Plutonia</i>).
<i>Psychomantis</i>	A conjurer of the dead for purposes of divination, a necromancer.
<i>Psychopompeia</i> , <i>Psychopompeion</i>	An oracle of the dead, as <i>necyomanteia</i> .
<i>Psychopompos</i>	Conducting souls to Hades, a title frequently applied to Hermes, also to Charon, the ferryman of the dead.

Necromancy, from the Greek *necros*, dead, and *manteia*, divination, has always been associated with goetia. It has two meanings: the first is divination by the dead; the other, which became common in the Middle Ages, means the Black Art and often applies to evocation of demons, and sorcery generally. It is in the latter sense that Cellini uses the word.

The art of evoking the dead for divinatory purposes was part of the religion of most nations of the ancient world. As such it had originally no negative associations, although some fear attached to it. Strabo and others make mention of its use among the Persians, and it is possible that some specialists in the art were counted among the sect of the Magi. Babylonia and Egypt, among other ancient nations, all had a place for necromancy in their religion. In Greece, as also in the Roman world, necromancy was frequently associated with special places. These included caverns, sites in volcanic regions, as well as rivers or lakes with or without a shrine. The association of the dead with water is a theme that will frequently be encountered in this book.

The waterside was a location often associated with established oracles of the dead. A famed oracle of this type (necromanteion) was in Thesprotia in northern Greece, beside the river Acheron, which was reckoned among the rivers of Hades; other rivers of Hades, the Cocytus and Pyriphlegethon, lay in the same region. Thesprotia is also the region where is found the oracle of Dodona. The widely famed cavern of the Sibyl at Cumæ in Italy, was situated believed to be near Lake Avernus, which also had a strong traditional association with the underworld. Another famous necromanteion was sited at Heraclea on the Black Sea. Volcanic regions were also favoured for such oracles; such as the famous cavern at Tænarus, a promontory of Laconia which is the most southerly part of Europe. This was reckoned an entrance to Hades, one of those from which Heracles was said to have dragged Cerberus to the land of the living. Pausanias mentions a huge serpent said to have lived there; presumably an oracular hero or chthonic deity of the place. In historical times this oracle was presided over by the Olympian Poseidon; if this dedication predates the historical record, then this is likely the archaic Posiedon who united with Erinyes and Medusa.

Famous evocations involving prominent figures mentioned in Classical texts took place at such centres, and many lesser persons must have visited them. According to Plutarch for example, the murderer of the poet Archilochus visited Taenarus for an evocation of his victim; Herodotus and other writers record that Periander, tyrant of Corinth, had an agent visit the oracle on the Acheron to make an enquiry through his dead wife Melissa (an account that, while probably fictionalised, contains many important and authentic details); Pausanias, a Spartan general, who had accidentally slain a girl and been haunted thereafter, visited the oracle at Heraclea to consult her shade. Plutarch tells us in addition that the Spartans sent to Italy for necromancers to evoke and appease Pausanias himself after his death, which would also involve establishing annual rituals for him. In Virgil's *Aeneid* a visit to the Underworld, commenced at Cumæ on Lake Avernus, apparently replaces the ritual. While none of these accounts are precise historical documents, they nevertheless demonstrate the familiarity of necromancy, and its widespread acceptance, in the Classical period.

Ghosts

The subject of ghosts as understood by the Greeks is sufficiently important to require some elucidation. There are, understandably, resemblances between their ideas and more widespread folklore themes; imputing a Greek origin to any of these is far from my intention. Nevertheless, it is useful to have some idea of the classes of ghosts concerned and the differences involved. This is therefore a summary geared towards practice and understanding of the original sources.

One important class of ghosts are those denied proper funeral rites. These form a major category along with other spirits who for whatever reason cannot enter the Underworld. There were essentially three types in this class: those who had died before their time, who wandered for the intended period of their earthly life, those who had suffered a violent death, and the unburied. Murder victims and executed criminals belong essentially to the same class. Since none of these can cross the River Styx,

they are restless spirits. As a result, they can and will haunt of their own volition, or through magical manipulation.

Female ghosts of those denied fulfilment in life, by the standards of the culture, form another major class. Such fulfilment involved marriage and children; while male ghosts of this type essentially resemble that above, the equivalent female ghosts are important enough to treat as a separate type. So important indeed that there are named individuals of this type in the mythology. Some personify the type and are essentially goddesses or daimons; others are particularly important ghosts, though the exact distinction can be uncertain. Lamia, Medea and other key figures are, to one extent or other, personified forms of this class of ghost, or of participants in archaic rituals of Hera and Artemis involving them. These ghosts pose a threat to women who have yet to achieve the fulfilment denied them, and to children. In the event that a woman succumbs to the assaults of such a spirit, she will become another of the same type.

Substantial vestiges of ritual and imagery concerning these ghosts are clearly perceptible in goetic tradition. The precise cultural context involves factors that in our present culture do not have the same weight. This does not necessarily diminish their importance for us, particularly as figures like Lamia and Medea are more complex, subsuming other themes within themselves. These themes include archaic female initiation rites and the personnel involved in them. Their association with both Hera and Artemis makes of them an implicit reflex of Goddess spirituality, repressing which is decidedly unwise.

Ghosts of children were important to ancient belief, and their connection to both the above types is clear. They could of course be victims of the vampiric female ghosts of childless women, or have died by other means. In either case, denied fulfilment of their lives they fall into the class above described. However, being immature as well as intensely frustrated, they were dangerous and particularly prone to magical manipulation.

Ghosts haunting battlefields fall naturally into the class of ghosts suffering violent death and frequently the class of unburied dead &c. However, they can occasionally overlap with the heroes, as in the late period ghosts of gladiators might also.

GHOSTS, DEMONS & THE GRIMOIRES

To call up the Dead. Go to a cemetery on a Friday night at midnight, one where shootings have taken place. Go to a man's grave, taking along with you a white candle, one leaf of wild acacia, and a fully loaded gun. On arrival you will make this appeal: *Exurgent mortui et acmo venient. I require of you dead that you come to me.* After saying these words you will hear a stormy noise; do not take fright, and then fire one shot. The dead will appear to you; you must not run away, but walk backward three steps, saying three times these words: *I besprinkle you with incense and myrrh such as perfumed Astaroth's tomb.*

Sending back a Dead Spirit after you have called it. Pick up a handful of dirt, which you will throw to the four corners of the earth, saying: *Go back from where you came, from dirt you were created, to dirt you may return. Amen.*

Libretto attributed to General Benoit Batrville, died Haiti 1920

AS NOTED AT VARIOUS POINTS IN THIS STUDY, the line between the restless dead and that of demons is not only hard to draw, but at times utterly non-existent. This is certainly true of ancient Greek traditions, and of many other ancient cultures, as well as very common in folkloric traditions. The idea is current that this has little connection with the traditions of the grimoires, where demons are fallen angels. Despite the reality of the intrusion of this Judæo-Christian idea, such a supposition is still an erroneous modern simplification. Not only are the grimoires direct descendents of traditions, literary and oral, where the identity of dead and demon is central, but the genre also retains numerous explicit and implicit points of contact with the older belief.

So too the conjuration in the grimoire tradition of heroes or of historical persons has frequently been portrayed in fiction and historical works. The plays of Goethe and Marlow regarding Doctor Faustus describe the conjuring of Alexander the Great and of Helen of Troy (herself a queen

of the underworld), while in *A Pleasant Treatise of Witches* (1673) conjurations of Achilles, Hector and of King David, supposed to take place at the court of Maximilian, are described.

On occasion such apparitions are attributed to the tricks and impersonations of devils, but in fact reflect more ancient practice, such as Apollonius of Tyana's conjuration of Achilles. The imposture of damned spirits also appears as a back dated explanation of older practices, for example the conjuration of the soul of the prophet Samuel by the Witch of Endor. Its logic is comparable to the idea that fossils were included in God's creation to make the world seem older than 4004 BCE, when he made it in six days.

While arguing the case at length is hardly required, the grimoires themselves provide us with a shorthand substantiation of such agreement:

Erik de Pauw drew my attention to two conjuring books where the identification is explicit: the first is *Herpentil's Black Magic* (supposed date 1505), the subtitle of which tells us it includes *Conjurations and Names of the powerful Ghosts*. An enlarged German edition of the *Grand Grimoire*, called the *True Red Fiery Dragon*, explicitly terms the demons 'Ghosts,' greater and lesser; many of these are identical with spirits known from the *Goetia of Solomon*. While current popularity is no gauge of importance in an under-explored genre, another example is better known; this is *Doctor Faust's Great and Powerful Sea-Ghost* (1692). This title reminds us that in Greek lore being lost at sea was a potent maker of restless ghosts.

Another text cited by de Pauw bears the title *Mysterious Heroes Treasure*, where again linkage with ancient ideas is apparent in the title. If this inference appears strained, consider those important figures from history and myth, including Helen and other figures from Homer, said to be conjured by magicians such as Faust. In any case, it is course a fact, whether appreciated by Solomonian conjurers today or not, that goetia is directly equivalent to necromancy. Many grimoires while dealing exclusively with conjuration and talismans (such as the *Black Pullet*) explicitly claim to teach this art. So then, either lurking in the background or staring us in the face, an identification of many spirits of the grimoires with the spirits of the dead is both present and correct.

It is of course necessary to distinguish levels within the ranks of the dead, as among the scarcely distinguishable demons. The majority of types mentioned above are not, for example, among those described in the papyri as *inhabitants of dark Erebos*, which lies across the Styx, and even beyond the Asphodel Meadows. It is in Erebos, for example, that Hades keeps court. There too, if not in Elysium or the Isles of the Blessed, the noble heroes dwell. Beyond the restless dead also, of course, are the spirits of the Idæan Dactyls and Trophonians mentioned by Plutarch. These are ancestor spirits of the magical tradition; ancient magicians become spirits themselves. For those among us with any imagination this is a sufficient note of caution; when conjuring spirits a degree of respect is necessary, since one day we may well be numbered among them.

GOETIC GALLERY:
NECROMANTIA REXURGAT



Trophonios

TROPHONIOS IS A COMPLEX FIGURE, and ancient and modern interpreters alike have been undecided whether he was a hero, a dæmon or a god. However, the name Zeus Trephonios has been applied to him, both in ancient inscriptions, and the writings of Strabo. There are strong indications that his oracle functioned in the Mycenaean period, and as a pre-Olympian chthonic Zeus he would be susceptible to later re-interpretation as a daemon, as the gods had become more etherealised. It appears most likely then that he was a pre-Olympian god demoted to the status of a semi-historical hero whose resting place was a famous oracle. That he was reinvented in a new guise is supported by the various traditions according to which the oracle was supposed to have been lost and rediscovered.

In Classical times he was seen as an oracular hero. He was celebrated as the builder, with Agamedes (his father or brother), of the temple of Apollo at Delphi. It may be more correct to assume they were credited with building its threshold, and were buried beneath it. One account of his legend says that upon asking for their reward they were bidden by the Priestess to wait seven days, living with all cheerfulness and pleasure. Other accounts speak of being told to spend six days in this way, and on the seventh their heart's desire would be granted. At the end of this time he and his brother were found dead in their bed. This story is the origin of the saying *whom the gods love die young*. Subsequently a statue and temple were erected to him, and games celebrated annually in his honour. His oracle became one of the most famous in all of Greece. The important

historian Pausanias – not to be confused with the much earlier associate of Empedocles – visited this oracle and left a very full account of it. According to the account of Pausanias, Trophonios was swallowed up alive by the earth:

... at the point in the grove at Lebadeia where is what is called the pit of Agamedes, with a slab beside it.

According to this account, the oracle:

... was once unknown to the Boeotians, but they learned of it in the following way. As there had been no rain for a year or more, they sent to Delphi envoys from each city. These asked for a cure for the drought, and were bidden by the Pythian priestess to go to Trophonios at Lebadeia and to discover the remedy from him. Coming to Lebadeia they could not find the oracle. Thereupon Saon, one of the envoys from the city Acraephnum and the oldest of all the envoys, saw a swarm of bees. It occurred to him to follow himself wheresoever the bees turned. At once he saw the bees flying into the ground here, and he went with them into the oracle. It is said that Trophonios taught this Saon the customary ritual, and all the observances kept at the oracle.

Other accounts, while still crediting Delphi with the rediscovery of Trophonios' resting place credit a young shepherd boy with following the bees. From then on Trophonios was honoured as a god and the son of Apollo.

Against this identification, some authors such as Cicero, consider his name as a surname of Hermes, and make him a son of Valens and Phoronis; Valens is likely a Latin title of Zeus (meaning strong, healthy), while Phoronis is a name of Io. Thus it appears some elements of the traditions concerning Trophonios may reflect late attempts by Delphi to assimilate older Trophonian traditions to theirs. The oracular *dæmon* of the shrine of Trophonios was understood to be a dragon, comparable with the Python of Delphi, and the Dragon of Delos.

Some inklings of the older tradition may also be gained from Pausanias. According to him Lebadeia is:

... separated from the grove of Trophonios by the river Hercyna. They say that here Hercyna, when playing with the Maid, daughter of Demeter, held a goose which against her will she let loose.

This is reminiscent of the legend of Leda and the swan, and the Egyptian Nuit being separated against her will from Geb, whose animal was the goose.

The bird flew into a hollow cave and hid under a stone; the Maid (Persephone) entered and took the bird as it lay under the stone. The water flowed, they say, from the place where the Maid took up the stone, and hence the river received the name of Hercyna.

This river goddess, with her connections with Demeter and Persephone, was certainly closely involved with the oracular cult of Trophonios, as Pausanias makes clear:

On the bank of the river there is a temple of Hercyna, in which is a maiden holding a goose in her arms. In the cave are the source of the river and images standing, and serpents are coiled around their sceptres. One might conjecture the images to be of Asclepius and Hygeia, but they might be Trophonios and Hercyna, because they think that serpents are just as sacred to Trophonios as to Asclepius... the most famous things in the grove are a temple and image of Trophonios; the image, made by Praxiteles, is after the manner of Asclepius. There is also a sanctuary of Demeter surnamed Europa, and a Zeus Rain-god in the open. If you go up to the oracle, and thence onwards up the mountain, you come to what is called the Maid's Hunting and a temple of King Zeus. There is also a sanctuary of Apollo.

Clearly this was a very major religious site.

The goddess Demeter is also said to have nursed the infant Trophonios, reminiscent of Rhea and the infant Zeus in Crete. Two sons of Europa by

Zeus were Minos and Rhadamanthus of Crete who, with Aeacos, became judges in the Underworld. Incidentally, connected with another such fostering by Demeter, a fourth judge is added to the traditional three by Orphic sources. This is Triptolemus, the eldest son of the king of Eleusis when Demeter visited there searching for Persephone. She gave him a chariot drawn by winged dragons, and wheat which sprouted everywhere on the earth as he flew over it.

According to Plutarch the priests who attended the oracle of Trophonios are linked to the Dactyls who instituted and celebrated the Mysteries of Samothrace, and derive from the pre-Olympian age of Kronos. They were sons of Erginus, one of the Argonauts. Trophonios and Agamedes can be compared with Castor and Pollux, also Argonauts, who are connected with the Cabirs. A temple in the grove of Trophonios housed images of Kronos, Hera and Zeus, a triad which represents the local equivalent of the Cabiri. Regarding such archaic origins it is striking that Trophonios' shade was serpentine in form, reminiscent of the Python supposed to have formerly owned Apollo's oracle in the mythic past.

The celebrated Pythagorean magician, Apollonius of Tyana, who was worshipped as a god after death, is reputed to have written a book concerning *The Oracle of Trophonios* which was once owned by the Emperor Hadrian, and consulted by Philostratus the biographer of Apollonius. Apollonius found what he learned at the oracle fully in accord with Pythagorean teachings. The waters of Lethe and Mnemosyne are strikingly in accord with the *Vision of Er* related in Plato's *Republic* and the so called Orphic plates found in tombs, sometimes thought to be Neo-Pythagorean. Similarly these waters have parallels in the older writings of Hesiod.

The rites attending the oracle of Trophonios were extremely complex, and undoubtedly derived from cultic initiation ceremonies. They began with an extended purification over several days, and sequestration in a temple of the Goddess of Good Fortune and of the Agathodaimon. Then came bathing in the river Hercyna, hot baths being forbidden. All this prior to making sacrifices to Trophonios, Demeter, and to other deities. Thereafter they ate only the flesh of sacrifices, in particular a ram sacri-

ficed to the ghost of Agamedes, the brother of Trophonios. This too probably indicates a connection with Castor and Pollux who spent alternate seasons in heaven and below the earth. Two boys of thirteen then led the seeker to the river, for bathing and anointing with oil. The querent then drank from the Water of Lethe to cause forgetfulness of the past, and then from the Water of Memory, that what was to be learned would be remembered.

Preparation for the descent consisted of being shod in *country boots*, which are undoubtedly the hunting boots invented by Aristæus. In addition the inquirer was dressed in a linen robe, wore the garlands of a sacrificial victim and carried two cakes of barley mixed with honey of the type offered to Cerberus in similar rituals elsewhere. The querent then descended by ladder through a narrow entrance into the cave, which was some eight yards deep. At the bottom was found a narrow opening, into which they first placed their legs, holding a cake in each hand. Unseen hands then seized their legs and pulled them swiftly through. The pools of Forgetfulness and Memory are also features of the Orphic eschatology revealed on the golden plates excavated in Italy. So too the honey cakes and other details reflect funerary ritual. The ritual, in essence, duplicates ritual and mythological elements appropriate to the dead on behalf of the living inquirer of the oracle. Such a ritual was known as *katabasis*, a descent ritual; curiously enough *katabasis* has very precise analogues in rituals of ascent, these are still current in modern magical practice. How the switch in direction began will be sketched in the account of the *Vision of Er* to follow shortly.

What followed then is described as a blow to the head that created the illusion of being slain. For various reasons this is unlikely, and another possibility is an experience so overwhelming that it felt like a blow to the head, or as we might say, a shock. That this might involve a symbolic slaying, perhaps with a thunder-stone as at Crete, is not unlikely. Following this an unseen speaker answered their query and revealed cultic secrets in addition. According to Plutarch's account at least, this experience involved the soul absenting itself from the body. After receiving this answer – an experience that might have extended to days – they again lost their senses

and were again thrust through the aperture, feet first, to the bottom of the descent.

Having regained the surface they were placed on the Chair of Memory to repeat what they had heard. Finally, still in a disoriented state, they returned to the Temple of the Agathodaimon to recover both their senses and the ability to laugh. Like Pythagoras and others on their returns from the Underworld, the faces of those returning were exceedingly pale and solemn. So much so that it became proverbial to say of a melancholy man that he had visited the cave of Trophonios.

The cave of Trophonios is mentioned by Cornelius Agrippa in one of his psychological chapters concerning types of phrensy (*Occult Philosophy* III: XLVIII). In the case of Apollonian phrensy:

...obtained by certain sacred mysteries, vows, sacrifices, adorations, invocations, and certain sacred arts or certain sacred confections, by which the spirits of their gods did infuse virtue [power], making the soul rise above the mind, by joining it with deities and demons.

Given the accordance of how such phrensy is to be obtained with the description of the oracular rites by Pausanias, Cornelius Agrippa must have been acquainted with his writings.

Er of Pamphylia

Mircea Eliade compares the story of Er of Pamphylia to the shamanic journey to the Underworld, becoming acquainted with all that concerns the destiny of man, and returning to life. He compares the descents of Pythagoras and Zoroaster, in which he sees nothing shamanic. Jean Doresse calls this story a *veritable apocalypse*, a description which does more than highlighting the dramatic quality of the text, in that it accurately defines its nature. An Apocalypse is a species of revelation in which eschatological knowledge and the geography of another realm are imparted by gods, angels or spirits to a human who has reached the required state in one of various ways.

These include a divine calling, in which the recipient is elected to receive the knowledge by special dispensation. This type of revelation is common in Jewish and subsequent Christian literature, and might mistakenly be imagined to be either the prototype of such literature or even its unique form. However, an entirely distinct Greek apocalyptic genre was inspired, very specifically, by accounts of the visionary experiences of Abaris, Empedocles, Pythagoras and other Greek 'shamans'.

Alternatively the event can come about by accident, illness or other near death experience. This is the category into which the *Vision of Er* falls, and of which it may be the earliest example. This type is common in Greek and later Roman literature and has the appearance of an indigenous form, having no reliance on the Semitic model.

Lastly there is the quest type, where the revelation is consciously sought for by ritual, meditation or other process. There are many examples of this type in the Greek sphere, as well as in others. Incubatory oracles involving descents into mysterious caves, fasting and sexual abstinence, adherence to a moral code, ingestion of psycho-active substances and other processes which arise in this study were resorted to in quest of such revelations.

Doresse also mentions an Armenian named Zoroaster as a possible source for Plato's account. This Zoroaster was identified by Arnobius as a grandson of one Zostrian, to whom Gnostic scriptures were attributed. However, internal Greek traditions are at least as likely to have inspired Plato's account. Rather than assume a reading of 'Er the Armenian', a country not far distant from ancient Pamphylia, I have retained the reading 'Er the son of Armenius'. It should be noted that Cornelius Agrippa mentions Er in the *Three Books of Occult Philosophy* (III: XLII), under the name of Phereus of Pamphylia. His edition of Plato must have been much corrupted, but it is interesting that again he speaks of ecstatic states, and that the chapter in question deals with Necromancy, an art he elsewhere completely identifies with goetia. There is so much of interest in this legend that, rather than give a précis, I present my slightly abridged adaptation from Benjamin Jowett's translation of the *Republic*.

The Vision of Er

Er the son of Armenius, a Pamphylian by birth was slain in battle, and ten days afterwards, when the bodies of the dead were taken up already in a state of corruption, his body was found unaffected by decay, and carried away home to be buried. And on the twelfth day, as he was lying on the funeral pile, he returned to life and told them what he had seen in the other world. He said that when his soul left the body he went on a journey with a great company, and that they came to a mysterious place at which there were two openings in the earth; they were near together, and over against them were two other openings in the heaven above. In the intermediate space there were judges seated, who commanded the just, after they had given judgement on them and had bound their sentences in front of them, to ascend by the heavenly way on the right hand; and in like manner the unjust were bidden by them to descend by the lower way on the left hand; these also bore the symbols of their deeds, but fastened on their backs.

He drew near, and they told him that he was to be the messenger who would carry the report of the other world to men, and they bade him hear and see all that was to be heard and seen in that place. Then he beheld and saw on one side the souls departing at either opening of heaven and earth when sentence had been given on them; and at the two other openings other souls, some ascending out of the earth dusty and worn with travel, some descending out of heaven clean and bright. And arriving ever and anon they seemed to have come from a long journey, and they went forth with gladness into the meadow, where they encamped as at a festival; and those who knew one another embraced and conversed, the souls which came from earth curiously enquiring about the things above, and the souls which came from heaven about the things beneath. And they told one another of what had happened by the way, those from below weeping and sorrowing at the remembrance of the things which they had endured and seen in their journey beneath the earth (which journey lasted a thousand years), while those from above were describing heavenly delights and visions of inconceivable beauty.

He said that for every wrong that they had done to anyone they suffered tenfold; or once in a hundred years, such being reckoned as the length of a man's life, and the penalty being thus paid ten times in a thousand years. If, for example, there were any who had been the cause of many deaths, or had betrayed or enslaved cities or armies, or been guilty of any other evil behaviour, for each and all of their offences they received punishment ten times over, and the rewards of beneficence and justice and holiness were in the same proportion. I need hardly repeat what he said concerning young children dying almost as soon as they were born. Of piety and impiety to gods and parents, and of murderers, there were retributions other and greater far which he described.

When one of the spirits asked another, *Where is Ardiaeus the Great?* he mentioned that he was present. This Ardiaeus lived a thousand years before the time of Er: he had been the tyrant of some city of Pamphylia, he had murdered his aged father and his elder brother, and the committing of many other abominable crimes was attributed to him.

The answer of the other spirit was: *He comes not hither and will never come. And this, said he, was one of the dreadful sights which we ourselves witnessed. We were at the mouth of the cavern, and, having completed all our experiences, were about to reascend, when of a sudden Ardiaeus appeared and several others, most of whom were tyrants; and there were also besides the tyrants private individuals who had been great criminals: they were just, as they fancied, about to return into the upper world, but the mouth, instead of admitting them, gave a roar, whenever any of these incurable sinners or some one who had not been sufficiently punished tried to ascend; and then wild men of fiery aspect, who were standing by and heard the sound, seized and carried them off; and Ardiaeus and others they bound head and foot and hand, and threw them down and flayed them with scourges, and dragged them along the road at the side, carding them on thorns like wool, and declaring to the passers-by what were their crimes, and that they were being taken away to be cast into hell.* And of all the many terrors which they had endured, he said that there was none like the terror which each of them felt at that moment, lest they should

hear the voice; and when there was silence, one by one they ascended with exceeding joy. These, said Er, were the penalties and retributions, and there were blessings as great.

Now when the spirits which were in the meadow had tarried seven days, on the eighth they were obliged to proceed on their journey, and, on the fourth day after, he said that they came to a place where they could see from above a line of light, straight as a column, extending right through the whole heaven and through the earth, in colour resembling the rainbow, only brighter and purer; another day's journey brought them to the place, and there, in the midst of the light, they saw the ends of the chains of heaven let down from above: for this light is the belt of heaven, and holds together the circle of the universe, like the under-girders of a trireme. From these ends is extended the spindle of Necessity, on which all the revolutions turn. The shaft and hook of this spindle are made of steel, and the whorl is made partly of steel and also partly of other materials. Now the whorl is in form like the whorl used on earth; and the description of it implied that there is one large hollow whorl which is quite scooped out, and into this is fitted another lesser one, and another, and another, and four others, making eight in all, like vessels which fit into one another; the whorls show their edges on the upper side, and on their lower side all together form one continuous whorl. This is pierced by the spindle, which is driven home through the centre of the eighth.

The first and outermost whorl has the rim broadest, and the seven inner whorls are narrower, in the following proportions: the sixth is next to the first in size, the fourth next to the sixth; then comes the eighth; the seventh is fifth, the fifth is sixth, the third is seventh, last and eighth comes the second. The largest (of Fixed Stars) is spangled, and the seventh (or Sun) is brightest; the eighth (or Moon) coloured by the reflected light of the seventh; the second and fifth (Saturn and Mercury) are in colour like one another, and yellower than the preceding; the third (Jupiter) has the whitest light; the fourth (Mars) is reddish; the sixth (Venus) is in whiteness second. Now the whole spindle has the same motion; but, as the whole revolves in one direction, the

seven inner circles (the planets) move slowly within the other (the Fixed Stars), and of these the swiftest is the eighth; next in swiftness are the seventh, sixth, and fifth, which move together; third in swiftness, appearing to move according to the law of this reversed motion, is the fourth; the third fourth and the second fifth.

The spindle turns on the knees of Necessity; and on the upper surface of each circle is a Siren, who goes round with them, hymning a single tone or note. The eight together form one harmony; and round about, at equal intervals, there is another band, three in number, each sitting upon her throne: these are the Fates, daughters of Necessity, who are clothed in white robes and have chaplets upon their heads, Lachesis and Clotho and Atropos, who accompany with their voices the harmony of the Sirens: Lachesis singing of the past, Clotho of the present, Atropos of the future; Clotho from time to time assisting with a touch of her right hand the revolution of the outer circle of the whorl or spindle, and Atropos with her left hand touching and guiding the inner ones, and Lachesis laying hold of either in turn, first with one hand and then with the other.

When Er and the spirits arrived, their duty was to go at once to Lachesis; but first of all there came a prophet who arranged them in order; then he took from the knees of Lachesis lots and samples of lives, and having mounted a high pulpit, spoke as follows: *Hear the word of Lachesis, the daughter of Necessity. Mortal souls, behold a new cycle of life and mortality. Your genius will not be allotted to you, but you choose your genius; and let him who draws the first lot have the first choice, and the life which he chooses shall be his destiny. Virtue is free, and as a man honours or dishonours her he will have more or less of her; the responsibility is with the chooser – God is justified.* When the Interpreter had thus spoken he scattered lots indifferently among them all, and each of them took up the lot which fell near him, all but Er himself (he was not allowed), and each as he took his lot perceived the number which he had obtained.

Then the Interpreter placed on the ground before them the samples of lives; and there were many more lives than the souls present, and

they were of all sorts. There were lives of every animal and of man in every condition. And there were tyrannies among them, some lasting out the tyrant's life, others which broke off in the middle and came to an end in poverty and exile and beggary; and there were lives of famous men, some who were famous for their form and beauty as well as for their strength and success in games, or, again, for their birth and the qualities of their ancestors; and some who were the reverse of famous for the opposite qualities. And of women likewise. There was not, however, any definite character given them, because the soul, when choosing a new life, must of necessity become different. But there was every other quality, and the all mingled with one another, and also with elements of wealth and poverty, and disease and health; and there were mean states also ...

And according to the report of the messenger from the other world this was what the prophet said at the time: *Even for the last comer, if he chooses wisely and will live diligently, there is appointed a happy and not undesirable existence. Let not him who chooses first be careless, and let not the last despair.* And when he had spoken, he who had the first choice came forward and in a moment chose the greatest tyranny; his mind having been darkened by folly and sensuality, he had not thought out the whole matter before he chose, and did not at first sight perceive that he was fated, among other evils, to devour his own children. But when he had time to reflect, and saw what was in the lot, he began to beat his breast and lament over his choice, forgetting the proclamation of the prophet; for, instead of throwing the blame of his misfortune on himself, he accused chance and the gods, and everything rather than himself. Now he was one of those who came from heaven, and in a former life had dwelt in a well-ordered State, but his virtue was a matter of habit only, and he had no philosophy. And it was true of others who were similarly overtaken, that the greater number of them came from heaven and therefore they had never been schooled by trial, whereas the pilgrims who came from earth, having themselves suffered and seen others suffer, were not in a hurry to choose. And owing to

this inexperience of theirs, and also because the lot was a chance, many of the souls exchanged a good destiny for an evil or an evil for a good.

For if a man had always on his arrival in this world dedicated himself from the first to sound philosophy, and had been moderately fortunate in the number of the lot, he might, as the messenger reported, be happy here, and also his journey to another life and return to this, instead of being rough and underground, would be smooth and heavenly. Most curious, he said, was the spectacle – sad and laughable and strange; for the choice of the souls was in most cases based on their experience of a previous life.

There he saw the soul which had once been Orpheus choosing the life of a swan out of enmity to the race of women, hating to be born of a woman because they had been his murderers; he beheld also the soul of Thamyras choosing the life of a nightingale; birds, on the other hand, like the swan and other musicians, wanting to be men. The soul which obtained the twentieth lot chose the life of a lion, and this was the soul of Ajax the son of Telamon, who would not be a man, remembering the injustice which was done him in the judgment regarding the arms of Achilles. The next was Agamemnon, who took the life of an eagle, because, like Ajax, he hated human nature by reason of his sufferings. About the middle came the lot of Atalanta; she, seeing the great fame of an athlete, was unable to resist the temptation: and after her there followed the soul of Epeus the son of Panopeus passing into the nature of a woman cunning in the arts; and far away among the last who chose, the soul of the jester Thersites was putting on the form of a monkey.

There came also the soul of Odysseus having yet to make a choice, and his lot happened to be the last of them all. Now the recollection of former toils had disenchanted him of ambition, and he went about for a considerable time in search of the life of a private man who had no cares; he had some difficulty in finding this, which was lying about and had been neglected by everybody else; and when he saw it, he said that he would have done the same had his lot been first instead of last, and that he was delighted to have it. And not only did men pass into

animals, but I must also mention that there were animals tame and wild who changed into one another and into corresponding human natures – the good into the gentle and the evil into the savage, in all sorts of combinations.

All the souls had now chosen their lives, and they went in the order of their choice to Lachesis, who sent with them the genius whom they had severally chosen, to be the guardian of their lives and the fulfiller of the choice: this genius led the souls first to Clotho, and drew them within the revolution of the spindle impelled by her hand, thus ratifying the destiny of each; and then, when they were fastened to this, carried them to Atropos, who spun the threads and made them irreversible, whence without turning round they passed beneath the throne of Necessity; and when they had all passed, they marched on in a scorching heat to the plain of Forgetfulness, which was a barren waste destitute of trees and verdure; and then towards evening they encamped by the river of Unmindfulness, whose water no vessel can hold; of this they were all obliged to drink a certain quantity, and those who were not saved by wisdom drank more than was necessary; and each one as he drank forgot all things. Now after they had gone to rest, about the middle of the night there was a thunderstorm and earthquake, and then in an instant they were driven upwards in all manner of ways to their birth, like shooting stars. He himself was prevented from drinking the water. But in what manner or by what means he returned to the body he could not say; only, in the morning, awaking suddenly, he found himself lying on the pyre.

Comment on the Vision

This is certainly an Apocalypse, and it is therefore only polite to lightly deal with technicalities before the commentary. The vision arises in a trance resulting from a supposed accident: a state of deathlike unconsciousness on a battlefield. This distinguishes it from arising from personal actions, or a direct summoning. Even so, the distance between a call from the gods and an accidental event is reduced when it transpires that Er – rather than any other combatant on that day – has been selected as a messenger to the living.

However interesting apocalyptic literature may be in itself however, it is more essential to our purposes that Plato's tripartite schema is vertical, above is good and greater, and below is bad and lesser. Its three levels equate misleadingly easily with what our culture calls Heaven, Earth and Hell. In this important respect this is completely distinct from older Greek ideas about the afterlife; in which the underworld was the abode of the dead, good or bad. Punishment and reward are also significant elements of Plato's eschatology, which bears comparison with Orphic ideas of expiation. Significantly a good place in Plato's afterlife does not depend on initiatory knowledge, the moral conditions and their consequences involve everyone.

Coinciding with changes in the wider culture, Plato's departure from the old model of the afterlife can be seen as a turning point. It preceded a still greater departure of increasing influence into the latest period of Græco-Roman culture. This involved varied projections of the afterlife either mostly or entirely into the heavens. In many instances this involved or assumed a transferral or projection of the geography of Hades onto the sky; complete with its rivers, Islands of the Blessed and other important locations. Such developments, interconnected with Babylonian astrological thought, represent a crucial stage in the development of Western magic. Very many features of Western magic as we know it are a direct consequence of these events, and would be instantly recognised if listed. This must wait however, as the most powerful and central aspects of the context in which they first arose are all too frequently overlooked.

In Plato's myth the asphodel meadow of Hades is an aerial place, in the upper atmosphere, while Tartarus remains underground. Subsequently this was extended, as in Plutarch for whom the river Styx flowed upwards from the Earth to the Moon, and the Asphodel Meadows are transferred to the space between Earth and the Moon, which luminary plays a very conspicuous part in Plutarch's eschatology:

Every soul, whether without mind, or joined to mind, on departing from the body, is ordained to wander in the region lying between the moon and earth for a term, not equal in all cases; but the wicked and incontinent pay a penalty for their sins; whereas the virtuous, in order, as it were, to purify themselves and to recover breath, after the body, as being the source of sinful pollution, must pass a certain fixed time in the mildest region of air, which they call the Meadow of Hades.

Tantalisingly, Plato tells us the ritual specialists or *goetes* described themselves as Children of the Moon, so perhaps these lunar associations are earlier than is currently thought. In any case, in various religions of late antiquity the relocation is extended even further. Under the influence of astrological ideas from Chaldean and later Jewish sources the seven planetary gods, with their near all-encompassing role in human destiny, become the hostile Archons of Gnosticism. The origins of these gods may lie in seven evil stars, rather than planets, in Babylonian star-lore. In the emergent systems they bore malign influence over incarnating souls descending through their domains towards the Earth, and after death impeded their departure to the higher realms. By contrast, while the fiery wild men of Plato's vision with their scourges superficially approach to the Christian conception of demons, there is no suggestion that they are themselves damned. Nevertheless, Plutarch's myths, which typify the subsequent transfer of Hades to the sky, contain a more developed demonology. Greek mythological language was undergoing an evolution, which sometimes collided with the more pessimistic forms of astrology. The negative conceptions of planetary gods or angels, the Archons of Gnosticism, were both compatible and convergent with these tendencies.

Plutarch indeed may be the most ancient source for the association of the planets with eschatological events on this model. In his *On the delays of Divine Vengeance* the vices of descending souls are associated – as in Plato's *Gorgias* – with physical scars. Plutarch, who is influenced by popular tradition and useful for that reason, goes further. He associates these vices also with specific colours; which correlate precisely with Hermetic astrological correspondences of the period. Thus too a soul guilty of meanness, associated with Saturn, he gives a dark and dirty colour; envy, the vice of Jupiter he associates with violet; cruelty and harshness, which are Martial vices, he associates with the colour red, and so on. Although the astrological associations are not made explicit, there can be little doubt what the origins of these colour associations were. Thus, the comprehensive astrological eschatology that was flourishing in the 2nd century AD appears to have its first witness in Plutarch.

The roots of such thinking in Greek circles can be traced far earlier than Plato; Heraclitus held the soul to be a spark of sidereal essence, and its origins in the stars were a commonplace of Ionian thought. Empedocles also preceded Plato in giving a dualistic twist to this conception. In Platonic thought particularly, physical incarnation was a prison, repeated incarnations being required to overcome material obstacles to returning to the contemplation of Divine Beauty in the highest sphere. So too from the 3rd century BCE Hellenistic astrological thought made the interconnectedness of the planetary worlds and human fate an increasingly familiar idea. As in Plato the personification of these forces was a powerful factor, where he gives us Ananke and the Fates, the Judges and the Sirens, so too in astrological thought the decans, planets, the Arabic Parts, degrees and so on were all understood as personified mythological intelligences. So too astrology itself was held to be literally a divine science, in which the revelations of destiny were comprehended as if in a vision. This is also seen in Jewish apocalyptic literature, the *Book of Enoch* contains references to visionary journeys revealing calendrical and astrological secrets.

Broadly speaking, two widespread and influential consequences of these influences on religious and philosophical thought are to be understood: the development of celestial roles by chthonic deities, most notably

Persephone and Cybele, and the perception of demonic qualities in celestial gods; including but not restricted to those associated with the planets, and even the Creator or Demiurge. Most strikingly evident of the transformative power of such ideas is that seen in some Gnostic movements. In a startlingly creative interpretation of *Genesis* the God of the Old Testament becomes the demonic chief of the hostile Archons, themselves identical with major Angels in conventional systems. However these ideas are neither restricted to expression in Gnosticism nor reliant on Jewish materials, their influence is apparent throughout the Magical Papyri and in much of the thought of later antiquity.

Plato's transferral of the Isles of the Blessed to indeterminate places in the heaven was soon clarified. Iamblichus – the head of the Syrian Neoplatonist school, (died 330 AD) – records a dictum attributed to the Pythagoreans locating the Isles of the Blessed in the Sun and Moon; this may represent a late, fully developed form of the process. If so, Plutarch (died 140 BCE) far precedes it by presenting an entire eschatological lunar landscape, which simultaneously illustrates the transferral of chthonic deities:

... there are deep places and gulf-like in the moon, whereof the largest is called Hecate's dungeon, in which the souls either suffer or inflict punishment, for the things which they have either done or endured ...

The schema is consciously building on Plato, the Moon is a transitional region between the lower earth and the higher planetary spheres leading to the Fixed Stars and beyond. Thus Plutarch invests her with upper and lower portals:

... as for the two smaller depths, because the souls pass through them on the way towards heaven and towards earth back again, the one (facing the Sun) is denominated the Elysian Plain, the other (facing the Earth) the Passage of Persephone the Terrestrial!

The higher worlds are occupied by the gods and their retinues, but the Moon is the preserve of terrestrial daimons, which is to say the dead. The very term terrestrial appears contradictory in this context, and its use shows the pace at which ideas were evolving while terminology struggled to keep pace. These spirits form a very important class and are not distinct from the souls previously mentioned. The idea of a sub-lunary world between Earth and the Moon, occupied by spirits or demons, was long enduring; it was simply forgotten that most of them were former human beings. Reclassified as Aerial demons, they are traceable in Agrippa and much demonological lore, the angels of course being resident higher up, in accordance with Christian Neoplatonist ideas. The positive aspects of sub-lunar spirits have been eradicated from many of these later redactions, along with their identity with the dead. In Plutarch the essentially benign role of some among the lunar terrestrial daimons is very apparent, and he names some very interesting names:

The daimons do not always pass their time upon her (the moon), but they come down hither and take charge of Oracles. They are present at and assist in the most advanced of the initiatory rites (Mysteries). They act as punishers and keepers of wrongdoers, and shine as saviours in battle and at sea. Whatsoever thing in these capacities they do amiss, either out of spite, unfair partiality, or envy, they are punished for it, for they are driven down again to earth and coupled with human bodies. Of the best of these genii they told him were those who wait upon (the god) Saturn (in Elysium) now, and the same in old times were the Idaean Dactyls in Crete, the Curetes in Phrygia, the Trophonians in Boeotia Lebadea, and others without number in various parts of the world...

Whilst I am not suggesting that popular belief in the ancient world faithfully adhered to the tenets of Plutarch or Plato, there undoubtedly were popular forms of these ideas. In fact Plutarch was as influenced by popular traditions as he was by Plato, and has the additional virtue of illustrating and providing models for the subject in hand. On the other

hand under-estimating the influence of Plato and his successors on the literate classes of the Greco-Roman world would also be an error. What might be termed Low Platonism was undoubtedly highly fashionable in the later Græco-Roman world. Consequently we find his influence in various Gnostic texts, and perfectly visible in the Low Hermetic Magical Papyri. So far as the grimoires are concerned, Low Neoplatonism typifies what we might term the school of Agrippa. At least it would do, if it were possible to penetrate the still current 19th century overemphasis on the cabalistic elements of his *Occult Philosophy*. Indeed the above passage is strikingly reminiscent of the ideas of the Comte de Gabalis, as cited in my *True Grimoire*. His writings were contemporary with and influential upon important manuscript and printed grimoires.

Another participant in the transferral of the Underworld to the sky, who has been credited with actual authorship of the idea, was one Heraclides of Pontus (born approx. 388–373 BCE). Interestingly this philosopher wizard came from the city of Heraclea, where a famous necromantic oracle flourished. In the tradition of many of our goetes he practiced self-deification, as well as admiring several figures examined in this volume that had done likewise. Unsympathetic accounts of him appear to recall (and lampoon) a practicing goetic philosopher, whose end was associated with translation to heaven. A mysterious serpent features in the account Diogenes Lærtius gives of these events; suggestive of a posthumous hero cult, perhaps on the model of Glycon. Unsurprisingly Heraclides wrote a book on the famous figure of Abaris, another on catalepsy and yet another on *things seen in the underworld*; all that is missing is a work on the Argonauts. In the course of his writing he developed a fictional foil for his ideas, named Empedotimus; obtained by combining the names of Empedocles and Hermetimus.

This hero's exploits included a vision of just such a celestial Underworld, including a variant on its geography better known in another form. Plato's *openings* to the realms above and below were developed by this writer and others into veritable gates with definite celestial locations. Empedotimus beheld these gates, and from the surviving fragments we know where Heraclides situated them. The most important gate in many respects was

the Gate of Heracles, which led to the realm of the gods. This, surprisingly perhaps, he located in Scorpio. Two other gates he situated between Leo and Cancer, and between Aquarius and Pisces. This is clearly an innovation on Plato, who though his openings were double were essentially headed in two directions rather than three. More importantly it differs from the classification found later, perhaps beginning with Numenius, but very influential overall, of two gates. It is possible, though perhaps not likely, that Heraclides extrapolated his third gate from the only other route mentioned in the *Vision of Er*. This, of course, is the way back out of the cave where the events in the vision take place.

In the better known astrological form of the celestial gates there are two, and their locations are not those of Heraclides. Called the Gate of the Gods and the Gate of Men, these were situated in Capricorn and Cancer respectively. By means of these gates souls ascended to the realms above or descended into incarnation. It is a fact integral to this conception that the Milky Way intersects the Zodiac at these two points; or rather it did so in the era when these systems were formulated. The Milky Way was referred to by Heraclides as the Path of Souls traversing the Heavenly Hades. Similar language occurs in the papyri with reference to the zodiac as a *processional way*. Both were stellar highroads for the journeying of souls, the zodiac of course being also the road of the Sun, Moon and the five planets. It is as well to begin distinguishing the two luminaries from the planets, as Pherecydes did for instance, as they were frequently treated differently in systems of this kind. The five planets were often associated with the evil Archons, whereas the Sun and Moon generally remained benign, precisely because they are luminaries. In Manichean myth the Lunar Nodes were counted among the 'evil planets' in order to maintain the canonical number seven when excepting the luminaries as benign.

The celestial Hades, with variations, became a very widespread theme in the evolution of beliefs. A creative ferment had taken hold of the initiates of Mystery schools, members of Gnostic sects, on magicians and philosophers. A major theme of these events was focus on knowledge of the names of astrological guardians, of routes through the celestial underworld, of seals or characters associated with them; these were secrets

that assured the initiate of a privileged existence after death, and bestowed power on the magician. There is no firm evidence of any kind that the mystical elevation of the soul was ever believed to occur during life. Exceptions to this rule have been suggested in the case of the cults of Mithras and Cybele, but this has not been demonstrated and is likely erroneous. On the other hand the techniques of many of the goetic magicians, such as Empedocles, had the clear goal of self-deification. Nevertheless, this too appears to have culminated in the post-mortem state, even though god-like abilities were claimed during their earthly career. The things seen and the powers exercised by these mystics and magicians however clearly anticipated such an event.

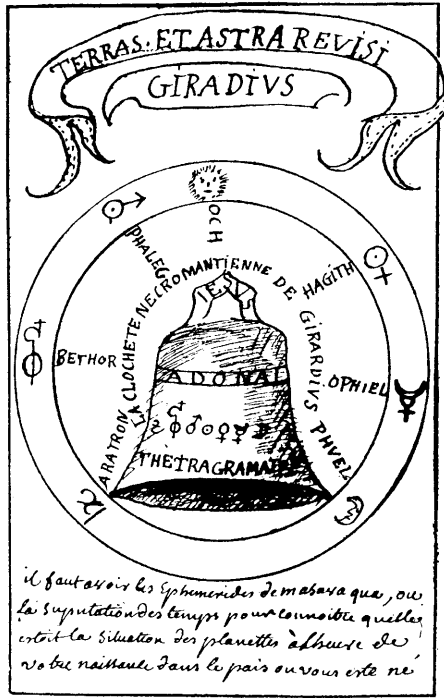
As has been seen, the Sun and Moon were equated with the Isles of the Blessed and also with rulers of the Underworld in the Sky. This meant particularly Persephone in the case of the Moon, but also Dis Pater in the case of the Sun. This much is fairly straightforward, even if the idea of these deities ruling the luminaries seems counter-intuitive from a conventional view of myth. On the other hand, what are we to make of the Gates in Cancer and Capricorn? There is, to be sure, solar and lunar significance to these two signs; but might there be something else? The ruler of Cancer in Olympian rather than planetary terms is Hermes, the guide of souls. This is obviously appropriate to the themes here. So if Hermes is bringing souls down into incarnation – or, following Plato and older mythology, bringing them to Hades – then who is their guide to the realm of the gods?

Glancing at the Orphic correspondences for the Sign of Capricorn, the goddess Hestia is faithfully but fairly unhelpfully named there. However, when Dionysus was raised to the status of an Olympian, Hestia surrendered her place to him. On revising our table in accordance with this, Dionysus is revealed as the patron of souls entering the realm of the gods. This has, to say the least, the ring of an authentic interpretation that would have commended itself to Orphic magicians and others. The mythic precedent for Dionysus in this role is of course his rescue of his mother Semele from the Underworld, bringing her into the company of the gods.

The removal of the Underworld into the sky caused massive disruptions in categories of gods, angels and other immortals, both celestial and chthonic. The resultant upheavals indifferently made objects of devotion into demons and restored lustre to those formerly despised. Just as the Gnostic demonisation of God and Angels typifies the one, so the rehabilitation of Typhon-Set, both in solar theology and in magic, typifies the other. Equally this upheaval transferred deities and others from one place to another, retaining the same status as previously enjoyed. Some, like the God of the Old Testament demonised by various Gnostics, cast aside the novel garment. This was achieved relatively soon, if we discount certain aspects of medieval dualism. Others found their new clothes harder to shake off; their changed status has persisted right into modern times. The chthonic realm generally was the loser, despite the popularity of some of its major deities: for instance Dionysus and indeed Persephone. This was likely inevitable given the vertical distinctions already explicit in Plato's model, and in the historical process of separating the chief deity from the material universe. This separation, which monotheistic theology occasionally considers its crowning accomplishment, is from another point of view one of the world's greatest doctrinal disasters.

As there was bound to be with such widely distributed ideas, there were differences in understanding and distinctions in application. Some of these concern us more than others, so it is better to turn from the Babylonian evil planets and the Gnostic Archons. Let us though retain their reminder that not only pagan deities, but the Angels too have been seen as demons. As Michael in particular had strong chthonic components in his previous incarnations, recalling this will encourage us to be more flexible.

It is against the background of this upheaval, to return to our theme, that my central point is made: while moving from knowledge of underworld geography to a map initially drawing greatly from astrology, the magician's concern with spirits and the afterlife remained constant throughout this period. Thus, despite superficial appearances, Western magic was and remains at root goetic. Regardless of the fact that its operations are focussed on beings attributed to planets, stars and signs, its foundations are solidly necromantic.



The Necromantic Bell of Girardius

An interesting necromantic ritual of the 16th century illustrates the enduring association of astrological themes with the raising of the dead. This ritual employs a magical bell, called the Necromantic Bell of Girardius (The document in question is the *Parvi Lucii Libellus de Mirabilibus Naturae Arcanis*, 1730).

At the lower part of the bell is engraved the name Tetragrammaton, and in its midst the name Adonai, while on the handle is written the name Jesus. Between the first two names are the symbols of the seven planets: Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Sun, Venus, Mercury and the Moon. This bell is cast from a form of magical electrum, consisting of alloyed gold, copper, fixed mercury, iron, tin and silver, lead being omitted. This is to be per-

formed at a time when the aspects of the planets favour the operator. This is presumably by progression or transit to the natal chart, the date of the casting is to be engraved inside the bell. The prepared instrument is to be kept wrapped in a green cloth. The operator is to seek a suitable time for placing it in a grave for the span of an entire week, which of course consists of days attributed to the seven planets. The precedent of rituals in the papyri where items are placed in graves suggests that this is to enlist the aid of a spirit (a magical assistant or parhedros), perhaps to be summoned by the bell.



The manuscript includes striking illustrations: in one the operator with bell is portrayed in garments that are clearly of ancient style; sandals, a toga like vestment clasped at the shoulder, and some form of tunic. This figure, which must be regarded as Girardius in person, holds the bell in his left hand, beneath which appears a small table. In his right is a scroll bearing the symbols of the planets. Another illustration shows the bell in detail, surrounded by a magic circle where the symbols of the seven planets are each accompanied by the appropriate sigil of the seven Olympic Spirits: Aratron, Bethor, Phaleg, Och, Hagiel, Ophiel and Phul.

Ananke

While Plato's account contains startling new features, the *dramatis personæ* among other elements are very traditional. The judgment takes place in a meadow, the asphodel meadow of Hades is undoubtedly the model, and the judges cannot be anyone but Minos, Aeacos and Rhadamanthus. So too Necessity, the Fates and Sirens have long established prior roles which deserve examination outside the context of the *Vision*.

Ananke, identical with the Roman goddess *Necessitas*, *Necessity*; she is the supreme personification of fate, so absolute the gods themselves could not resist; also of moral obligation in the highest possible sense. Her role connects her naturally with *Tyche*, goddess of fortune. In the Horatian *Ode to Fortuna*, the goddess is preceded by *Necessitas*, with brazen hand holding nails that fixed the decrees of fate. Ananke possessed a temple in Corinth, considered so holy that only her priests could enter. This deserves to be born in mind when Corinthian traditions recur later in this work.

In popular tradition, Ananke increasingly came to be seen as a goddess of death, which may partly explain her considerable role in the *Magical Papyri* (see for example PGM IV, where she appears at 605; additionally Seven Fates – identified with the Seven Hathors – appear at 669 and the pivot of the universe at 680 & 681). She appears also in PGM III 120, an incantation that also has the distinction of conjuring the Sun god Helios by the name of one of the Dactyls and the title Chthonic. Necessity is also invoked in PGM VII 302–304, XXXVI 342–49 and elsewhere. Indeed one of the most important verbal and written formulae of the papyri, a powerful spell of compulsion, is specifically and frequently associated with her, the famous Maskelli-Maskello formula: MASKELLI MASKELLŌ PHNOUKENTABAŌ OREOBAGRA RHĒXICCHTHŌN HIPPOCHTHŌN PYRIPĒGANŸX. So too, along with Aidoneus (Hades), Persephone, Hecate, Hephæstus, Serapis, the Erinyes &c. the name Ananke also appears among the gods associated with the decans in the table of Ostances (see Book Four).

In Orphic tradition, she is the daughter of Kronos and it is she and her daughter Adrastia who are the nurses of Zeus. Adrastia, alternatively known as Nemesis or Nemesis Adrastia, was more traditionally considered a daughter of Night. Her most celebrated temple was at Rhamnus in Attica, from which she obtained the title Rhamnusia or Rhamnusia. In the earliest times she was believed to measure out the fortune of mortals, to apportion their happiness or misery, and send suffering to those who were too fortunate in their gifts. Subsequently she was seen more as resembling the Erinyes, as a punisher of crimes. A goddess with many underworld associations, she presided over vengeance and reward, her power extended over the living and the dead whose relics and reputation she protected. Her name resembles that of the mortal Adrastus, and this is more than accidental since he built near Troy a temple to Nemesis, where Apollo had an oracle. His name significantly is also that of the unfortunate prince of Phrygia who whilst in exile at the court of King Crœsus accidentally killed his benefactor's son Atys.

The Fates

While retaining Plato's *dramatis personæ*, but developing on the transferral of chthonic deities to the celestial region, Plutarch allotted the Fates to the three principal bodies of geocentric astrology, Sun, Moon and Earth; as follows:

And of the Three Fates, Atropos, seated in the sun, supplies the origin of birth; Clotho, moving about the moon, unites together and mingles the various parts; lastly, Lachesis, on earth, who has most to do with Fortune, puts her hand to the work.

Greek *Moiræ*, Latin *Parcæ* or *Fata*: the word *moira* means a share, and the Fates thus represent the allotters of each man's share or fate. In Homer, Fate is singular, the goddess who at every birth spins the thread representing the fate of the individual life, watches their life unfold and – directed

by divine counsel – apportioning the consequences of good and bad actions. Hesiod's Moirae, while without individual names, are more substantial, and he makes them daughters of Erebus and Night and sisters of the fateful Keres and of Death. More conventional Jovist schemas reckon them daughters of Zeus and Themis, and name them Clotho, Lachesis and Atropos; representing respectively the spinner of fate, the assigner of fortune and the unavoidable doom.

Other authors variously make them daughters of Erebus or Kronos and Night, of Gaia and Oceanus, or indeed of Ananke. While some made none but Zeus superior to their decree, this is plainly an intermediate stage of religious thought. In the late period, and in the older form, every kind of being has its fate allotted by them, and even the gods – yea Zeus himself – durst not oppose them. On occasion Persephone's name was included with this trio, who – like the Sirens – were seen as her attendants. Not surprisingly perhaps Persephone frequently disputed with Atropos the right of cutting the thread of life; in effect, both are goddesses of death.

The Fates are goddesses of birth as well as death, presiding over every birth and life; spinning the fate of every newborn, and prophesying their fate. They were frequently depicted as ministers of Hades, and seen seated at his feet. Elsewhere, in accordance with the Platonic schema, they are depicted on radiant thrones of their own, amidst the spheres of heaven, crowned and robed with starry vestments.

Clotho the youngest presided over the moment of birth, she held a scroll (the book of fate), or a distaff for spinning wool in her hand with which she wove the thread of life; her distaff was said to be a pole reaching from heaven to earth. Upon her head was a crown of seven stars and she wore a robe of variegated hue. Lachesis presided over the future following the birth of an individual, she appeared in a robe spotted with diverse stars and appeared with a staff pointing at the globe with many spindles around her, or either spinning thread or holding a spindle. Atropos, the eldest of the three, was inexorable and irresponsive to prayer, she appeared in a black veil bearing a pair of scales or sundial, or holding scissors to cut the thread of life, and many threads of different lengths according to the varied lives they represented.

The tradition recorded by Pausanias is interesting in its variation; according to him their names were different, the most ancient being Aphrodite Urania, presiding over the birth of men, the second Tyche and the third Ilithyia. Ilithyia was a goddess of childbirth, perhaps of Cretan descent, who was associated in this role with Hera and with Artemis; she could shorten or protract the pains of labour.

Tyche and Fortuna

Tyche is an important figure, the goddess of chance or fortune, corresponding to the Roman Fortuna. Her images in various parts of the Greek and Roman world are instructive; Boeotia's rustic traditionalism may give it more weight than some of the others, and here she was represented with the pole star over her head and holding Plutos god of riches in her arms. The supposed moral of this figure was that fortune is the source of riches and honours, but given the connection of the Fates with Persephone, a connection with the Mysteries is more likely. The Italian city of Antium was the foremost Latin shrine, receiving gifts and offerings from all parts of Italy. As a protector of cities like the goddesses Hecate and Cybele, Tyche bore the title Pherepolis, which has that meaning. In this role, which is also strongly linked to Hera, she often wore a 'mural crown'. Another title is significant, Acrea, which she bore from her Corinthian temple. This stood on a prominence, or in Greek *akron*. There was an important shrine of Hera on this site, in consequence of which she bears the same title.

Her Roman name is the derivation of the Part of Fortune in astrology. This part or lot equates with the lots drawn in the *Vision of Er*. In Hellenistic astrology there were seven principal 'parts' corresponding to the seven planets, these represented the presence of benign or malign influences inherited from the individual soul's descent through the spheres. The Part corresponding to the Moon, Pars Fortuna, is the most important of these. At dawn the Part of Fortune is automatically conjunct the Moon, Tyche is thus involved with the timing of many magical opera-

tions. Having mentioned astrological pessimism, a sidelight on the nature of Tyche highlights the fact that this was and is not the only perspective. In Hellenistic syncretism, Tyche was strongly associated with the goddess Isis. As Isis-Tyche or Isis-Fortuna, she did not represent implacable fate, but rather the positive use of foreknowledge. The association with lots in divination is extremely ancient, reflected in their use by the Sibyl of Cumæ, and at the ancient and prestigious temple of Fortuna at Praeneste (see Book Six).

Important symbols of Fortuna include a wheel, commemorated in the circled cross that forms her astrological symbol, and the rudder or prow of a ship. There were no less than six shrines of Fortuna in various forms in the city of Rome alone. Her forms were indeed varied, and included Female Fortune and Fortuna Virilis, also Equestrian, Evil, Peaceful and Virgin Fortunes and so on.

A festival of Venus was held among the Romans on April 1st, in which Italian widows and marriageable women assembled in shrines of Fortuna Virilis. A rite was celebrated in which incense was burned in her honour, and the women assembled stripped themselves naked. The apparent idea was to entreat the goddess to conceal any blemishes from the eyes of potential husbands and suitors. This is in itself a form of love magic; however, there is also a strange resemblance to Corinthian legend involving the aforementioned temple of Hera. This must await discussion in Book Five.

The Fates continued

The Latin Parcae correspond exactly with the Moirae, and again Parca was originally a goddess of birth, with sisters Nona and Decima presiding over different months of birth. Parcae came to be applied to them as a collective term corresponding to Moirae, with Nona and Decima presiding over the birth and allotment of fate, and a third, Morta, allotting the death. They were generally shown as three aged women wearing white robes and woolen chaplets in which narcissus flowers were interwoven. The Latin noun *fatum* represents the spoken decree of heaven.

Though inexorable and beyond propitiation, throughout Greek and Roman lands they received divine honours; both temples and offerings. Their offerings were identical to those allotted to the Erinyes, receiving a black sheep each year; the priests officiating at this sacrifice wore garlands of flowers. Hyginus credits the Fates with devising five of the letters of the Greek alphabet: alpha, beta, eta, tau and upsilon (Αα Ββ Ηη Ττ Υυ). Doubtless connected with this is the tradition terming them secretaries of heaven, and keepers of the archives of destiny.

Dramatis Personae concluded

The other major players in Plato's account are the Sirens and Judges. Most of what there is to say about the Sirens follows later, while an account of the Judges preceded this section. There are some points specific to the Sirens in this context that belong here. Primarily this involves their relation to the Music of the Spheres, a concept often thought to be Pythagorean, and here introduced by Plato. There is no doubt whatever that the Sirens in this role are essentially benign; they are not acting as hostile Archons, but are fulfilling a useful, even beautiful, role in the cosmogony. The Sirens are 'hand-maidens of Persephone', who is not named in Plato's account, though featuring prominently in those of Plutarch and others. Their appearance in this vision is therefore natural and builds upon ancient tradition. Regarding Plato's attribution of the Sirens to the planets, it is interesting to note that Agrippa replaces them with the nine Muses (*Occult Philosophy* III: XLVI) in relation to the seven traditional planets, the Sphere of Fixed Stars and the Primum Mobile.

Despite Plato's raising them to the heavens, the negative associations of the Sirens may have militated against them in a later age. Significant of the Orphic influences on Agrippa, examination of the *Three Books of Occult Philosophy* II: LVII attributes each of the Neoplatonist spheres to male female pairs: one a form or title of Dionysus and the other one of the Muses.

Orphic attributions

<i>Sphere</i>	<i>Bacchus</i>	<i>Muse</i>
Primum Mobile	Cribonius	Calliope
Fixed Stars	Picionius	Urania
Saturn	Amphietus	Polyhymnia
Jupiter	Sabazius	Terpsichore
Mars	Bassarius	Clio
Sun	Trietericus	Melpemene
Venus	Lysius	Erato
Mercury	Silenus	Euterpe
Moon	Lyeus	Thalia

Astrology, Fate and the Holy Guardian Angel

One way in which Plato's apocalypse differs from general belief concerns the genius or guardian angel attending each person's life. Plato makes the type of life and thus the genius a matter of pre-natal choice; whereas the usual idea was that the life allotted was determined by Fate. The genius referred to in the text is more or less identical with the angel of the nativity allotted each incarnating soul. Since this entity is essentially a similar conception to the Holy Guardian Angel of the *Abramelin* system it is worth giving an alternative method of invoking from Scot's compendious *Discoverie*. It is worth noting that the terms Familiar and Genius refer to and derive from one expression of the parhedros concept of Græco-Roman magic that evolved in the 2nd century AD.

*How to obtain the familiarity of the Genius or Good Angel,
and cause him to appear*

How to consult with Familiars or Genii: According to the former instructions in conjuring Spirits, we must proceed to consult with the Familiars or Genii; first, after the manner prescribed by Magicians, the Exorcist must inform himself of the name of his good Genius, which he may find in the rules of Travius and Philermus; as also, what Character and Pentacle, or Lamin, belongs to every Genius. After this is done, let him compose an earnest Prayer unto the said Genius, which he must repeat thrice every morning for seven days before the Invocation.

The Magician must also perfectly be informed to what Hierarchy or Order the Genius belongs, and how he is dignified in respect of his Superiors and Inferiors; for this form of Conjunction belongs not to the Infernal or Astral Kingdom, but to the Celestial Hierarchy; and therefore great gravity and sanctity is herein required, besides the due observation of all the other injunctions, until the time approach wherein he puts the Conjunction in execution.

When the day is come wherein the Magician would invoke his proper Genius, he must enter into a private closet, having a little Table and Silk Carpet, and two Waxen Candles lighted; as also a Crystal Stone shaped triangularly about the quantity of an Apple, which stone must be fixed upon a frame in the centre of the Table: And then proceeding with great devotion to Invocation, he must thrice repeat the former Prayer, concluding the same with Pater Noster, &c and a Missale de Spiritus Sancto.

The form of Consecration: Then he must begin to Consecrate the Candles, Carpet, Table and Crystal; sprinkling the same with his own blood, and saying:

I do by the power of the holy Names Aglaon, Eloi, Eloi, Sabbathon, Anepheraton, Jah, Agian, Jah, Jehovah, Emmanuel, Archon Archonton, Sadai, Sadai, Jeovaschah, &c. sanctify and consecrate these holy utensils

to the performance of this holy work, In the Name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, Amen.

The Prayer: Which done the Exorcist must say this following Prayer with his face towards the East, and kneeling with his back to the consecrated Table.

O thou blessed Phanael my Angel Guardian, vouchsafe to descend with thy holy Influence and presence into this spotless Crystal, that I may behold thy glory and enjoy thy society O thou who art higher than the fourth Heaven, and knowest the secrets of Elanel. Thou that ridest upon the wings of the wind, and art mighty and potent in thy celestial and super-lunary motion, do thou descend and be present I pray thee, if ever I have merited thy society, or if my actions and intentions be pure and sanctified before thee, bring thy external presence hither, and converse with thy submissive Pupil, by the tears of Saints and Songs of Angels, In the Name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, who are one God for ever and ever.

This prayer being first repeated towards the East, must be afterwards said towards all the four winds thrice. And next the 70. Psalm repeated out a Bible that hath been consecrated in like manner as the rest of the utensils; which ceremonies being seriously performed; the magician must arise from his knees, and sit before the Crystal bare-headed with the consecrated Bible in his hand, and the Waxen Candles newly lighted, waiting patiently and internally for the coming and appearance of the Genius.

Signs of the appearance: Now about a quarter of an hour before the Spirit come. There will appear great variety of apparitions and sights within the glass; as first a beaten road or tract, and travellers, men and women marching silently along; next there will Rivers, Wells, Mountains and Seas appear: after that a Shepherd upon a pleasant hill feeding a goodly flock of Sheep, and the Sun shining brightly at his going down; and lastly, innumerable shows of Birds and Beasts,

Monsters and strange appearances, noises, glances, and affrightments, which shows will all at last vanish at the appearance of the Genius.

The Appearance: And then the Genius will present it self amidst the Crystal, in the very same apparel and similitude that the person himself is in, giving instructions unto the Exorcist how to lead his life and rectify his doings.

But especially (which is the proper work of every Genius) he will touch his heart and open his senses and understanding, so that by this means, he may attain to the knowledge of every Art and Science, which before the opening of his Intellect was locked and kept secret from him.

After which the Genius will be familiar in the Stone at the Prayer of the Magician.

The concept here differs from that of Agrippa and some modern commentators – for example in taking the Good Angel and Genius as Celestial rather than Supercelestial. In my opinion the Good Angel of the Gnostics is an astrological force, and indeed has a House specifically allocated to it in the astrology used by the Gnostics and Hellenistic Greeks generally. This is not to say I consider either source or interpretation to be right or wrong, merely that they are finite opinions, whereas the experience (of Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel) is innate to us all as human beings, who are prone to interpreting things their own way either before or after the event.

In the past I've written that the HGA is everything we are not – that is, not the sum our natal chart, but outside our archonic limitations, completing us by complementing every element of the natal with it's opposite. That was my opinion then, based to a degree on the methods preferred, but also – and primarily – on experience. In the end it is best not to limit the immeasurable with opinions, or with terminology from either antique or more recent systems.

There are massive imponderables involved here: for example – aside from personal preference – in reality it is impossible to distinguish results

with *Abramelin* from results with *Liber Samekh*. We may be inclined to do so, merely because the interpretation or theology differs along with our personal preferences, but that is at the outset, later it becomes irrelevant. Our Angel will free us from reliance on either Crowley or Abramelin. It is a given – from my perspective – that while interpretations differ (as do theological preferences) results tend to resemble one another.

ARGONAUTICA:
BOOK I CONTINUED



THE ARGONAUTS' FIRST LANDFALL, on the Isle of Lemnos, can be recognised as the prototype of innumerable light hearted adventure stories to the present day. This island was associated with the Minyans, who were supposed to be descendants of the Argonauts and the Lemnian women. These women were said to have slain every male on the island, and, on seeing the Argonauts mistook them for Thracian raiders of whom they lived in fear. They then dressed in armour to repel them. After negotiations had established the Argonauts were not invaders the women invited them to stay and help repopulate the island.

In many respects this looks like and is light entertainment, but the episode has deeper aspects. Many elements of the *Argonautica* appear in Pindar's greatest poem, (*Pythian Ode IV 4*), a eulogy of an aristocrat from Cyrene in Libya, in which Medea foretells the founding of the city by his ancestors. Pindar was born 522 BCE and his poetry was certainly known and alluded to by Apollonius in his work. The Libyan prophecy is important in many respects. It appears in Apollonius' epic shorn of dynastic meaning while entirely embracing the mythic. It is in similar form that it is important here, providing an African context for our 'Greek' magic. While a romantic conceit, this mythic reference point can embody for us the historical links with Libya in the Mycenaean past, and possibly the Minoan.

After two years as very willing guests of the husbandless Lemnian women, the Argonauts were reminded of their mission by an irate, and seemingly celibate, Heracles. Thus the erotic idyll of the Argonauts was concluded and they set out once more upon the waves. Far in the future however, from the fruit of one union in Lemnos, Greeks would later honour their gods in Libya; dwelling in the divine city of Cyrene, and ruled by counsels of wisdom.

Of interest to this study is the character of the Argonauts' herald, who they despatch to announce themselves to the women of Lemnos. Aethalides was a son of Hermes, and shared many of his characteristics. His role of herald of the Argonauts is suited to the son of the herald of the gods, whose wand he bears. He also possesses an all encompassing memory. Even after the waters of underworld Acheron claim him, his memory, like that of Tiresias, is retained. He also had the power, after death, of living alternately in Hades and in the world of men, and thus knowing everything that takes place in both worlds. According to Pythagorean tradition, as recorded by the Neoplatonist Porphyry, Pythagoras was a later incarnation of this Argonaut. Considering the importance of the Argonauts legend in Orphic writings, this connection is undoubtedly significant.

Even if the interlude in the *Argonautica* is of comparatively little importance, Lemnos itself plays an integral part in many of the themes arising in this study; It is striking though that the island residence of the god Hephæstus, whose men like him were tireless metalworkers, is in the *Argonautica* portrayed as inhabited only by women armed with shield, helmet and spear. There are thus no men resembling Hephæstus, but numerous women resembling Athena. By contrast a fragment of a play by Aeschylus represents the Argonauts being greeted to the island by hard-drinking dwarflike Cabirs. It is as well to remember that Aeschylus and Apollonius were literary men, handling archaic themes with artistic license. However Aeschylus' fragment certainly reflects knowledge of the Cabiric rites on Lemnos; the characteristic finds on the island being large quantities of wine jars.

Hephaestus

Hephæstus was a god of fire, and the patron of all workers in metal. Like the metal working magicians known as Dactyls and Telchines, he was strongly associated with the magical arts. He was not originally Greek, and his name cannot be interpreted in the Greek language. Before he was worshipped in Greece his cult was established in Lycia, which was also closely associated with Apollo. The Mount Olympus of Lycia, which was his mountain, was described by Maximus of Tyre as having a gentle flame. This fire, like that of Mount Mosychlus of Lemnos where his cult was also well established, was formed by the igniting of volatile gases. The fiery mountain was his temple and the fire his visible image. It is a striking fact that Lycian Olympus belonged to him, rather than to Zeus as in Thessaly. In fact, while in Greece his shrines are few, in Asia Minor Hephæstus was more honoured than Zeus, having fifty known shrines. By contrast, as has been observed by various writers, Hephæstus appears to have been included in Olympian myth chiefly as a figure of fun. The semi-comic nature of much Classical myth concerning him also illustrates well the tremendous gap between Classical myth and actual religious practice. Given his non-Greek origins these myths are best read as reinterpretations of older traditions from Asia Minor and Thracian islands. The almost slapstick nature of his role in later Olympian myth contrasts sharply with his part in Homer's *Iliad*. When Achilles hurls himself across the battlefield in a berserk fury of destruction he resembles a typhoon rather than a human being. Human prowess is of no account against him, his progress is opposed successfully only by the god of the river Scamander, whose watery power engulfs the hero. The intervention of Hephæstus (*Iliad* 21: 342), who dries up the river Scamander with blasts of coruscating heat, eclipses the portrayal of the other Olympians in the work. In fact the representation of the daimonic power of Achilles, Scamander and Hephæstus is without parallel in the entire *Iliad*; the only comparison is the power of Poseidon in the *Odyssey*.

There are various accounts of his birth, of which the most accepted is that Hera conceived him alone, after Zeus had given birth to Athene

without female assistance. Zeus subsequently kicked him down from Mount Olympus in fury at his coming to the aid of Hera after Zeus had hung her up in chains. He took all day to fall to earth, and was caught in the arms of the inhabitants of Lemnos, receiving crippling injuries to his legs. Lemnos was inhabited at this time by a Thracian people known as the Sinti, also known as the Sapaiei. Of three Thracian clans living on the island one called itself the Hephæstion, and claimed descent from the god. The geographer Strabo, a native of Cappadocia writing in the time of the Emperors Augustus and Tiberius, specifically associates this tribe with the Chalybes, a caste of metallurgists whose importance will be delineated later.

The Homeric account of the birth of Hephæstus differs, making him the son of Zeus and Hera. Homer credits Hera with throwing him into the sea. Crippled by the fall he was rescued by the Oceanid Eurynome, and Thetis, a female sea deity who was the mother of Achilles. They provided him with an underwater metallurgy workshop, and taught him the mysterious arts of which he was the patron. Later he repaid Thetis by making the armour of her famous son.

As the god of skilled craftsmen many inventions and devices are credited to him. Among these, in Olympian myth, are the net in which he snared Aphrodite and Ares, and the throne with sprung manacles in which Hera was humiliated. Whatever the original significance or form of these stories, Hephæstus' aid was frequently invoked in binding spells, of which examples may be found in the *Magical Papyri* (see PGM VII. 379 and XII. 177, 417, 439). The tongs of Hephæstus were a recognised magical symbol which invoked the power of the god, much as a drawing or engraving of a caduceus invoked the power of Hermes. The tongs symbol occurs on so-called gnostic gems, and upon talismanic disks and nails from Rome and elsewhere; figures resembling an Aleph in early talismans may well originate in this symbol.

His coming to the aid of Hera when she was bound indicates that he had the power both to bind and to unbind, and could be invoked for assistance with either. An interesting myth is that he was the offspring not of Zeus and Hera, or another divine pair, but of the goddess Hera alone.

In Hesiod's *Theogony*, Hera, jealous of Zeus producing Athena unaided from his forehead, produced Hephæstus without male intervention. Also significant, and no invention of mythographers, is his connection with Lemnos. This island was home to an important cult of the Cabirs, who were seen as sons or companions of Hephæstus. It should be remembered that the Cyclops were also seen as companions and assistants of Hephæstus. His cult on the island, while much concerned with fire and metal work, also involved healing, particularly of snake bite.

In Anatolia smiths were revered figures during the Bronze and early Iron Age; they had a special connection with religio-political institutions, amounting to a special caste. The institution of kingship among the Hittites was connected to this caste in the late period. Hephæstus had precursors and links with various deities of Asia Minor and the Middle East. Prominent among these analogues was a Western Semitic god called Kothar; in the second millennium BCE he had his forge at Caphtor, which while once identified with Crete is more likely to have been Cilicia, Cyprus or both. As the location of the forge of Vulcan under his various names is frequently on an island, Cyprus is probably to be preferred. It is also worthy of recall that Cyprus was the pre-eminent home of the Asiatic goddess known as Aphrodite to the Greeks, who was the wife of Hephæstus.

Religious sanctuaries with close connections to smiths' workshops are also known on Cyprus; that at Kition dedicated to a blacksmith god and that at Enkomi to *the God on the Copper Ingot*, the partner of *the Goddess on a Copper Ingot*. During the Egyptian domination of Syria and Palestine Kothar was identified with the Egyptian god Ptah, and his forge was considered to be located at Memphis. The Phoenicians considered him to be the patron of magic; they also considered him to be the inventor of incantations, and cognate with this also the first poet. The significance of this last detail is important, and the term wordsmith still exists in the English language, demonstrating that poetry and incantation were seen as actual devices. It also points to the pre-Greek antiquity of the connection of poetry and magic, and their relation to the goetic fire cults.

Gods related to Hephaestus

Various facts follow the identification of Kothar with Ptah of Memphis. Herodotus uses the name Hephæstus as equivalent to the Egyptian god, when he tells us that dwarflike images of the Cabirs were found in the Temple of Ptah at Memphis. There are in fact many strong resemblances; the making of men and the practice of crafts employing fire among them. Not for the first time these interconnections give pause to wonder, were the Greek identifications of their gods with those of the Middle East really recognition of shared characteristics representing common origins? The aversion to supposed syncretism which stands in the way of such identifications has been useful in recognising the individuality of cultures. However, taken too far, as it frequently is, this aversion can blind us to real relationships. Relationships that do not involve biased theories of diffusion from a single supposed root culture, so much as mingling of several cultures whose knowledge of each other is not in the least controversial.

Thus an examination of the resemblances between Ptah and Hephæstus may reveal a good deal about the earlier form of the 'Greek' god. Ptah was, without doubt, the senior god of Memphis, among the oldest and holiest cities in Egypt. Although best known for the myth in which he makes humans from clay, he was the god of fire-based handicrafts in general, encompassing pottery and metallurgy. Interestingly, an Athenian temple of Hephaestus was located in the potter's quarter. There is a saying among the steppe peoples that the blacksmith, the potter and the shaman are brothers. As the supreme god of Memphis Ptah was the head of a trinity of deities. His female counterpart was the goddess Sekhmet, whose myth strongly resembles Greek myths concerning Cybele. Their son is best known to Western ears as Imhotep, a great builder and healer. The Sons or Followers of Ptah at Memphis were referred to as Cabiri by the Greek historian Herodotus. The metalworking Dactyls may also be compared with the *Shemsu Heru* or followers of Horus who, like them, were workers in metals, or blacksmiths. Many references are made to these followers of Horus in Egyptian funerary texts. Significantly, they assist the god in various activities undertaken on behalf of the dead. The parentage of the

Dioscuri also has parallels in Egyptian myth. The sky goddess Nuit couples with the earth god Seb or Geb, who is often represented as a goose. From this are produced five gods and goddesses. Among these are Set and Horus, who were anciently represented as twin gods like the Dioscuri.

Hephæstus also connects with a god of the Hatti, a non Indo-European people, who was subsequently adopted by the Hittites. This god, known as Hassamili or Hasammeli, was also a god of metal workers, and his mythic appearances are usually in an underworld context. The cult of Hephæstus bears witness to these ancient chthonic origins. Unlike the celestial gods, where a portion of the sacrifice was kept for feasting, the offerings of chthonic deities were frequently burnt entire, as were funeral offerings to the dead. This was the practice in rites dedicated to Hephæstus, the animals being a calf and a boar pig. Among the Romans his cult was also extremely ancient, and he bore the names of the Etruscan Mulciber, of Vulcan or Volcanus from the Lipari Islands near Sicily. He was also identified with a Sicilian volcano god named Adranus, as was Hephæstus, Adranus being a god of the pre-Greek population.

The case of Adranus is instructive on two levels; it is revealing concerning an archaic fire god prior to the Olympian recasting, and also illustrates the way important local gods were usurped by Zeus after the Greek expansion beginning in the 8th century BCE. Adranus gave his name to a town and river near Mount Etna. His shrine, which possessed a perpetual fire and a grove, was guarded by a thousand dogs, an animal that seems to have been sacred to him. These temple dogs were said to be very friendly to the inhabitants of Adranum, but ferocious to the impious. Adranus was the father of two male deities called the Palici or Palisci. These sons of Adranus were honoured with major rites by the Sicels. Near their shrine was a sulphurous pool from which were emitted two perpetual geysers. These were believed to have appeared at their birth. Like the waters of the Styx, great oaths were sworn upon these waters, perjury receiving swift supernatural punishment. Those who swore sincerely by the deities of the place retired unhurt. True to form with such chthonic deities, the Palici also possessed an oracle, consulted at times of dire need, the answers of which were the truest and least ambiguous. The antiquity of their rites is

witnessed by a tradition that they had originally been served by human sacrifices.

The tradition was altered by the Greeks, who made the Palici sons of Zeus, either by a nymph named Aetna, who may be assumed to be a goddess of the volcano, or Thalia daughter of Hephæstus. As usual with tales of Zeus and nymphs this goddess was pursued relentlessly by Hera. It was this that led Zeus to conceal her in the earth, from which her sons were born. Other accounts credit Hephæstus with fathering them upon Aetna, which is perhaps closer to the Sicilian original. It is worthy of note that Adranus has been identified by some with the Phoenician Adramelech, a Sun god who appears in later demonology, and with a supposedly Persian fire god named Atar or Adar. Regarding the latter some scholars have been too eager to trace Zoroastrian links where there are none, oblivious even to the plainly more ancient human and horse sacrifice practiced by Magian priests during the Persian Wars. In fact the Persian Yazata whose original name was Atar predated Zoroastrianism and seems not to have been of Indo-Iranian origin.

Prior to his absorption in Zoroastrianism, Atar was known as Agni in Vedic religion. His origins are very vague, although in the Vedas he is the son of Dyaus (the sky god from whence comes our Zeus) and the earth goddess Prithivi. He was the god of the forge, and the fire of purification and sacrifice. He also had a marked underworld role, guiding the genii of the cremated dead to the Underworld. Agni, and related fire deities in Mesopotamian religion such as the Sumerian Gibil, was invoked at the beginning of rites, so the flame would transmit prayer to the other gods. In a striking but incomplete parallel to the Promethean myth, Atar also chained a demonic Asura to a rock. Against these Indo-European connections there are strong links with Semitic deities; including a son of Asherah and El from Ugarit, and the god of war and the planet Venus who is brother of Astaroth. This particular identification casts an important light on the motif of Hephæstus falling from heaven.

All these identifications reveal Hephæstus as a much older chthonic fire god of non-Greek origin. His Italian counterpart, Vulcan, predates the importation of Classical Olympian themes. Among the most ancient rites

in Italy concerned the variously named god of fire and metalwork, as shall be seen when considering the Salian priests. These rites resembled those of the Curetes and undoubtedly derive from a related tradition. Vulcan's feast day was August 23rd and his place in the liturgical calendar was established in remote antiquity. An ancient Italian tradition is recorded by Livy, Plutarch and other Classical writers, which points to archaic links between a cultus resembling that of Dionysus and that of the fire god. According to this tradition Romulus was dismembered by the Senators, much as Dionysus was by the Titans. Although Livy makes this slaying take place at the Senate, the location of the ritualistic slaying according to Plutarch was the temple of Vulcan. The slayers – who would originally have been a religious rather than political group – concealed their crime, carrying away the pieces beneath their robes, and according to another source, burying them in the earth. While it cannot be shown that the victim was eaten raw after being torn apart, it is perhaps a permissible assumption. In any case there is plainly a sacrificial rite lurking beneath the superimposed political context. Such archaic traditions as these appear to have formed the background for the rites of the Salii, which continued, although scarce understood, into the days of the Emperors.

The Salii

According to Classical tradition the rites of Cybele did not enter Rome until the Punic Wars; even then no Roman citizens could be her priests until the time of Claudius. However a college of priests known as Salii existed in Rome from the earliest times, whose activities are strongly reminiscent of the Curetes. There were two colleges of Salii, of which the oldest will be examined here. The Salii were priests of Mamers, an archaic form of Mars god of war, who had a very different character to the Ares of the Classical Greeks. Their name appears to come from words meaning leaping and dancing which were required features of their rites. According to tradition they were instituted by King Numa, whose name is synonymous with archaic rites and magical practices, in 790 BCE. Their duty

was to take care of sacred shields known as Ancyli. In his reign a single original Ancyli was said to have fallen from heaven. The nymph Egeria predicted that this shield would make the nation possessing it dominant over all peoples of the world. Since the future glory and power of Rome was connected with this shield, Numa had eleven duplicates made. This was, according to tradition, performed by an armourer named Mamurius Veturius. This armourer appears to be synonymous with an ancient form of Mars, known in other parts of Italy, named Mamers. The Ancyli were kept in the temple of Mars, and the Salii were instituted to take care of them. It was the custom, on the occasion of declarations of war, for the Salii to furiously shake these shields, summoning Mars to the aid of Roman arms. They were also responsible for rites involving a ritual dance, which took a significant form, to be examined shortly.

These priests were twelve in number; three of these were officers over the remaining nine. The officers were called Praesul, Vates and Magister, and it is worth examining these titles. *Praesul* means dancer, while similar words involve leading or going first. *Vates* signifies a prophet, also a poet or bard; while *Magister* indicates the chief or director. Some details of their duties are known, which with the titles themselves provide sufficient information to deduce the following. The Praesul was in charge of the dancers; the Vates was a soothsayer who interpreted omens attending their rites, probably he also both performed and led invocations; and the Magister directed the rites as leader of the college.

All of the Salii were young men – both of whose parents had to be alive – from patrician families. The office was highly prestigious, and the home of the college was on the Palatine Hill. The usual costume of the Salii was a short scarlet tunic of which only the edges were seen, a bronze breastplate concealing the rest; a large purple coloured belt was worn about the waist, fastened with brass buckles; and a scarlet cloak. On their heads were worn round caps with spikes, such a cap being known as an apex. In the right hand was carried a rod, or on occasion a spear, while swords were also worn. In the left was a shield, roughly oval in shape, the edges drawn inwards at half its length so it resembled a 'figure of eight' similar to ancient Mycenaean shields. Some descriptions describe them as dancing

in full armour. This suggests that greaves, plate armour for the shins, were also worn; also that the caps, certainly of a martial type, were helmets.

Their rites were begun with a sacrifice on the Palatine Hill, from which the Vates would have drawn omens. Afterwards they went in procession in the streets, dancing in measured motions. At some points they would dance singularly, at others all together, while musical instruments were played before them. They bore their bodies in various positions, and struck their shields with the rods. A feature of this dance was an extremely vigorous triple stamp; so vigorous indeed that it was wondered if bridges could withstand it. They performed an ancient song in honour of Jupiter and Ceres, also to Janus who was named as god of gods. They sang also in honour of Mamurius Veturius. In this they were accompanied by a chorus of similarly attired virgins, known as *Saliaë*.

The rite of the *Salii* commenced on the first of March, at one time the first month of the year, which takes its name from Mars. The dance, involving leaping in the air, was connected with fertility as well as war. The height of such dances, which are widely known, is intended to stimulate the growth of corn. The corn goddess Ceres (Greek Demeter) was among those chiefly invoked, and in addition the first of March was also the feast day of Juno Lucina, goddess of childbirth. These rites continued for twenty-four successive days, each night stopping at a particular 'mansion' where the shields were kept. There were also halts during the day at various temples and altars. The costume, songs and other aspects of the celebration were extremely archaic and hardly understood in late Republican times, let alone the Imperial period. On the fourth of March there was a celebration, involving a chariot race, known as *Mamuralia*; the festival of *Mamers*. On this day a skin, presumably stretched over a frame, was beaten with staves. This was said to be specifically to imitate the sound of the armourers hammering.

The religious festivals of this period appear to have been partially incorporated into the later Christian festival of Easter. The last nine days of the celebration were attended by a fast, which was broken on the twenty-fifth for the joyful festival known as *Hilaria*. This day was known as the *Feriae Marti*, and it has frequently been suggested that it is the origin of

the celebration known today as Mardi Gras. The religious feasts and entertainments organised by the Salii were proverbially rich and sumptuous. These facts are well enough known, though the resemblance of the Salii to the Curetes has been little remarked upon. This being so it is interesting to note that March 24th, the last day of fasting before the Hilaria, was an extremely significant date in the cult of Cybele. Known as the Day of Blood, it was typically upon this day that the ritual self-mutilation of Cybele's priests, the Galli, took place.

The resemblance of the Salii to the Curetes is striking, and was recognised by the ancients. In Thomas Taylor's translation of the *Hymns of Orpheus*, that to the Curetes begins with the line: *Brass-beating Salians, ministers of Mars*. There were also nine junior Salii, equal in number to the Curetes. In addition the sacred shield is said to have fallen from heaven. This resembles the descent of Cybele's sacred stone, and the descent of the god Hephæstus, to the earth. The connection with metals of these two, and the armourer god Mamers, can hardly be coincidental. This resemblance is explicable if the Salii originated with a migration from Asia Minor prior to the rise of Rome and the adoption of Olympian Hellenic forms.

It is interesting also to consider the complexity of the god Mamers. He combines the functions of fertility, working iron, and of war; while the name Mars itself is derived from roots indicating boundaries, as survive in our word *margin*. He was also a protector of flocks, as such gods usually are. Such varied functions suggest strongly that he is akin to the Thracian Hero; far older than the separation of these functions among separate deities.

Samothrace and Cyzicus

At the suggestion of Orpheus, after their stay on Lemnos the crew travel to Samothrace. Here they receive initiation and learn something of the secret rites. This allows them to sail on with greater confidence, partly no doubt because the Cabirs are protectors of those travelling the seas. A more subtle implication is that their knowledge of the rituals is an asset in the performance of many key tasks that face them. Older references show that the Samothracian episode is not an innovation on the part of this author. There are major indications that Apollonius was an initiate of the Mysteries, including those of Samothrace and Crete. It is important to bear in mind that the Mysteries in Crete did not involve secrecy. There are strong indications that this permitted Apollonius and other writers to use substitute terms in alluding to other Mysteries. Some of the apparent confusion or syncretism in the literary sources, whereby different Mysteries appear to be conflated, likely derives from this circumstance. Despite the apparent reticence Apollonius exhibits regarding the Mysteries of Samothrace, the subtext of his epic would have been entirely comprehensible to initiates among his audience. Such significant details of the subtext emerge in the very next episode of the adventure, which accordingly requires an extended commentary.

After Samothrace, the Argonauts come to the Thracian island of Cyzicus on the coast of Mysia. Here they are warmly received by the prince, also named Cyzicus. On leaving they are obliged to return by night due to a storm. They do not recognise it as the place they recently left, nor are they recognised, they are immediately attacked in an apparent case of mistaken identity. They do battle with their former hosts, killing the prince and many of his attendants. At dawn the tragedy is revealed and they and the islanders spend three days wailing and tearing out their hair in grief. The horror is added to when the slain prince's virgin bride-to-be hangs herself in grief.

The ritual aspects of this episode so far should be apparent enough. However it is worthwhile pointing out the changes in roles the Argonauts act out here. They have been friends of the prince, then his enemies, and

then his mourners. That this part of the epic represents a sacred drama is an unavoidable conclusion. The participants in such a rite would have been goetes, likely including mourners from Mysia.

Bad weather then kept them at Cyzicus for twelve days. Keeping watch by night Mopsus the soothsayer saw a bird called a halcyon over Jason's sleeping head, singing sweetly. The bird then flew to the figurehead of the Argo and perched upon it. Mopsus – who understood the art of augury by birds – then woke Jason, who was wrapped in fleeces on the shore like Pythagoras at his Cretan initiation. He predicted a change in weather after a rite in honour of Rhea (the Cretan equivalent of Phrygian Cybele). Oxen were then driven up mount Dindymum for sacrifice. From there Apollonius adds that Thrace appeared so close it seemed they could touch it, despite the fact the mountain is described as wooded. An ancient vine was cut down to form an image of the goddess (probably a form of the Palladium), this work was performed by Argus who had shaped the prow of the Argo. This image they set up on a rocky eminence, shaded by mighty oaks. An altar of stones was then formed nearby. Crowned with oak wreaths they then began the sacrificial rites. Cybele (in the text called by the Cretan name Rhea, but also *Dindymian Mother, most worshipful, who dwells in Phrygia*) was then invoked, but not alone. Two other figures are mentioned, semi-disguised by epithets: *and with her, Titias and Cyllenos. For these two are singled out as dispensers of doom and assessors to the Idaean Mother from the many Idaean Dactyls of Crete. They were borne in the Dictaeon cave by the Nymph Anchiale as she clutched the earth of Oaxos with both her hands.*

Oaxos is the name of a Cretan town, where according to tradition the founder of Cyrene in Libya was born. Oaxes is a river of Crete, apparently named after a son of Apollo and Anchiale.

Titias, or Tityos, is the name of one of the giants born to Gaia. Born underground, he sprang from the earth at birth. A figure with a similar name also appears as an incidental character in the legends of Heracles deeds in the region of Mysia. There are several variants of his myth, from which it appears he was originally a chthonian oracular hero, similar or identical to Python of Delphi. Imprisoned in Tartarus, his body covered

nine acres, and two vultures or serpents perpetually consumed his liver, which renewed itself according to the moons phases. In this he resembles Prometheus, who was thus punished for giving men the gift of fire. The connections with the chthonic Rhea and with Prometheus are apt for a Dactyl. A further discussion of Tityos follows this analysis of events on the island Cyzicos.

Cyllenos is likely a form of Cyllenius, a title of Hermes indiscriminately applied to anything which he invented or presided over. The image of Hermes on Mount Cyllene was archaic, and resembled the ithyphallic images of the Cabirs at Samothrace. The practice of erecting phallic *herms* in honour of Hermes at crossroads was inherited by the Greeks from the Pelasgians. From this it appears that Anchiale is a title of the ancient and near genderless mother-goddess, while Titias and Cyllenos represent a masculine pair associated with her. Together they form a trinity; from this trinity lesser Cabirs or Dactyls are produced (the fingers of Anchiale in the earth produce the ten Dactyls).

Immediately after the passage naming them there is mention of a substantial fire, but there has been no apparent mention of its being lit. Titias and Cyllenos may represent two Cabirs equivalent to the Dioscuri, associated with ritual fire, which is a Mystery in itself. It might be argued that Castor and Pollux were among the Argonauts and their role in lighting the fire may just as easily have been quietly omitted, unconnected to the Dactyls. However, there is nothing to prevent apparent duplication of roles in the accumulative development of epic poetry. More to the point perhaps, Castor and Pollux may well have lit the fire. Then, in doing so the two Dactyls are thereby represented and invoked by two twins among the Argonauts. This, as will appear later, is a feature of important related cult practices.

Jason continued the rite, pouring libations on the blazing sacrifice, and beseeching the goddess to send the storms elsewhere. Orpheus meanwhile commanded the young men to move around the fire, dressed in full armour, in a high-stepping dance. They beat their shields with their swords to drown out the cries of mourning for the slain prince. Apollonius tells us that this is why the Phrygians honour Cybele with tambourine and drum

to *this day*; although in reality the tympanum was a Greek innovation in her cult. In this way Jason, and indeed Orpheus, is made responsible for the foundation of the rites of the goddess at Cyzicus and in Phrygia.

The invocation of the goddess is described as flawless, and is answered by abundant signs. The trees miraculously fruited, the bare earth sprouted with tender grass, animals left their lairs and appeared to them with wagging tails. More than this, the previously waterless mountain suddenly produced a gushing spring. That this quenched more than thirst is implicit in the blood guilt Jason and his companions have brought upon themselves by the slaying of their hosts. The subtext here implies that these waters purified Jason and his companions of their former misdeeds. Just as the earth is renovated by this rite, whose seasonal implications are apparent in the signs, so a similar renovation applies to the souls of the participants.

On the subject of participants, from the point where Mopsus sees the bird of good omen, the only other Argonauts mentioned by name are Jason, Argus and Orpheus, while Castor and Pollux may or may not be assumed to be present in a secret capacity. All of these have distinct roles, which can be assumed to exclude them from the armoured dance. The dancing youths are not given names, and what they represent here is not themselves but mythic and ritual figures. Here, as elsewhere, they represent multiple Curetes and Corybantes.

The precise timing of the ritual is not entirely clear from Apollonius' account. It is safe to say that the preparations for the ritual take place by day. Equally it appears that the feast went on through the night. The interlude takes place on Bear Mountain and *A Night on Bear Mountain* is the name of a powerful piece of music concerned with magical themes. Herodotus refers to the same rites, and makes clear that they took place at night. He also refers to the wearing of twin images by the participants, which likely represent Tityos and Cyllenos, and resembles cults of the Dioscuri elsewhere. The rites of the Argonauts are concluded by a feast on the mountain in honour of the goddess, in whose praise they also sing. At dawn – almost needless to say – the strong winds have abated and they are able to depart.

Tityos

And in Homer, in his Necromancy, Odysseus makes this relation to Alcinous, of Tityos the dear darling of the earth, we saw the body stretch'd nine furlongs forth and on each side of whom a vulture great Gnawing his bowel...

Cornelius Agrippa, *Occult Philosophy* Book 3, ch xli

The mythology of Tityos, and his original nature and identity, like that of other archaic figures, has to be recovered from fragments in the myths of others. It includes variants and occasional contradictions, as is to be expected from its age. According to Homer and others *Tityos son of Earth* was a giant and a son of Gaia; the great goddess Earth. Traditionally this goddess, whom the Romans called Terra or Tellus, gave her oracle at Delphi to Themis who in turn gave it to Apollo. She is essentially indistinguishable from Rhea and Cybele. In this form of the myth Tityos emerged from the earth at birth as a huge giant. This origin connects him with the tutelary deity of the oracle prior to its 'seizure' by Apollo. The evidence suggests that he was an oracular hero, of the type associated with such oracles; a deified king and son of the goddess, on the Thracian model, in his chthonic role.

Other accounts of his parentage make Tityos the son of Zeus and Elara, daughter of Orchomenus the king and ancestor of the Minyans. Zeus, fearing the jealousy of Hera, concealed Elara underground during her pregnancy. He drew her from the earth for the birth, but the giant was so enormous that she died. Other than connecting Tityos to an ancestor of the Argonauts this later variant has little value. It appears to be an adaptation, of the tradition previously described, to an Olympian form.

Although offering differing versions of his origins, the Classical forms agree that when Leto produced Apollo and Artemis to Zeus, jealous Hera unleashed Tityos. These differing traditions then give two versions of what followed. In one tradition Tityos brought Leto to face Hera's wrath, for which Zeus hurled him into Tartarus. According to the other he at-

tempted to ravish Leto on her way from Panopeus to Pytho. In this latter version, shortly after Apollo's seizing the Delphic Oracle, Tityos attempted to ravish Leto. Then Apollo, Artemis or both – called by Leto – slew Tityos with arrows; or as others say, Zeus struck him with a thunderbolt.

He was then cast into Tartarus, where his body covered an expanse described by some as nine acres. Here a vulture, two vultures or serpents perpetually consumed his liver, which renewed itself according to the moons phases. In this he resembles Prometheus, who was thus punished for giving men the gift of fire. The Dactyls, among whom Tityos appears to be one of the principals, are also associated with the origins of fire among mortals.

There is another tradition concerning him, which, at first glance, contains peculiar contradictions. Tityos – supposedly a villain and victim in the Olympian scheme of things – had a temple and altar on the island of Euboea. At Euboea, according to Homer, the *son of Earth* was also visited by Rhadamanthus, whether or not this was at the temple the poet does not say. Why would Rhadamanthus visit Tityos, at his temple or otherwise? To understand this it is necessary to examine the parentage of Rhadamanthus, who was a son of Europa. The legends of Europa are in themselves complex, with no less than five versions. Close examination shows close connections between the first and fifth. There is Europa the daughter of Tityos, who is the mother of Euphemus the Argonaut by Poseidon. Then there is Europa the daughter of Agenor/Phoenix who was carried off by Zeus, and became mother of Rhadamanthus, Minos and Sarpedon. The most likely explanation of the journey of Rhadamanthus to the tomb of Tityos is that he was visiting the shrine of his grandfather, and not, as has been anachronistically suggested, travelling in his capacity of Infernal Judge while still alive.

Tityos is thus the grandfather of two judges in the underworld, and of an Argonaut. So far from Tityos being a criminal, it appears that Zeus is guilty of abducting his daughter, who is also the mother of two of three Infernal Judges! The evidence suggests that Tityos was originally an important chthonic deity, rather than a notable captive of Hades. On a light-

er note, considering these facts, a visit to Hades by Zeus would not be received kindly.

Summarising this material some aspects of the nature of Tityos converge to link him strongly with themes in this study. He is an earth born giant, associated with the goddess to whom the Delphic oracle was originally dedicated. As a giant it would be appropriate to represent Tityos – like Aegaeon – with legs formed from enormous snakes. When invoked at their tombs heroes also frequently took ophidian form, the snake having powerfully chthonic significance throughout Greek religion. As seen with Aegaeon giants could be identified – like heroes – with ancient burial mounds. Hero cults also attached to ancient Mycenaean tombs, and there was a tomb of Tityos on the island of Euboea. Tityos may also be a variant form of the monstrous Python, who Apollo is said to have slain at Delphi. Gathering these threads together Tityos has the appearance of an oracular hero.

Mysia

The next landfall of the Argonauts was in the land of the Mysians, renowned as funeral mourners. It is of course from the Greek term for such mourners – goes – that Goetia takes its name. Apollonius mentions several landmarks which lend the area and the episode an atmospheric setting and underline the importance of what follows. That he does so quite deliberately, as a so-called Orphic writer and an educated Hellene interested in Mystery religions and chthonic cults, is important to recognise. Significant events are to take place here, and it is necessary to consider the location very carefully in order for us to appreciate them fully.

Apollonius tells us first that it is near the mouth of the River Rhyndacus and the great burial mound of Aegaeon, close to Phrygia. The Rhyndacus was a major river of Asia Minor, and has its source on Mount Dindymus, sacred to Cybele like that from which the Argonauts had lately departed. As such it undoubtedly was connected with a river god, while its source on the sacred mountain would have endowed it with considerable importance. Ancient inscriptions in the area point to religious and cultural

differences, as well as affinities, with the neighbouring Phrygians. Among these are dedications to Hecate and her near equivalent Artemis. The Artemis in question bears torches in token of her underworld role. Among these is Artemis Thermaea, a healing deity of a hot and sulphurous spring. Interesting too is the local syncretism of Asclepius, a healer god and son of Apollo, with Sabazius, a form of Dionysus as son of Cybele. This is a natural association considering the snake symbolism both share, but also tells us that Sabazius was not simply an orgiastic deity but a healer. Both Hecate and Sabazius are obviously closely connected with the Dionysian and Goetic themes explored here. It is therefore not surprising to find them prominent in Mysian cults.

Another mythic figure of the region is a legendary Phrygian king named Manes, also known as Mēn. In the garbled Greek form he becomes, like Attis, an entirely divine figure, being the son of Zeus and the Earth goddess. Although called Gaia by the Greeks his mother was really Cybele, and Mēn Tyrannus was a title of Attis even in her Roman cult. Although probably a separate figure Mēn was frequently combined with Attis. He had lunar and underworld roles and was immensely popular throughout rural Asia Minor. He presided over the growth of plants and productivity of animals, as well as over rural burial grounds. Judging from the local inscriptions Mēn became associated with a form of Apollo, and formed a male female pair with Hecate. One of his sons was named Acmon, which is a name of one of the Dactyls, although other connections also attach. Although Acmon is generally translated as anvil it is widely accepted that it anciently meant thunderbolt; judging from various associations this may originally have been a meteoric stone.

The burial mound of Aegaeon is another significant feature. Aegaeon is the third of the Giants, the others being Gyges or Gyes and Cottus. They were sons of Uranus and Gaea, known as the Uranids. They are described as huge monsters with a hundred arms and fifty heads, with serpents rather than legs. Aegaeon is also known as Briareus, which Homer explains by the device of making the first his name among men and the latter that among gods. The oldest tradition credits the Uranids with assisting the gods in the war against the Titans, who they subsequently guarded

in Tartarus. This naturally makes Aegaeon a resident of the underworld. Later accounts confuse him with the giants who made war upon Olympus, and still others describe him as a marine deity of the Aegean Sea.

There are two incidents to be examined in detail in this interlude in Mysia, for which the scene is now abundantly set. I shall let Apollonius describe the events that immediately followed their landing:

The Mysians, inhabitants of that land, hospitably welcomed them, giving them in their need provisions and sheep and abundant wine. Hereupon some brought dried wood, others from the meadows leaves for beds which they gathered in abundance for strewing, whilst others were twirling fire-sticks to get fire; others again were mixing wine in the bowl and making ready the feast that would follow the sacrifice after nightfall to Apollo Ecbasius.

This is apparently a mundane enough scene; the Argonauts are camped near to a river in Mysia, performing various tasks. However they have come here from a sacred mountain, also a ritual site, where as noted no reference to fire-making appears in Apollonius' text. Here the Argonauts are portrayed preparing for a ritual, which strangely enough is not described in the story as it unfolds. There appears to be a thread interconnecting these two incidents. It is interesting to ponder whether Apollonius, when he omitted the fire lighting secret in one episode and the ritual in the other, was making an in joke understood by initiates of the Mysteries.

In a description of ritual fire making elsewhere in this study it is mentioned that in some contexts at least it takes place apart from the other participants. Certainly this could be the case here, for many of the Argonauts are away from the camp collecting wood and bedding. It is not made clear either why more than one person might be required to twirl the fire sticks. It is interesting too that the proposed sacrifice, whether it takes place or not, is to be made to Apollo 'of safe landings' during the hours of the night. The explanation for the nocturnal celebration may lay in the Mysian cults wherein Apollo was a conventionalised form of

Mên, paired with Hecate. As an underworld god Mên had affinities with Nergal, from whom Apollo was ultimately derived.

While the fire was being lit many of the Argonauts went away from the camp, ostensibly on various duties; these included Hercules in search of timber for a broken oar. A beautiful youth named Hylas, brought on the expedition by Heracles, went into the woods in search of water. Meanwhile the nymphs of the place were preparing for a night dance in honour of Artemis. One of them, about to emerge from a spring, saw Hylas approaching. Smitten by his beauty she drew him into the water to be her lover. Later Heracles, convinced the Mysians knew something of his beloved's disappearance, forced them to search for the youth.

Also mentioned by Apollonius in the locale is Mount Arganthon, which, Propertius tells us, stood above the pool *beloved by Thynian nymphs*. Mount Arganthon was on the borders of Bithynia and Mysia. A nymph named Arganthonne mourned Rhesus, a Thracian hero and the 'god' of a Bithynian river. Arganthonne would appear to be a mountain goddess of the Cybele type, and Rhesus her hero lover the ancestor of a local Thracian dynasty. The pair may have resembled Cybele and Mên.

Both these stories were apparently put forward to explain the annual search by Mysian priests for the lover of Cybele. Mysians in Boeotia were still practicing this rite in Roman times. The fame of the dirge singers of Mysia in antiquity earned them a mention in *The Persians* of Aeschylus, the famous Mysian cry which he mentions is the *calling for Hylas*. The conjuration of the dead or the rites of a hero cult, which appear together in the drama of Aeschylus, plainly benefited from Mysian involvement.

After these events Heracles, distraught by his loss, went searching for Hylas and was separated from the crew. Another crew member, Polyphemus, who shares this name with a Cyclops in Homer's *Odyssey*, could also not be found. Unable to find them Jason departed without them, and an argument broke out concerning his motives in abandoning Heracles. This was resolved by the appearance of a prophetic sea-god, who told them of Heracles' destiny. This impressive scene describes also the destiny of Polyphemus, in the *vast land of the Chalybes*. It is worth noting that these events occur in Mysia, in the North West of Asia Minor,

but subsequent mention of the Chalybes occurs far to the East. The plain inference is that the entire territory is considered as in some sense associated with them. As will be seen in the Book Four, the Chalybes were ancient inhabitants of the territory, and important figures in the history of goetia. Their importance is such that it is necessary to leave for a while the *Voyage of the Argo*.

THE FOUNDERS OF THE MYSTERIES



THE OLDEST LITERARY REFERENCE to the goen is in the *Phoronis* of Hellanicus of Lesbos (born 490 BCE) in describing the Dactyls of Mount Ida. The literal meaning of the word *dactyls* is fingers, and as a title for a group translates as Finger men. The Dactyls were magicians (goen) who were the first blacksmiths, the discoverers of bronze and iron, and the working of them with fire. The Dactyls activities were described in a more precise manner by Ephoros (who it is important to note was born in Aeolian Cumæ, about 352 BCE). According to him they were: *wizards (goeten) who practised charms and initiatory rites and Mysteries, and in the course of a sojourn in Samothrace they amazed the natives of that island not a little by their skill in such matters. And it was at this time that Orpheus, who was endowed with an exceptional gift of poetry and song, also became a pupil of theirs, and he was subsequently the first to introduce initiatory rites and Mysteries to the Greeks.*

These references associate the goen with the foundation and celebration of the ancient Mystery cults. The date of these literary references is comparatively late, in the Classical period, but concern far older traditions. The tradition concerning the Dactyls has been thoroughly investigated by modern methods, and linked to historical events and persons. These methods establish a date at least a thousand years earlier than the surviving literary references. The studies also show that the literary connection of the term *goen* with the Dactyls is both accurate and highly informative. An examination of the Dactyls, and closely related figures, forms the core of this chapter. The fruits of modern research are discussed alongside the mythical and literary references. In the process are revealed the originators of the ancient Mystery religions, and of the goetic tradition within Western magic.

In Greek and Roman sources the Dactyls were strongly associated with the goddess Cybele, strongly identified with the Cretan deity Rhea, of whose retinue they formed an important part. The Dactyls, whose origin is in Phrygia, were also associated with Mystery cults on the island of Crete and elsewhere. The intimate relationship between the Cretan and Phrygian cults is demonstrated by the existence of a sacred Mount Ida in both locations, among other connections. However, despite the wide fame of Crete, achieved partly by its prominent place in the myth and cult of Zeus, the original Ida, and the Dactyls home, was in Phrygia. The Cretans nevertheless claimed the Idaean Dactyls for their Mount Ida. The cult as it developed there was extremely influential on the Classical form of Greek religion. This could hardly have failed to be the case, since it involved the birth of Zeus, the greatest god of Olympian religion. Yet, there is little evidence of mining and smelting in Crete, as opposed to the importing of copper from Cyprus &c. The best ancient authorities, and the extensive modern evidence, indicate decisively that the Dactyls original association was with Mount Ida in Asia Minor. This is important as it detaches the origins of the Dactyls from the later development of the cult of Zeus. Thus it is easier to focus on, and understand, their earlier connection with the Mother of the Gods.

Near Mount Ida were the town and mountain named Gargarus. This region was famous for its fertility and named for an ancient king called Gargoris. He was credited with discovering honey and bee keeping. He wished to destroy his daughter's son – the fruit of an illicit union – but after repeated failed attempts made him his heir. There was also an Italian town named Gargarum, after a son of Jupiter named Gargarus.

Zinc appears to have been worked near Andera, a Phrygian town, where were found stones convertible to iron by fire. Cybele was worshipped there, and in consequence bore the title Anderina.

The city of Magnesia beside Mount Sipylus, near Smyrna, possessed a great shrine of Cybele. Of three cities called by this name, this Magnesia was a Lydian town on the river Meander. Here too the magnet is said to have been discovered, and it is from nearby Magnesia that it derived its name. An interesting alternative tradition credits the discovery to a

shepherd of Mount Ida, named Magnes. While walking over a mine he was bound to the earth by the iron nails in his shoes. It was also said that he was a slave of Medea, who changed him into a magnet. It had formerly been called Ceraunius, the name of a child of Niobe killed by Apollo. Niobe incidentally was also said to be the mother of Pelasgus, an ancestor figure from whom the Pelasgians took their name. Called by the Romans Magnesia ad Sipylum, its temple of Cybele was famous and possessed of important privileges. Sipylus is a metal bearing mountain, which was said to have produced brass. In the time of the Romans medals in honour of Vulcan were struck here, and it appears to have been a great centre of metal working and the manufacture of weapons and armour. Nearby there was also an ancient statue on Mount Coddinus. This statue was associated with Cybele. The Greeks however called it Niobe and attributed it to Broteus, the son of Tantalus. In fact the carving was of Hittite origin, but it is important to note that Tantalus was the father of Pelops, whose shoulder had been eaten by another goddess of fertility associated with the Mystery cults, namely Demeter. The likelihood of Chalybes, or Dactyls, being present here is extremely strong.

Ephesus amongst its mountains was a major centre of the worship of Cybele from at least the tenth century BCE. The North Syrian cult of Astarte, Artemis to the Greeks, Diana to the Romans, was built upon hers in later times, but the ecstatic festival known as the Ephesia was still celebrated in her honour in the Roman period. The priests of Cybele appear to have originally been ethnically distinct from the main population, being probably supplied by native Chalybes. The waning of her cult might represent the shrinking of the hill tribes. Even so, the high priests of Artemis at Ephesus were also eunuchs (*Megabyzi* or *Megalobyzi*). This may indicate either their original connection with the more ancient priesthood of Cybele, or the reverse, the influence of other cults upon that of Cybele. In either case the magical traditions so strongly associated with the city are rooted in the lore of the Dactyls.

Cybele

The origin of the cult of Cybele, as known in the Classical period, was with the Phrygians who in the 13th century invaded Asia Minor from Thrace. Both the Greeks and the Romans were aware of these oriental origins, which rendered it controversial despite its widespread acceptance which was earlier and more extensive than other imported cults. While Phrygian and ultimately Thracian in origin, the cult, and the goddess around which it centred, absorbed elements from the religions and iconography of the Hittite, Neo-Hittite and Urartian cultures. However, the myth and cult of Cybele contained highly primitive elements, which putting all ancient and modern Occidental prejudice aside, nevertheless distinguished her worship from all others. Here we shall review and partially correct the Greek account of her nature. This is necessary to understand the important place she occupied in ecstatic religion in that sphere. The nature of the Great Goddess of Thracian religion, where Cybele originated, will be examined in the fifth book. Curiously, Lynn Roller, author of the most up to date examination of the Phrygian goddess currently available, omitted this entirely from her study. Her example cannot be followed here, as the Thracian background underlines the importance of Cybele in relation to our theme. I am nevertheless indebted to her for clearly differentiating the Græco-Roman and Phrygian forms of the goddess.

On the most basic level her distinguishing features include a strong association with mountains, and with predators. These included lions or leopards, which influenced her Greek and Roman cult, but the hawk and falcon were more common in Phrygia. While controversial, Walter Burkert calls the association of her iconography with the images of the Neolithic Great Goddess of Catal Huyuk, who is also associated with predators, *irresistible*.

Accounts of her eunuch priests are fairly common knowledge but may have been a later development under Eastern influence, having no counterpart in Thracian religion. The subject has been greatly exaggerated by the growth of this class of priest in the Roman era. The evidence from Phrygia suggests that castration was not a requirement for the priesthood,

which on the contrary could be passed down from father to son. Roller is probably correct in ascribing its origins to a requirement for celibacy in an elite caste. It is true that there were strong ascetic elements in some Thracian religious expression; in addition Eleusian hierophants, who had Thracian connections, temporarily suppressed sexual urges with henbane ointment. Oriental cults such as that of Atargatis may have influenced Phrygian practice; the date of the innovation cannot presently be ascertained.

According to Pausanias, Cybele was formed from the seed of Zeus, falling on the rock Agdus, hence her name Agdistis (properly Angdistis). Another form of the myth involves a failed seduction of Cybele by Zeus, in which some of his sperm falls upon a rock, forming an entity known as Agdistis. Despite the variants, and the fact that these myths are Greek rather than Phrygian, there can be no doubting the equivalence of Agdistis and Cybele. On first appearing Agdistis was a monstrous being, at once male and female, enormously strong and ferocious. The monster, a terror to men and gods, rampaged across the country causing great destruction. At last Bacchus poured a great quantity of very strong neat wine into a fountain favoured by Agdistis. Upon drinking this powerful brew the monster fell into a deep asleep. Bacchus then tightly tied its male organs to a tree with a rope formed of bristles. When Agdistis awoke and leapt up, the phallus was ripped off, attended by a great flow of blood from which grew the first almond tree. From then on Agdistis was purely female, but retained her colossal proportions. This legend also bears comparison with the Egyptian legend of Sekhmet, a lion headed goddess, who began to destroy mankind until tricked into drinking an enormous quantity of red beer, which she had mistaken for blood.

The birth of Attis, who was to become the consort of Cybele, is intimately associated with this myth. The blood of Agdistis had caused a tree, identified either as an almond or a pomegranate, and a local nymph had become pregnant either by placing one of its fruits in her lap, whereupon it disappeared, or directly inside herself. Her father Sangarius, a local river god, attempted to starve her, but she was fed by Cybele. When Attis was born Sangarius had him exposed on a mountain and left to die, but he

was fed and raised by a goat. This legend has some affinities with the boyhood of Zeus himself, who was fed by the goat Amalthea. As Attis grew to manhood Agdistis grew enamoured of him, and accompanied him on hunts, presenting him with game. Their relationship was disapproved of by his father, Midas, the Phrygian king of Pessinos, (himself the son and lover of Cybele). He arranged a marriage for his son, and closed the city gates. Agdistis, undeterred by this precaution rose from beneath the city walls, which she raised on her head. Her intervention was, in this version, to avert the ill-fortune she foresaw was to follow if Attis married. However the marriage-hymn had already been sung and Attis became insane. In his madness he castrated himself beneath a pine tree, presenting his mutilated organs to Agdistis before he expired. Zeus, whose part in this story under that name is likely to be an interpolation, was appealed to by Agdistis. He would not restore Attis to life, but preserved him from decay and, a curious detail, kept his little finger constantly moving. Agdistis thereupon created a cult around the tomb of Attis at Pessinos, with castrated priests to serve the shrine.

This barbaric and powerful myth, resembling an erotic nightmare, has all the qualities of primal myth lacking in Classical Græco-Roman stories. Disturbing on a literal level, it cannot be doubted that it preserves many features of great antiquity. On the other hand this myth involves considerable distortion of the original Phrygian context; Cybele had no androgynous form but was female from the beginning. More importantly, there was no eunuch god Attis in Asia Minor until the Græco-Roman forms of the cult were re-imported to their original home. There is no Phrygian image of Cybele in which any kind of consort is depicted. The name Attis was initially associated with the cult for two reasons. Firstly it was a very common name in the region, secondly and more importantly it was a dynastic name of the Phrygian kings who formerly had a priestly role within the Phrygian cult. The confusion in the Greek mind may have arisen on contact with the cult after the fall of the Phrygian kingdom; confusing priests named Attis with the former kings honoured in funerary cults.

Nevertheless, according to the Greeks, Agdistis, also found as Agdestis or Agdistus, was the name of a mountain in Phrygia, where Attis was bur-

ied. It was also a surname or title of Cybele. The colossal size of the goddess in the myth may indicate the indigenous connection of the goddess with the mountain wilderness. On the other hand both her size and original androgynous nature are attributes of other primitive goddesses, remembered by the Classical Greeks. Their myths frequently involve suffering acts of violence. This, taken with their association with mountain caves, is at least partly explicable by an ancient association with mining.

Mystics and Metallurgists

The Dactyls were said by Ephoros to have founded the Mysteries of Samothrace. The Cabirs of Samothrace are, according to varied interpretations, either intimately associated or identical with the Dactyls. Other similar groups – under other names – are associated with archaic rites in these and other places. Strabo, whose importance to this study cannot be understated, summarised the matter as follows (*Geography* 10.3.7):

Some represent the Corybantes, the Cabeiroi, the Idaean Daçtyls and the Telchines as identical with the Curetes. Others represent them as all kinsmen of one another and differentiate only certain small matters in which they differ in respect to one another. Speaking approximately and in general, they represent them, one and all, as a kind of inspired people and as subject to Bacchic frenzy; and, in the guise of ministers, as inspiring terror at the celebration of the sacred rites by means of war-dances, accompanied by uproar and noise and cymbals and drums and arms, and also by flute and outcry. Consequently these rites are regarded as in some way having a common relationship, these [Idaeans] and those of Samothrace, Lemnos and several other places, because the divine ministers are called the same... This is common both to the Greeks and the barbarians, to perform their sacred rites in connection with the relaxation of a festival, sometimes with religious frenzy, sometimes without it; sometimes with music, sometimes not; and sometimes in secret, sometimes openly... The relaxation... turns the real

mind towards the divine; the religious frenzy affords divine inspiration very like that of the soothsayer; the secrecy with which the sacred rites are concealed induces reverence for the divine; music, which includes dancing, rhythm and melody, brings us in touch with the divine.

Taken together, Strabo's statement regarding the Dactyls relation to many similar groups; their relationship with Samothrace mentioned by Ephoros; and the description of the Dactyls as *goen* furnished by Hellanicus, bring into focus an extremely complex subject. It is complex because a variety of terms, names and locations associated with one topic are being compared. The topic is the origins and nature of the Mystery religions of the Greek world.

These Mysteries perpetuated traditions and practices far older than the Classical Olympian state religion. Some were of such extreme antiquity that their origins and meanings frequently defied the scholarly efforts of Classical Greek culture. To illustrate, the beginnings of Mycenaean culture preceded Classical Greece by as great a period as the Classical period preceded the Crusades. The beginnings of Minoan culture preceded Classical Greece by as great a period as the Classical period precedes our own times. In other words, while it is common to speak of Ancient Greece, the beginnings of Greek culture were already ancient in Classical times.

Behind the distance of time and the confusion of terms, names, titles and locations, the overall situation can be outlined as follows. At the most important and archaic cult centres of the Greek world rites of *the great gods* were performed. At any such particular centre the great gods generally consisted of a group, of say three to four archaic deities. Often they were essentially more primitive forms of figures integrated – in Homeric form – into the 'Olympian' religion of the polis. A representative group would be Demeter, Persephone and Hades, with Zeus as an alternative to the last named god. The local myth frequently included, among other elements: a death, a descent to the underworld and a birth or rebirth on the part of one or other of such a group of gods. Alongside this group also appeared various attendants. These included witnesses and subordinate characters involved in various key stages (one might compare the Magi at

the birth of Jesus). The ritual roles of various participants in the celebration of these rites corresponded – naturally enough – with the mythic activities of some of these characters. Much as actors are occasionally confused with the characters they play, there arises confusion between the gods, their mythical attendants and the actual participants in the ritual. This is not to suggest that these rites consisted of Mystery plays or dramatic re-enactments, which does not seem always to have been the case. Nevertheless, at the founding of these Mysteries, the celebrants either included or consisted of the goetes.

In this way the goetes were both the founders and the original celebrants of the most important and prestigious religious festivals and celebrations in the ancient Greek world. This places the goetes at the very centre of archaic Greek culture; long prior to the devaluation of the term with the rise of the polis and Homeric Olympianism beginning in the 8th century. One of the most important celebrations the Dactyls are credited with founding was the Olympic Games. Some ancient authors place this at 1453 BCE, others credit the Dactyl named Heracles with instituting them in 1222 BCE. (Another tradition attributes the foundation of the games to Pelops, a name which will be encountered many times in the next chapter; but the Dactyls are associated with a foot race and Pelops with chariots). Strabo objects to these dates on the grounds that Homer would have made mention of them. This objection is countered by others who claim they were long neglected, after their first period of importance, until revived in 884 BCE. In fact however the Zeus shrine at Olympia dates to the 10th century BCE. There is significance to the traditional dates, whether or not they truly mark the first Olympiad. 1453 BCE places the Dactyls in the Mycenaean age, near the end of Minoan culture, which is certainly striking and supported by other evidence.

Is there any way in which these Dactyls can be associated with non-mythical persons and their traditions? The answer lays in the occupation of the mountains of Anatolia, the Caucasus and Carpathians by specialised metal working tribes. The mythological Dactyls are readily identifiable with such historical tribes. The tribes in question are referred to in the sources either as Halizones or Chalybes. Their name is closely

related to the Greek word for iron, *chalybos*; the metal of the Chalybes. The same term is the root of the name of King Arthur's sword, Excalibur, (the legends concerning which are nowadays thought to reflect the influence of Sarmatian cavalry settled in Britain by the Romans). In the nineteenth century the Besh Parmak or 'Five Finger' mountains of Turkey were worked by gypsy metal smiths. The Greek name for these mountains, until recent times, was Pente Dactyloi or Five Fingers. Undoubtedly the Turkish name is a continuation of this ancient designation. It is from these mountains that the Chalybes, who discovered iron there, acquired the name Dactyls.

It is important to recognise in the Chalybes a specialised caste involved in the working of metals. Castes of this type are a recognised historical and ethnological phenomenon, occurring almost worldwide. Throughout the history of mankind, the earliest specialists in metal working are almost invariably of this type. The existence of such castes is not only to be sought in the distant past; in some regions of the world they continue to the present day. In the medieval period, and in the period of European colonial expansion, such a caste was represented by the Gypsies; specialising principally in the working of copper.

The metals first worked by the Chalybes were copper, silver, and gold; brass and bronze followed, and finally iron. These they mined, smelted, and worked, producing tools, weapons and armour. Their descendants, or successors of other ethnic groups, carried on these metal-working labours until recent times. The metal-working tribes in Asia Minor may include the oldest known populations; and are prominent in the history and mythology of the region. The entire mountain system of Asia Minor is rich in metals, including very major deposits of hematite iron. These ores are readily accessible on the surface. Extensive literary, archaeological and anecdotal evidence makes plain that the smelting of iron ore in Asia Minor was propagated by mountain tribes. The mountains were occupied in the historical period by tribes engaged in smelting, that were called Chalybes. Similar activities in more recent times continued in sites associated with both the Chalybes and the Dactyls. The chief points to be kept in mind are: the connection of the Dactyls with metal working and fire; their rela-

tion, and that of the other mythical figures associated with them, with the cult of the mother of the gods; their association with a god of fire, whose assistants they were; and their involvement with magic and Mystery cults throughout the region.

It is not my business to decide to which ethnic group the Chalybes belonged. In the period which chiefly concerns us they were closely associated with both the Scythians and Thracians. It is also known that metal working tribes were present in the Balkan and Danube regions from remote prehistory onwards. On the other hand the Hittites undoubtedly possessed iron prior to the Phrygian and Cimmerian migrations, suggesting such a caste was present from earlier times. This early caste is closely associated with the people known as Mushki, (the same people appear under similar names in the various languages of the region; the Moesi of Thrace and their relatives in Asia Minor, the Mysians). The destruction of the Hittite kingdom, apparently, involved Phrygians from Thrace and the more mysterious Mushki. The succeeding Phrygian kingdom of King Midas, as it is known to Greek historians, involved the Mushki in Eastern history. Allowing for some variation in the traditions, Midas in Eastern history becomes King Mita, and his people were known to Sargon of Assyria as the Mushki. The Mushki successfully opposed the Assyrians attempts to annexe the metal rich land of Tabal; with which the biblical blacksmith Tubal-Cain is associated. After the Cimmerian invasion destroyed the Phrygian kingdom the north-easterly Mushki moved towards Colchis. The Moschi mountains between Asia Minor and Colchis show their migration route in that direction, probably too a remaining presence among the hill tribes in those mountains. Another tribe, associated with the Chalybes remaining in Asia Minor, is the Tibarenii who may be identified with the people of former Tabal.

In short, the metal working caste of both the Armeno-Chalybes of Colchis and the Chalybes of Asia Minor may have diverse origins. Nevertheless such castes also existed among the invaders, and all would naturally have become associated with one another. Such communities, whether related ethnically or not, existed all round the Black Sea. It is not necessary, and may not be possible, to firmly decide to what extent the

Chalybes represented indigenous or migrant populations. The Chalybes undoubtedly formed alliances with succeeding waves of migrating peoples. The kings of Lydia and Phrygia received such allegiance from them as their hereditary right. Such behaviour anthropology has shown is typical of metallurgical castes. Outside the modern Western world, interaction between such castes and their neighbours are almost invariably based upon treaties. Through such pacts they become tribute paying or subject communities. Regardless of their ethnicity, what matters here is that the Chalybes coexisted, and even migrated alongside other communities, while retaining their own identity and roles.

It was probably the coastal Chalybes who earned the fame of discoverers and untiring producers of iron on Mount Ida. The iron of highest quality, transformed by carbon into steel, was named chalybos by the Greeks. This was also the name of a community of Chalybes in Pontus. The iron was delivered as a tribute, or traded as a commodity, by the Chalybes to their neighbours and the Greek towns. Stephanus of Byzantium, a writer on ancient geography of the 5th or 6th century AD, wrote of Chalybes in the region of the river Thermodon. Although doubted at one time he was very likely correct. In the nineteenth century people were observed working iron with charcoal at the site anciently called Oenoe in Pontus, which is close to the Thermodon. This is in the neighbourhood of a historical settlement of Chalybes and the source appears to have been hematite ore, as in the Besh Parmak Mountains. The iron produced there in the nineteenth century was sent to Constantinople, formerly Byzantium.

In succeeding periods the hill-tribes would be growing smaller. In the case of the specialised iron-smelters, they were small in numbers to begin with. Their market was restricted at first, and when demand increased those seeking the iron would have sent their own people, in large numbers. Such incursions would lead to the disappearance of the hill-men, whether through extinction, assimilation or relocation. Another reason for the relatively small size of such communities is another principal distinguishing feature of metallurgical castes; the practice of endogamy. This practice, of intermarriage within the clan, ensures their secrets remain the exclusive knowledge of the caste.

It is essential to realise that these hill tribes served successive waves of invaders, and new dynasties among those already present. They were considered as subject peoples and barbarians with their own rites, customs and beliefs. Nevertheless, the rites and practices of the hillmen inevitably and powerfully influenced those of the lowlanders. This influence was not only due to proximity, as applies to any relations between cultures. The influence was intensified by the nature and role of the caste. Attitudes towards black smiths, and the castes to which they frequently belong, are usually ambivalent, and often suspicious. Their craft is seen, by themselves and others, as involving magic. Not infrequently they have their own beliefs, customs and rites, which distinguish them from their neighbours. In addition some of their practices in relation to their craft are often both magical and frightening. The use of blood to quench blades, or of dead or living bodies to test them, is one source of such fear. Their social status and prestige can be highly variable, ranging from outcaste to one of social superiority, depending on circumstances. In this respect their position approximates very closely to that of magical specialists, and religious castes in archaic societies. Not infrequently the functions of magical and metallurgical castes are united. There are many indications that this applies very strongly to the Chalybes.

The aura of magic, fear and respect for metallurgical castes very often transfers to their creations. In particular this applies to weapons. The weapons are seen as possessed of special magic power; such weapons are wielded by heroes, and even gods. This, as shall be shown, was certainly true of beings such as the Telchines and Cyclops, who were essentially synonymous with the Dactyls.

The Chalybes in Myth and Classical Tradition

The Dactyls in the Classical period were honoured as benevolent gods, and their names were recited as a protective incantation in times of fear and danger. They were also credited with composing the Ephesian letters, a famous protective incantation from the 4th century BCE. This was said to have been found inscribed upon a statue of the goddess. The incantation appears, with variants, on talismans and in the rituals of the papyri; a standard form is: *Aski Kataski Lix Tetrax Damnameneus Aision*. These untranslatable words were known as Ephesia Grammata, and the term was, and is, synonymous with the concept of barbarous names in incantations generally. The names of the male Dactyls are variously given in different accounts: quoted fragments attributed to Hesiod give their names as Kelmis, Damnameneus, Delas and Skythes; Strabo calls them Kelmis, Damnameneus, Heracles and Akmon; Pausanias calls them Heracles, Paionaios, Epimedes, Iasios (Iasion) and Idas or Acesidas. Akmon, Damnameneus and Kelmis are the eldest of them. The names of the Telchines, another set of magician blacksmiths who guarded the infant god Poseidon, show their relation to the Dactyls: collected from various accounts, these names are Damon or Demonax who was their chief, a triad named Lykos, Skelmis and Damnameneus; a quartet named Aktaios, Megalesios, Ormenus or Hormenus and Lykos.

Among the accomplishments of the Telchines were the making of the trident of Poseidon and the sickle of Cronus. The sickle of Cronus was originally that of an earth goddess. Sickles were dedicated to Artemis Orthia in Sparta as well as to Demeter, and a similar weapon was used by the Chalybes to butcher and decapitate their enemies. The trident of Poseidon was originally a form of thunderbolt, both sickle and trident weapons were wielded by Middle Eastern thunder deities.

Eustathius, following Stesichorus, identifies the Curetes and Telchines, calling them magicians of Cretan origin. He describes them as of two sorts, reflecting the beneficent and malefic roles originally inherent in all spirits and the magicians later identified with them. One sort were craftsmen who invented statuary and discovered metals, the others were fear-

some, bringers of fierce winds, possessed of cups in which they brewed destructive potions from roots. They had varied forms, generally amphibious and demonic: some were like men, some fishes or serpents, some had no hands, others lacked feet, and they had webbed fingers, blue eyes and black tails. The evil nature of the Telchines emphasised by some authors reflects their place in the old order, their earlier dual nature only becomes purely evil with the coming of the Olympian religion. Their strange forms are reminiscent of the so called Minoan daimons or genii; these are represented as performing ritual acts, clearly suggesting a priestly role. Their form however is anything but human, having dog-like snouts and paws and a strange tapering cover on their backs which Burkert compares to the Egyptian images of Taurt, who wears a crocodile on her back. This resemblance, while significant, does not account for their number or the ritualistic roles in which they are portrayed.

According to some the female Dactyls were identical with the mountain nymphs called the Oreades, who were associated with pine trees growing on the mountains. By mating with the male Dactyls they were the mothers of the Curetes and Corybantes. In the rites of Cybele and Dionysus these were the male equivalents of the Mænads; and thus the Dactyls were also said to be the parents of the Cabirs, Satyrs and so on. Another group of five rustic nymphs associated with the female Dactyls were the Hecaterides, whose name is strongly reminiscent of Hecate. Some indeed make the Oreades daughters of Hecate.

The names of the Curetes are occasionally given as Prynneus, Mimas, Akmon, Damneus (Damnameneus?), Ocythous and Idaeus, which list shows convergences with the Dactyls and Telchines. The Curetes were paired with Ash nymphs known as Meliai, which likely connects with the name Melissa, a name meaning Priestess and connected with honey. A Curete of Sparta named Pyrrhikhos is associated with Silenus, and another named Melisseus with Aristæus. Indeed Melisseus, or *honey man* is variously counted among the Titans and Curetes, and is the name of a Corybante of Euboa.

The Cabiri – like the Dactyls – are a group of mystical figures associated with important Mystery religions of the ancient world. They were

said for example to have 'attended' the birth of Zeus at Pergamus, another place name common to Crete and Anatolia. The meaning and origin of the term Cabiri has baffled scholars, but it may be derived from the Semitic root *kbr*, perhaps via the Assyrian *kuburu* meaning great; thus the Kabirim or Great Gods. This in turn seems to connect them with the Cherubim or strong ones. Like the Dactyls they were considered to be workers in metal, associated with fire, and to be sons of Hephæstus. His name among the Romans was Vulcan, etymologically and mythically connected with volcanic fire. In the rites of Eleusis, and by analogy elsewhere, the names of the gods were given coded cover names, and such the titles of the Cabirs seem to be. Not infrequently they, or the gods whose attendants or representatives they were, are referred to anonymously as Theoi Megaloi, the Great Gods, the Greek equivalent of Kabirim. *K* easily becomes softened to a *G* in the languages of the region, and the Kabirim become the Geburim or Strong Ones. Gebers is also an Arabic name for the Magian sect, suggesting Cabirs in the 'cave' with the infant Jesus. The Hebrew word *ChBR* means to conjoin, a joining of words, incantations, a brother, and sorcerer.

Another such group is the Corybantēs; the term represents mythical figures that guarded the infant Zeus on Mount Ida, but also priests of the Mystery cult in Phrygia and Crete. In the celebration of their rites they clashed shields and weapons, beat cymbals and behaved as if delirious. They are often identified with the Idaean Dactyls. There was a festival at Cnossus in Crete called Corybantica. The Corybantēs are also compared with or similar to another group, the Curetes. Like the Dactyls, the Curetes' knowledge of all the arts was extensive and they communicated it to many parts of ancient Greece. They were the guardians of the infant Zeus, whom his father Cronus wished to destroy; they prevented his cries being heard by the clashing of their shields and of cymbals in a warlike dance. As a reward for this they were made the special priests of the Great Goddess. They, and the Corybantēs with whom they are often identified, were also known as the defenders of Zagreus, Zeus' son by Persephone goddess of the Underworld. Older and younger forms of gods and goddesses in these rites often have different names. In some cases these ap-

pear as if quite distinct from their other selves. Zagreus originally was a name given to the infant Zeus himself.

Although archaeology shows that the Idaean cave later associated with the Zeus cult was less impressive in Minoan times, it also demonstrates that it subsequently became a major cult centre where initiations were performed. Bronze Curete shields have been found together with ample evidence of a Zeus cult fitting Classical descriptions. The cave sanctuaries are undoubtedly more ancient, dating to Minoan times, and the association with the Dactyls may well precede the cult of Zeus in the Classical period. Among the Minoan offerings known from these caves are some bronze swords and other artefacts which are manifestly unfinished. Unfinished work does not become the possession of any ordinary person, still less a noble, strongly suggesting that these are offerings by an ancient guild of smiths.

Strabo likens the Curetes and Corybantes to the Satyrs who accompanied Dionysus or Bacchus. Among these is found Silenus, who guarded the infant god, and became his attendant and philosophical counsellor in maturity. Also among the Satyrs was the flute playing Marsyas, and the poet Olympus. The Satyrs and other attendants such as the Telchines also accompanied Dionysus on his conquest of the East including a legendary expedition to India.

Various accounts of the number and the names of the Cabiri are given in ancient writings, representing different phases of development and differentiation. Where the number is three generally a primordial one is attended by a pair. Seven are also found, resembling the Pelasgian Titans and the Babylonian planetary gods.

Representative of these versions in the Greek world are a pair named Alcon and Eurymedon and a group of four named Axierus, Axiocersa, Axiocersus and Kadmillos. These four are equated in some accounts with Demeter, Persephone, Hades and Hermes. The latter has been considered a later addition to the central triad. However, while Hermes is Classical Greek and the Cabirs older, the identification of this figure with the candidate for initiation means Kadmillos is likely to be the primordial deity. Such a figure establishes the cult by being at once its deity and the

first initiate. Another name associated with them is Dardanos, who was either one of the Cabiri, or responsible for introducing their rites to the Trojans. He also had a brother named Iasion, which is the name of one of the Dactyls. In Hellenistic times Dardanos appears in the Magical Papyri, in association with the magical use of a lodestone.

The Mysteries with which the Cabirs are connected were particularly important at Imbrus and Samothrace; those at Samothrace were celebrated in particular splendour. Divine honours were also paid to them in Phrygia and in Macedonia, at Lemnos, Thebes, Anthedon, Pergamus and elsewhere. None but the priesthood were permitted to enter their temple but their patronage and protection was sought through initiation by all the ancient heroes and princes. Philip of Macedon and Queen Olympias were initiated, and Germanicus Caesar was only prevented by an omen, which did not long precede his death. Among the gifts they could bestow was safety at sea, by the conferring of a purple bracelet, which was probably made of wool from a sacrificial ram.

Certain affinities between the Cabirs and Dioscuri had always existed. In the late Classical period the Cabirs came to be mainly regarded as patrons of navigation, as were the Dioscuri. This role had always belonged to the Cabirs anyway. Herodotus described images of the Cabiri as resembling dwarfs; dwarf-like figures called Pataikoi also formed the figureheads of Phoenician ships. The father of the Cabirs was said to be Hephæstus, an ancient god with dominion over the working of metals. According to Sanchuniathon he was also the first who ever sailed a ship. While this god was often a figure of mockery in 'official' Olympian myth, he bears many signs of far greater original dignity. His image was common in ordinary Athenian households, and he was worshipped as a great god at Lemnos and elsewhere. He had anciently been partnered with Athena rather than Aphrodite. Images of this pair were common in Athenian homes, as household gods. Athena as eternal virgin was a relatively late development, and it appears both she and Hephæstus were drastically overhauled in the interests of the Olympian state-religion.

The Dioscuri were divine twins represented by the constellation Gemini. The astrological symbol of this sign is a representation of a mys-

terious cult object associated with them, known as the dokana. To the Greeks they were known as Castor and Polydeuces, and to the Romans as Castor and Pollux. In Classical legend they were sons of Zeus, either by Nemesis or Leda. Zeus seduced Leda in the form of a swan and she produced two eggs, from which two sets of twins were hatched, two mortal, two divine. In some accounts the immortal offspring of Zeus were Pollux and Helen, the mortal offspring of Leda's husband Tyndarus were Castor and Clytemnestra. According to others she produced only one egg, from which the Dioscuri were born. Their relationship with Helen however is an important feature of many myths; her divine nature, while variously explained, reflects a pre-Olympian cult. In some accounts she is united with the hero Achilles in the Elysian Fields, while other myths show Medea in this role. Both seem to derive from archaic representations of the goddess as daughter, as suggested by Helen's role in the story of Autoleon, and Medea's relationship with Hecate.

Some authors point to apparent confusion between the Dioscuri and the Cabirs in later times. However, like the Cabirs the archaic character of the Dioscuri was not well understood in the Classical period, and the connection is significant in several respects. Speaking generally, while the Dioscuri resemble particular roles among the Cabirs, not all roles among the Cabirs resemble the Dioscuri. The Dioscuri were also credited with the invention of war-dances, which links them with the Curetes and Corybantes. They are often represented on horseback, wearing helmets described as egg-like in shape (when not wearing the Phrygian cap habitually worn by Mithras), and with stars over their heads. These features and others are all represented on steles and engraved gems from ancient times, associated with Mystery cults in Thrace and elsewhere. A revealing aspect of their myth makes them initiates of the rites of the Cabiri, and the Mysteries of Eleusis. Their involvement with both from an early date, whatever their original role, is a powerful likelihood.

The Dioscuri in Classical myth are represented as taking part in the voyage of the Argo as soon as they reached maturity. Afterwards they personally cleared the Hellespont and surrounding seas of pirates. During the Argonautic expedition, during a violent storm flames were seen about

the heads of the Dioscuri upon which the storm was dispelled. These flames, known nowadays as St. Elmo's fire and anciently known as Castor and Pollux, are common in storms. When only one fire was seen it foretold storms, while two indicated fair weather, and the aid of the Dioscuri was then sought by the seafarers. The same omen applied in the case of sightings of the stars of Gemini representing them.

The connection with the sea also links the Dioscuri with the Telchines, who were seen as sea gods and magicians. It is significant that the Telchines had a distinctly sinister reputation for magic and the evil eye. Indeed among the variously titled guards of the divine infant are the prime suspects for the slaying and eating of the god. The goetes celebrating these primitive rituals were, after all, adept shape-shifters. Celebrants of magical drama and initiation, they have control of rain, hail, snow and thunder, bringing or taking away the fertility of the earth. They make images of the gods and enact their myths with music, sound, magical songs and mysterious rituals connected with the Underworld, death and resurrection. By means of ritual, they become united with the god and the lover of the goddess, and in the memory of myth, the gods and their goetes have truly become synonymous.

Echoes of the Mysteries in Balkan Ritual

The individual Goes has been identified as a celebrant of archaic rituals associated with the various mystery cults. There are surviving folk rituals in the Balkans that throw considerable light on the Mysteries with which they were involved. Among other indications, comparisons with literary sources suggest connections with the Samothracian Mysteries. Archaeological finds in the Balkans confirm that many of the details of these rites have continued since at least Roman times. Motifs and images on medieval Croatian tombstones also portray the same consistent details. There is no doubt that these rites represent a powerful and living element of the culture of the region, stretching back thousands of years. In modern times the rites themselves have been observed by anthropolo-

gists. The rituals concerned are stages of a larger schema. The description which follows concerns several inter-related parts, which do not constitute the whole cycle of folk ritual in the region. Rather is it the core of ritual activity, to which other parts relate, and from which some lesser rites may be extracted in adapted form to serve different needs.

This greater rite is in many respects a festival of the dead, although other functions are connected with it. It occurs over three days in May or June. On the first day the graves of the dead are visited, food and drink given to them, and an invitation to return made aloud. Later there is a procession, first come female relatives of the dead bearing food and drink. Behind them comes a row of dancers consisting of three young women, with a young man at each end. One of these young men must, and both may bear a sword; all hold hands, in which are held sprigs of vegetation, wine, eggs and perhaps lighted candles. Behind these come musicians, who are nowadays often violinists, but originally would have included flute players and beaters of drums and cymbals. The purpose of this procession appears to be to bring the dead to the place where the ritual is celebrated. A dragging motion forms a part of the dance, and small mirrors are worn on the backs of the dancers as if to catch the spirits.

On reaching their destination, which in this context is the town square, a feast is laid out. The musicians are seated and sing a song in praise of the dead. The dancers perform another dance, forming the same row with linked hands. During the dance the female relatives of the dead feed them from the table. There are several such groups of dancers working independently on behalf of various families gathered in the square at this time. The dance is repeated for each dead person, and even for aged persons who lie under the table of feasting as if in mimicry of death, who explain that they are ensuring in advance that their funerary rites are properly performed.

Another kind of dance follows this part of the festival, and does not involve the same dancers. This is a large circle dance in which any of the villagers may take part, and in which married women, and particularly brides of the past year are obliged to participate. These clearly are not the equivalents of the ancient ritualists represented by the dancers and musi-

cians from the previous stage of the rite. This stage of the rite appears to be to guarantee fertility, and very likely to promote the rebirth of the dead into the community.

Another stage of the rite, which was beginning to be neglected when these observations took place, was once an integral part of these celebrations. Certain women, known as 'falling ones' come to the square and collapse in trance. They are fully aware that this is going to happen, and attend the rite perhaps entirely for that purpose. They need not have participated in any of the dances; the trance is the important aspect of their part in the proceedings. The manner of their restoration to consciousness is evidently an ancient aspect of the ceremony. A group from among the ritual dancers and musicians carry the entranced woman towards the river. As they near the bank they put her down, and the principal sword dancer draws a cross upon her chest with his sword. He then chews garlic and wormwood and spits it upon her cheek. The whole troop then touches her with their feet and dance three times around her, singing a magical incantation. They then lift her up and carry her on, putting her down again and performing the whole procedure three times by the time the bank is reached. At one time the entranced woman was also carried to the other side of the river and it is safe to assume this was a feature of the ancient rite of which the whole is a survival. She is then raised to her feet and the sword bearers cross their swords over her head, and water is poured over the crossed blades. One of the men catches the water in his hand and offers it to her to drink. At this point she usually recovers immediately, but if not the procedure is repeated several times. If she still does not awaken from trance honey is put in her mouth and she is left to recover in her own time. If this rite was not performed on her behalf it is believed she would go mad or die. The purpose of her trance is not to prophesy, which however she may perform at other times. She is making a journey to the underworld on behalf of the deceased, and is then brought back to life by magical rites, to prevent her soul being lost in the Underworld.

The swordsmen clearly represent figures such as the war-dancers of the Mystery rites. The voyage across the water is significant given that the Dioscuri, Cabirs and Telchines are associated with protection from perils

at sea. The goal of spirit rescue is also present in the legendary voyage of the Argonauts, in which figures such as Orpheus and the Dioscuri take part. The musicians, with their song for the dead, clearly represent lamenting magicians. The falling women possess the ability to 'die' and visit the underworld on another's behalf, being then magically restored to life. These themes are clearly archaic and connect with ancestral funerary rites.

It is as well to clarify a few points regarding archaic Greek religion before analysing these rites any further. Naturally most people are aware that Mediterranean and Middle Eastern paganism was by nature tolerant of other people's gods and religious practices. Hostility towards other religions was rare; the usual response was generally curiosity and the making of comparisons. What is less understood is that the Classical mythological literature of the Greeks has virtually nothing to do with their religious practice. On a regional level beliefs and practices were not concerned with the huge collection of deities of the sky, earth, sea and underworld, and their innumerable lovers, offspring, enemies and favourites, or even necessarily with the twelve Olympians. Before the rise of literacy and the urbanised state, and long after in rural areas, the various local tribal religions each involved a more self contained cast and mythic drama. Involving, for example: a fertile goddess, a male husband, consort or son representing the Sun, the Spring or the Year, with perhaps a semi-deified royal or priestly figure in addition. Frequently one or more of these central characters manifested in a variety of modes. Often a god, goddess or hero manifested in younger and older modes, or in other dual roles such as solar and chthonic.

These deities were attended by such rites as described above. In addition by initiation rituals, the recital or singing of sacred poetry, and a more ancient music; which are the more perishable parts of antique religions in the folk memory. The substitution of a violin has in any case Classical precedents that are in themselves instructive. It is well known that the controversial Athenian leader, Alcibiades, was accused of disrespecting the Mysteries and defacing the sacred herms (which were related to the phallic images at Samothrace). It is less well known that he made the playing of flutes unpopular in Athens, saying they distorted the features of the

player making them ridiculous; and pointing disparagingly to their use by the 'backward' people of Boeotia. It is simple enough to deduce from this that the religious use of the lyre was an innovation. It is more than coincidental that, at the end of the Peloponnesian war, the 'traditionalist' Spartans tore down the walls of Athens accompanied by the playing of flutes.

The mythological literature is, in many respects, the response of a later stage of culture grown distant from its roots. It represents attempts to rationalise or interpret allegorically the primitive elements of hundreds of local cults and their variants that had arisen in previous centuries. Many of these traditions had their roots in the Minoan and Mycenaean periods from 3000 to 1200 BCE, whereas Homer and the Classical interpretations of older myth date from 800 BCE, beginning the Classical period that continued to 400 BCE. Once this is understood it is easier to appreciate the importance of local folk ritual, when supported by strong archaeological evidence as well as literary references. While features such as god-names, music and spoken liturgy perish, much else is perpetuated faithfully and revealingly. That the surviving details of these rituals correspond in large part with the celebration of the Mysteries is reasonably certain. However, there are other aspects of the goetes activities that remain to be shown.

Firstly, a paramount consideration is the relation of these magicians to works of fire. Comparatively little evidence of mining can be found in many regions where the Mysteries were celebrated. The importance of ritual fire is another matter. In addition there are rites of purification and of healing. These too can be traced in the folk rituals of the region, with startling correspondence in detail, casting considerable light on the obscurity of the literary sources. The Dioscuri, according to many sources, became associated with the Cabirs through some resemblance to them. However, figures such as the Dioscuri seem always to have been part of the ritual cycle. Disregarding syncretic combinations from different ethnic origins, the main distinction is a matter of role within the celebrations. It is evident that the males among the Cabirs or Dactyls must include fire-makers, who judging from these survivals are equated with the Dioscuri.

The ritual cycle in the region, even in its recent state, is complex. Parts of the cycle, which initially must have formed a unified whole, appear to have become detached, reflecting the various purposes served by its parts. The making of ritual fire is among these detached elements, and properly belongs to the first part of the cycle. It is a Mystery, and only those involved in the process are allowed to be present when it is performed, even though it is understood to be taking place. Prior to the making of this new fire, all the village fires are extinguished, being considered to have become unfortunate in some way.

A branch with a fork of two equal tines is selected from a tree; either fir, lime or willow. The locals refer to the two prongs as twins, like the Dioscuri themselves. These are cut from the branch and dried before being made into two posts. These are planted in the ground and circular holes cut into them near the top. A wooden bar, often of softer wood, is inserted into these so that it may rotate in them. A second bar, or a rope, is occasionally placed lower down to act as a brace. A cord is then looped around the uppermost bar, and held by two men, preferably twins. Some customary means exist to provide for the non-availability of twins, including a 'twin making ceremony'.

When these twins pull their ends of the cord, in swift alternate motion, friction is produced in the holes at the top of the twin poles. Smoke plumes rise, resembling the serpents found on images of the Dioscuri, and following these actual sparks. A third person catches these in dry tinder and carries it off like Prometheus stealing fire from Heaven. Having made fire other stages of the ritual cycle become possible, and it appears from this that originally the fire making rite was the first stage of the cycle. The traditional purifying and healing powers of the Dactyls or Cabirs follow from the making of ritual fire.

This purification rite, like the revival of the falling women, is often performed beside a river. It requires a tunnel to be dug under the roots of an oak-tree, the tree associated with Zeus. The ritual fire is divided on either side of the entry to this tunnel, and the twin fire makers flank its exit. Those to be purified must pass through the river and between the fires, and pass through the tunnel, often naked and on their hands and knees.

On emerging they are tapped on the back by the twins with sticks – one might say wands – previously blackened in the ritual fire. On occasion these wands are split at the end and a live snake placed in the notch. This is of course reminiscent of the snaked wand of Asclepius, the divine healer and son of Apollo. In other variants an H like symbol, resembling the fire making dokana, is drawn on their backs.

With the twins at the exit are also positioned two or three old women with large urn like pots, one containing milk and the other honey or melted fat. The pot of melted fat is also replaced in some variants with a mirror, which is gazed into in its place. Both the pot of milk and the mirror are to be found in accounts of Orphic and Eleusian rituals. In addition twin urns (amphorae) and snakes are common symbols of the Dioscuri. The people emerging, after they have been tapped or had the symbol drawn on their backs are given milk from the first pot, and made to gaze into the second. They then recite a spell, to the effect: *I have passed through the waters and not been drowned, I have passed through the fires and not been burned, I have gazed into the fat [or mirror] and not been drowned.* The purified persons then partake in a feast, cooked on the ritual fire by the same women. This same fire is distributed to light new fires in the homes of all participants.

The importance of water in such rituals as these must douse the simplistic urge to associate the fire making 'goeten' with the Persian 'fire-worshippers', or Magi. The nineteenth century classicists knew this: *Every person who came to the solemn sacrifices was purified by water. To which end, at the entrance of the temples was commonly placed a vessel full of holy water* (Potter and Boyd, *Grecian Antiquities*, 1850). So in a way did the Church Fathers; according to Tertullian, the Lesser Mysteries at Eleusis commenced with a baptism by total immersion. According to him, this was so severe that he speaks of the Mysteries being revealed to the initiate thereafter, *if they survive*. It has been doubted whether Tertullian could have known so much about the Eleusian Mysteries, and it is likely such reconstructions borrow elements from several cults, rather than one. Nevertheless, such rituals of water, involving sacred springs and rivers as well as vessels of water, were a major part of ritual purifications and sacrifices. These rites which

constituted a major part of the Mysteries, of 'permitted' religion – often in its more archaic and miraculous forms – are identical in origin and conception with the rituals of goetia, or magic. Virgil speaks of purification, both of the dead and of those about to perform holy rites, by ritually washing or sprinkling with the help of sprigs of herbs. It is significant that Virgil – whose name was often synonymous with magic in the medieval mind – is quoted concerning such lustrations by Cornelius Agrippa. Such rituals indeed were part and parcel of the religion of the Greeks, and of the magicians. The rituals of purification and consecration with water and incense, which form an important part of the preliminaries of later ceremonial magic, are directly derived from Greek religious rites, originating in the Mysteries celebrated by the goeten. That, in their later form, rites similar to those of the magician form a major part of the rites of Catholic Christianity is no objection, for these have the same origin in pagan religion.



Constellations of the Northern Hemisphere
 Albrecht Dürer 1515
 (in collaboration with the astronomer Conrad Heinsigel)

GOETIC GALLERY:
ASTROLOGIA

THIS SECTION OF THE GOETIC GALLERY involves archaic star-lore, the predecessor of the astrology inherited from the Greeks by the West. The early astronomer Pherecydes links the origins of philosophy and astrology to the more ancient roots of goetia. His writings also linked an important mythological figure – who we shall encounter in the next phase of the *Argonautica* – with this background of archaic star-lore. In addition the origins of major aspects of Neoplatonist and Kabbalistic cosmology can be traced through him back to the Chaldeans and Ionian Greeks.

Pherecydes

The mentor of Pythagoras was Pherecydes, a Syrian thought to be versed in Chaldean astronomical theology, which was flourishing at this period. The Golden Age of Chaldean astronomy began approximately 600 BCE. It is known that by 523 BCE they were recording advance predictions of solar and lunar eclipses and of planetary conjunctions. Among the recorded accomplishments of Pherecydes were the devising of a sundial, and the prediction of solar and lunar eclipses. He also proposed a cosmology involving three eternal principles: Aether, Time and Earth, represented by Zas (Zeus), Chronos and Chthonie.

Zas (Zeus):

Power or Principle of Aether

Chronos:

Power or Principle of Time

Chthonie:

Material Principle

These three principles resemble those found in some forms of Zoroastrian thought, particularly the Zurvanist strain. In his system Aether is the active celestial principle; Chthonia is the material world or universe which is acted upon; Chronos or Time is the medium within which such action takes place. According to this conception Chronos produced Fire, Breath or Air and Water from his own seed. Chthonie was conceived as female, and a Latin account of his cosmology credits Zeus with rewarding her with the name Tellus or Earth. In Greek terms this would likely have been Gaia or Rhea, although all such names are at least partially interchangeable. Given her importance in the cosmology of Pherecydes she is most probably the Demeter with which his pupil Pythagoras was associated. In addition Pherecydes conceived the Universe as consisting of seven Spheres: Unbounded Space; the Sphere of the Fixed Stars, the Sphere of the five Wandering stars (Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Venus and Mercury); the Sun; Moon; Earth and Underworld.

Cosmology of Pherecydes

- 1 Sphere of Unbounded Space
- 2 Sphere of the Fixed Stars
- 3 Sphere of the Wandering Stars
- 4 Sphere of the Sun
- 5 Sphere of the Moon
- 6 Sphere of Earth
- 7 Sphere of the Underworld

This conception predates the concept of the Primum Mobile by thousands of years. Nevertheless it is recognisable as a direct precursor of the Neoplatonist and Qabalist cosmo-conceptions that were to follow. This understood, it is interesting to visualise the triad of Sun, Moon and

Underworld surrounding Earth as distant predecessors of the lower part of the Tree of Life.

Pherecydes is a pivotal figure, standing between Chaldean star-lore and the astrology of the Greeks, and between 'irrational' myth and 'rational' classicism. Unlike his pupil Pythagoras he did not bear the title philosopher; his astronomy, while advanced, involved a magical view of the universe expressed in mythical terms.

Mesopotamian star-lore, the predecessor of astrology, certainly existed before 1600 BCE. This is demonstrated by the Venus tablet of King Amisaduqa. It is likely enough that this was preceded by a long period of development, perhaps two hundred years. Great strides were made in Mesopotamian astronomy from around 700 BCE, related to the lunar calendar and the prediction of eclipses. By the late 4th century BCE the Chaldeans were capable of producing accurate predictive tables of lunar positions.

The history of astrology, then, consists of two strands. The oldest of these is the taking of omens from the observation of the heavens. This existed among many peoples, without a comprehensive method of forecasting, from the earliest times. Its existence undoubtedly contributed to the later development of astronomy and astrology. The second strand, which produced the main elements of the system known as astrology in the West, was both predictive and comprehensive. The more ancient approaches did not have the methodology to forecast planetary positions, a deficiency largely caused by imprecise chronology.

This is not the place for a comprehensive history of astrology, still less an account of its theory and practice. Nevertheless, astrology is of critical importance in the development of western magic; it is also the basis of much of the symbolism of the grimoires. This being the case some account of it is an essential part of this study. The astrological art of divination in the West is of Greek origin. This is to say that as a rational system, with a strongly developed mathematical and geometric underpinning, its origins are Greek. Against this however is the dependence of the Greeks on Eastern nations, including Egypt. Of particular importance was Chaldea,

whose achievements in mathematics and observational astronomy initiated the development from star-lore to astrology proper.

This aside, the star-lore that preceded astrology has more connections with the roots of Goetia, and had a powerful influence upon the magical traditions dependent upon it. It is a fact that astrology in its rationalised Greek form has a more visible influence; however its 'primitive' predecessor continues to influence ritual magic up to the present day. This influence is visible in the magical papyri, and their descendents, the grimoires, as well as in such influential traditions as Kabbalah and Gnosticism.

In modern occultism the astrological decans, ten degree divisions of the zodiac, are frequently associated with the angels of the Shemhamphorash. Following Dr. Rudd they are also – quite erroneously – connected with the spirits of the *Goetia of Solomon* (attributed either to the quinaries or to night and day aspects of the decans). Early on in Egypt and in the Ptolemaic and Roman period the decans were recognised first as gods and subsequently as daimones, and had a significant role in the magic of the time. The name Photeth, see Taurus in the 1st table following, appears as one of the barbarous names in the Headless Rite. This was made famous in revised form by Crowley as *Liber Samekh*, but the original is now rightly recognised as important. Many characters of the magical alphabet known as Celestial Script are identical to older sigils or characters of the decans.

GEOSOPHIA

Ptolemaic Decan Gods

SIGN	1 ST DECAN	2 ND DECAN	3 RD DECAN
♈	Sit	Chnoumis	Charchnoumis
♉	Etet	Photeth	Tum
♊	Oueste-Bikuti	Aphoso	Soychoue
♋	Tpechonte	Chontare	Chontachre
♌		Sptchne	'Reoyu
♍	Sesme, Sisesme	Konime	Smat
♎		Sru	Sisru
♏		Tpechy	Chy
♐	Tpebioy	Bioy, Tpibioy	Chontare
♑	Chontarche	Siket	Chouy
♒	Eru, Aroy	Remenaare	Thosolk
♓	Oyare	Sothis	

ASTROLOGIA

Names of the Decans according to Ostanes







SIGN	1 ST DECAN	2 ND DECAN	3 RD DECAN
♈	Aidoneus	Persephone	Eros
♉	Charis	Horai	Litai
♊	Tethys	Cybele	Praxidice
♋	Nike	Herakles	Hecate
♌	Hephæstus	Isis	Sarapis
♍	Themis	Moirai	Hestia
♎	Erinys	Kouros	Nemesis
♏	Nymphai	Leto	Kairos
♐	Loimos	Kore	Ananke
♑	Asclepius	Hygieia	Tolma
♒	Dike	Phobos	Osiris
♓	Oceanus	Dolos	Elpis

GEOSOPHIA

Decan Names according to Firmicus (4th century)

SIGN	DECAN	NAME OF DECAN	GOD OF DECAN
♈	1	Assicean	Arouris
	2	Lencher	Anubis
	3	Asentacer	Horus
♉	1	Asicath	Serapis
	2	Viruasoo	Helitomenos
	3	Aharp	Apophis
♊	1	Thesogar	Taatus
	2	Verasua	Cyclops
	3	Tepisatosoa	Titan
♋	1	Sothis	Apoltun
	2	Syth	Hecate
	3	Thuisimis	Mercophta
♌	1	Aphruimis	Typhon
	2	Sitlacer	Perseus
	3	Phuonidie	Nepthe
♍	1	Thumis	Isis
	2	Thopitus	Pi-Osiris
	3	Aphut	Cronus

ASTROLOGIA

SIGN	DECAN	NAME OF DECAN	GOD OF DECAN
	1	Serucuth	Zeuda
	2	Aterechinis	Omphtha
	3	Arepien	Ophionus
	1	Sentacer	Arimanius
	2	Tepiseuth/Tepsisen	Merota
	3	Senciner	Panotragus
	1	Eregbuo	Tolmophtha
	2	Sagen	Tomras
	3	Chenen	Zeraph
	1	Themeso	Soda
	2	Epima	Riruphta
	3	Homoth	Monuphta
	1	Oroasoer	Brondeus
	2	Astiro	Vucula
	3	Tepisatras	Proteus
	1	Archatapias	Rephan, [Rempham?]
	2	Thopibui	Sourut
	3	Atembui	Phallophorus

THE ARGONAUTICA: BOOK II
ONWARD TO COLCHIS



ALITTLE INTO THE SECOND BOOK OF THE ARGONAUTICA the heroes come to the land of Bithynia, which was a Thracian kingdom in Asia Minor. Here the Argonauts encounter Phineus, a blind prophet, during an interlude which is full of meaningful details and events. Among them are dreadful manifestations of vengeful underworld deities, magical countermeasures, details of the day to day life of a soothsayer, several sacrificial rites, and a god of the Mystery cults more ancient than the Olympians.

This point in the epic contains so much that a focussed commentary is essential. With several important tangents to explore, details which have no direct bearing on the study have to be omitted. Interested readers, who will likely be reading the *Voyage of the Argo* for themselves, will be able to explore these readily enough. It should be noted that some versions of the legend place the meeting with Phineus in Thrace, rather than the opposite shore, but since Apollonius is our guide this need not detain us. In any case the Thracian connections of Phineus are well enough represented by our text.

Phineus himself is a figure with whom many variant myths are associated. Most details concerning him do not require thorough commentary, only that he was a son of Agenor, and thus related to Europa, Minos and Rhadamanthus, as well as Tityos. Phineus was made a prophet by Apollo; he was either blinded for offending the gods, or simply through age. More importantly, he was subject to terrible afflictions by vengeful underworld beings known as Erinyes or Furies. They appeared every time a meal was set before him, snatched up most of the food and befouled the rest. Through them the life of Phineus was a cycle of terror, humiliation and gnawing hunger.

Phineus had foreseen his deliverance from this dreadful vengeance of the gods; those who were to be his saviours were two heroes among the Argonauts. These were the two sons of the North Wind, Zetes and Calais. They were brothers in law to Phineus, and possessed of the power of flight. Their father, Boreas, the North Wind himself, was not only a god but a Thracian king. The name Hyperborea, which pertained to a mysterious region associated with Apollo, means behind the North Wind, and is derived from the name Boreas. The interlocking relationships of this family are indicative of an alternative pantheon, separate from the Olympian cultus, and older.

The Erinyes

As the Erinyes are among the most important figures of the Greek underworld they deserve a digression here. These avenging deities dwelt in Tartarus, the deepest region of dark Hades. Their purpose was to punish wrongdoers, in this world and the next. In particular they avenged disobedience to parents, disrespect towards the aged, perjury, murder, crimes against the sacred customs of hospitality, and mistreatment of suppliants. The name Erinyes is the most ancient; they came to be known also as the Eumenides, meaning the *well-meaning* or *soothed goddesses*, a title apparently used by way of euphemism, as people feared to mention them by name. On the other hand this title is not entirely undeserved; while horrific to wrongdoers, so far as those wronged were concerned their nature was benign. In consequence they possessed numerous shrines, one of which plays a major role in Sophocles' play *Oedipus at Colonus*.

In form they appeared as fearsome maidens with wings like a bat's, having either serpents entwined in their hair or serpents rather than hair, their eyes dripping with blood, and dressed in black, blood stained garments. In one hand they held a burning torch, and in the other a whip of scorpions. Terror, pallor, rage and death attended them at all times. They are related to the Sirens, who while often portrayed as fishtailed maidens in later art, were originally bird women, and are strongly connected to funerary ritual and the décor of tombs. A possible relation to another group

of women suggests itself, the snake wreathed hair and torches are strikingly reminiscent of the Mænads or Bacchantes of the Dionysian cult.

Their parentage was variously attributed by the ancients. According to Hesiod they sprang from the blood spilt by Kronos when he castrated Ouranos with his frightful sickle. It is noteworthy that the birth of Aphrodite sprang from this same event. Sophocles tells us their parents were Nox, goddess of night, and the god of the infernal river, Acheron. According to others they were daughters of Hades and Persephone, of whose court they certainly formed a prominent part. All agree they were amongst the most ancient divinities, older far than Zeus and the Olympians. They received divine honours throughout the Greek world in accord with this status. Their sacrifices consisted of doves and black sheep; and those attending them bore branches of cedar, alder, hawthorn and juniper, as well as saffron. According to some libations to the Eumenides consisted of honey and wine. However according to Sophocles, who was born at Colonus near one of their sanctuaries, the libations were three in number the last of which at least was wineless, consisting of the old chthonic offering of mixed water and honey. Other references are specific that their libations were of *nephalia*, the Greek term for the offering of mixed honey and water. Circe makes this offering when Jason and Medea visit her as suppliants.

The antiquity of the Erinyes is demonstrated by a singular form, Erinys. This is the name of a goddess found in the Linear B inscriptions from Mycenaean Crete. The name also survives in the guise of Demeter Erinys. This archaic form of Demeter is horse headed, suggestive of nightmare; her paramour is Poseidon, himself the patron of the necromantic oracle of Tainaron. The origins of the Medusa figure connect with this level of Demeter's development. Poseidon's association with the horse and with water are natural counterparts to her as a chthonic goddess of death and growth of vegetation.

In Homer and elsewhere their names are given as: Aello (*squall*), Celaeno (*dark, like a storm cloud*), Okypete (*swift-flying*) and Podarge (*swift-foot*), all names that speak of storm-winds. According to Virgil and later writers they were three in number, and bore the names Tisiphone (*avenging*

murder), Alecto (*unceasing*) and Megæra (*grudging*). They were known to the Romans as the Furies. These then were the horrific underworld deities that afflicted Phineus. The sons of Boreas took pity on Phineus, and – having assured themselves that no divine displeasure would befall them for assisting him – they awaited the next appearance of the Furies, and pursued them. They came very close to catching them, even touching them at one point, and would certainly have slain them had they done so. This was prevented by Iris, the female messenger of the gods (who unlike Hermes seems to have had no underworld role), who descended from Olympus to intervene. Taking the mighty oath of the gods upon the waters of the infernal river Styx, she assured them that from now on Phineus would be liberated from his terrible plight. The epic tells us that at this point the Furies withdrew to the cavern on Mount Dicte, one of the most important mystery centres of Crete. It is interesting and important that deities of the Greek underworld are here associated with the mysteries of the cave of initiation. Important too that while Cretan religion differed in many respects from Mycenaean, the underworld Judges of later Classical mythology had been kings of the island.

To resume: Iris returned to Olympus, and Calais and Zetes returned to Bithynia; the Furies they had pursued returned to Crete. While the sons of Boreas were gone the Argonauts busied themselves removing the traces of the foul visitants. They made a sacrifice of sheep, prepared a feast, and talked through the night as they waited with their host. He prophesied and forewarned them of the dangers they would face on their journey.

A little before dawn the sons of Boreas returned, and gave a full account of their pursuit of the Furies, the intervention of Iris, and her promise on behalf of Phineus. The pursuit, by Thracian heroes, of the Furies afflicting Phineus, resembles similar flights of shamans and magicians of many cultures. Such flights, or journeys into the spirit world, are often undertaken on behalf of a member of the tribe, or other client. The purpose of such journeys is, often, to fight with spirits who have brought illness, misfortune, even death to the person on whose behalf the magician is working; and thus end the affliction.

When the sons of Boreas recount their adventures they are, naturally enough, at the home of Phineus, who is a prophet or soothsayer. Similarly, of course, they have an audience. This setting is important, and highly suggestive. Just as the pursuit of the Furies suggests magical practices, so the tale they tell on their return can be compared with the singing and acting out of events in the spirit world by the tribal magician, to be witnessed by those gathered for the occasion. Once again *The Voyage of the Argo* appears to be commemorating legendary themes connected with archaic magical rites. The heroes are sons of a Thracian king who is also a god; such kings were archetypal magicians, and priests of their own Mystery. The same would apply to his heirs, and it matters comparatively little whether these were his sons or twin manifestations of the god he represented. The territory in which the pursuit begins is also Thracian. With all these Thracian elements, the epic tradition of the Argo is nevertheless a Greek epic more ancient than Homer.

The Argonauts' journey involves contact with cultures of Thrace and Asia Minor and the story involves a mythic account of contact with the magical traditions of these regions. The legend can be interpreted to suggest such traditions entered Greece when contact with these cultures increased, but such interpretation remains speculative. What is certain is that the account of the journey tells us much about the integration of these traditions with those of the Greeks, whether or not the Greeks had previously possessed similar traditions.

After the night journey which relieves him, Phineus stoically accepts his blindness, and prays for an imminent death, making the interesting observation that this will bring him perfect bliss. This is reminiscent of the traditions surrounding the Thracian Zalmoxis, whose initiates anticipated a pleasing future life. These traditions, it has been plausibly suggested, were at the root of the supposedly Pythagorean doctrine of reincarnation. Through this, and other details, significant traces of living traditions can be seen to surround and inform the story. This includes events following the night journey of the sons of Boreas, which reveal interesting aspects of the activities and life of a seer.

Shortly after dawn, and an intimate conversation between Jason and Phineus, visitors begin to appear. This, so the text assures us, was not an exceptional circumstance, but a daily occurrence. There are many of these visitors and they bring with them food offerings, in return for which Phineus foretells their futures, in matters great and small. It is made clear that these visitors are not distinguished by social class, but includes rich and poor, and Phineus treats them equally. He accords them the same courtesy on this day, even though he has cause for celebration, as well as honoured guests in the form of his saviours. One of his visitors in particular is of interest, by the name of Paraebius. This man was devoted to Phineus as a result of assistance he had received from the seer. His father had offended a tree spirit – known as a Hamadryad – by cutting down a particular tree, and from this event Paraebius suffered an inherited curse. He had been freed by Phineus who instructed him how to appease the Hamadryad by building an altar and making appropriate offerings and prayers for release.

Phineus next instructed the Argonauts how to continue on their journey, and deal with the hazards they had yet to face. They were then prevented from leaving immediately by an adverse seasonal wind, with a detailed and fascinating mythology attached to it. This Apollonius details in the narrative, not putting it into the mouth of any particular character. Of special interest in what he relates is the figure of Aristæus:

And at dawn the Etesian winds blew strongly, which by the command of Zeus blow over every land equally. Cyrene, the tale goes, once tended sheep along the marsh-meadow of Peneus among men of old time; for dear to her were maidenhood and a couch unstained. But, as she guarded her flock by the river, Apollo carried her off far from Hæmonia and placed her among the nymphs of the land, who dwelt in Libya near the Myrtosian height. And here to Phoebus she bore Aristæus whom the Hæmonians, rich in corn-land, call Hunter and Shepherd. The god made her a nymph there, of long life and a huntress, and his son he brought while still an infant to be nurtured in the cave of Cheiron. And to him when he grew to manhood the Muses

gave a bride, and taught him the arts of healing and of prophecy; and they made him the keeper of their sheep, of all that grazed on the Athamantian plain of Phthia and round steep Othrys and the sacred stream of the river Apidanus. But when from heaven Sirius scorched the Minoan Isles, and for long there was no respite for the inhabitants, then by the injunction of the Far-Darter they summoned Aristæus to ward off the pestilence. And by his father's command he left Phthia and made his home in Ceos, and gathered together the Parrhasian people who are of the lineage of Lycaon, and he built a great altar to Zeus Icmaeus, and duly offered sacrifices upon the mountains to the star Sirius, and to Zeus son of Kronos himself. And on this account it is that Etesian winds from Zeus cool the land for forty days, and in Ceos even now the priests offer sacrifices before the rising of the Dog-star.

This brief mention of Aristæus, and its interesting context, is one of many widely distributed references to him in Classical literature, and in archaeology. The character of Aristæus constitutes an extraordinarily well developed figure, although the various references to him have to be collated to understand his importance and relevance to this study. This I have attempted to do below.

Aristæus

Classical scholars and other academics have tentatively identified some archaic hero figures of the pre-Olympian traditions as gods of older cults. In the case of Aristæus the identification is not tentative but certain. While he survives in Classical myth as a king, hero and benefactor of humanity, his earlier status as a deity of considerable importance is strongly established. This is not to say that no obscurity surrounds him, as it does even various Olympian deities; nevertheless his powers, pedigree, cult centres and other details are sufficient to identify him as a god.

By collating the references and information relevant to Aristæus a detailed and significant picture emerges. He is revealed as an important

pre-Olympian deity, with a substantial role in the Mystery traditions; the Mysteries of Dionysus in particular. His origins are apparently in Thessaly, a 'barbarous' region north of Greece. In Classical tradition Aristæus was usually called a son of Apollo and the nymph Cyrene, a powerful hunting goddess. His brother by the same parents was the prophet Idmon, one of the Argonauts. In fact Aristæus is older than the Classical Apollo, and was likely both son and lover of this Cyrene. Bacchylides gives his parents as Ouranos and Gaia, Heaven and Earth, which may reflect older traditions. On the subject of alternative parentage, the Scholiast on the *Argonautica* cites Pherecydes as calling Aristæus the father of Hecate. Besides her relevance to our study as a patron of magic, Hecate also played a major role in the Mysteries of Eleusis, doubly underlining the importance of this identification.

The Bœotian form of Aristæus was referred to in later times as the pastoral Apollo. This likely reflects the way many older gods were either absorbed by the Olympians or demoted in status. In Classical sources again, Aristæus was born in Libya, and Hermes himself acted as midwife. This reflects his status at Cyrene; a colony in Libya founded by settlers from the island of Thera. In this version the city took its name from this event. The colony possessed a temple to Cyrene and Aristæus as their principal deities. A colossal head from a statue of Aristæus is in the collection at the Detroit Institute of Arts. This head, which is 52 centimetres tall, is thought to come from the temple at Cyrene. Its serene expression is reminiscent of images of Apollo. Pindar, who is a major Classical source on Aristæus, has him taken by Hermes to the earth goddess Gaia. She feeds the child on the nectar and ambrosia that are the food and drink of the gods, and makes him immortal. The prophecy of Chiron, foretelling the birth of Aristæus to Cyrene, says that Gaia feeding him in this way will ordain him an immortal being: *a Zeus or Holy Apollo*.

The reality is that Aristæus predates his association with Zeus, Apollo and Hermes, and exemplifies their superimposed relation to the older traditions. His name is in fact a title, from the same root as aristocrat and means best. Similar terms are used to describe the greatest and bravest heroes, and the prizes bestowed on them. He bore the additional titles of

Nomius (*shepherd*) and Agreus (*hunter*). All three titles are mentioned by Pindar as being applied to Apollo or Zeus. However, Agreus is a title not only of Aristaeus but of Pan, while Nomius was also applied to Pan, with Hermes and Apollo. Other titles of Zeus are frequently associated with Aristæus. Another of his titles is Alexeter, meaning helper, guardian or champion; literally one who keeps off, a powerful defender from calamity or enemies.

He was given into the care of the Earth goddess Gaia and the goddesses of the hours or seasons (Horæ); or as others say of nymphs who were children of Hermes. From these he received instruction in dairy farming, vine-keeping and bee-keeping. Others say he learned these arts from the Muses at a later date. In his myth the daughters of Hermes, the goddesses of the Hours and the Muses are likely identical; they probably represent priestesses of an archaic cult, in which Aristaeus and Cyrene were god and goddess. This possibility is reinforced by the roles of certain women in the myth and rites of Dionysus, as will be shown. His delivery into Gaia's charge indicates his origins as a Titan. The Titans were the offspring of Gaia and Ouranos. Pherecydes, the star-gazing mentor of Pythagoras who was introduced earlier, identified Aristæus of Ceos with Astraios; the Titan who was father of the winds and stars, and the husband of the goddess of the dawn.

Aristæus next spent some time in Boeotia, until Apollo put him in the care of the centaur Chiron (others add the nymph Melissa) for further, perhaps more esoteric instruction. He afterwards went to Thebes, where he was instructed in prophecy and healing by the Muses (of course, these were things in which Chiron could readily have instructed him). His education by Chiron, who some accounts consider to be his father, taken with his Theban connections, are reminiscent of the prophet Tiresias. While under the tuition of the Muses he also acted as shepherd for their flocks. While protecting the Muses' herds Aristæus perfected his understanding of hunting. These skills included hunting with pits and nets, among other methods; his mother was a mighty huntress and he inherited these skills from her. It is noteworthy that both Aristæus and Hermes are represented bearing a sheep on their shoulders. Further, there is consider-

able overlap in Classical myth between Apollo and Hermes, relating to prophecy, guarding flocks and other matters. Aristæus unites the shared attributes of the two gods in himself, just as he has attributes claimed by Olympian Zeus. The clear implication is that he preceded them in local cults typifying the chthonic traditions that preceded the more homogeneous Olympian religion.

In Classical myth too he travelled widely throughout the world, this is a standard mythological device accounting for his widespread worship. He settled in Greece where he married Autonœ. His bride was the daughter of Cadmus, son of Agenor and brother of Europa, a family which recurs time and again in this study. The children of Aristæus and Autonœ included a daughter named Macris, the nurse of Dionysus, and a son, the hunter Actæon. This son – whose myth while comparatively minor is considerably better known – suffered a cruel punishment for seeing the goddess Artemis bathing in a spring. He was transformed into a stag and killed by his own hunting dogs. It is not to be overlooked that the mother of Aristæus was herself a hunting goddess like Artemis.

Desolated at his loss, Aristæus returned to travelling, visiting Sardinia, Sicily (he is particularly associated with Mount Etna), and Greek Italy. Everywhere he went he dispensed knowledge, that of bee-keeping, and the cultivation of the vine and olive, the source of wine and oil. In return for these blessings he was worshipped in all of these places. At the island of Cos or Ceos, which was settled by his descendents, he ended a drought and plague by building a temple to Zeus Icmaeus, giver of moisture. He was worshipped by the islanders, sometimes under the name of Zeus Aristæus. From here he travelled on to Thrace where the best known part of his myth took place.

In the old chronology of Greek myth, the above history of Aristæus has already occurred before the voyage of the Argonauts. The events described below occur later, and also concern the subsequent history of Orpheus.

Aristæus in later tradition

It is a curious fact that Aristæus receives considerable attention from authors in the Hellenistic period. The most important among these is Virgil, who mentions his role in the death of Eurydice. Apollonius of Rhodes gives him substantial mention, and some of his other allusions connect with the god. Still later authors, such as Oppian and Nonnus, also make substantial additions to our knowledge of Aristæus. It is important to note that Virgil's reference to him connects Aristæus with the legend of Orpheus, while Oppian and Nonnus connect him directly with the Mysteries of Dionysus. That Apollonius does not mention his connection with these traditions is not surprising, he had a particularly strong sense of the logical ordering of mythic history, and events in his *Argonautica* precede the love of Orpheus for Eurydice. Many attempts have been made to portray Orpheus as a real or mythical reformer of the Dionysian rites, whose orgiastic nature he greatly reduced. Others have shown that the death of Orpheus itself resembles the death of Dionysus, suggesting that their rites as well as their cults were rivals or alternative forms. In any case the involvement of Aristæus in this body of lore is considerable and worthy of close examination.

In the past, when conventional Classical studies were widespread, it was commonplace to portray Virgil as the rival in Latin of Homer. In the 18th century Lemprière described Virgil as basing his poetry on historic fact, and providing entirely credible origins for Roman religious traditions. There is no doubt that his tracing of 'Trojan' traditions in Roman religion involves far more than invention, whether the traditions involved are Etruscan, Phoenician or brought by Greeks from Asia Minor.

Although a late part of the tradition concerning him, Aristæus' place in the myth of Orpheus as recorded in the writings of Virgil is the best-known reference to him. According to this version Aristæus, while in Thrace fell in love with Eurydice, the bride of Orpheus, who he pursued when she fled from him. She was bitten by a snake while fleeing, and died in consequence. Orpheus then sought to reclaim her from the Underworld. Aristæus meanwhile was punished by the nymphs for his crime by the

destruction of his bees with a devastating sickness. Anguished by this loss, Aristæus sought the advice of his mother, Cyrene. The manner in which he contacted her is significant. In Classical myth Cyrene was the daughter of the river god Peneus. Aristæus took himself to this river and invoked Cyrene with a lamentation. That is to say, his call to her is delivered in a wailing tone, like a goen. She told him to seize the reluctant prophet-god of the sea, Proteus, and demand a solution from him. This he did, not merely holding Proteus but binding him, and was advised that his plight was in punishment for causing the death of Eurydice. The involvement of Proteus in this stage of the myth may be an interpolation or local variant; perhaps replacing Cyrene as oracular goddess.

From Cyrene he learned that he was to raise four altars to the Dryads, tree nymphs who were companions of Eurydice. (Such demi-goddesses were traditionally offered milk, oil and honey, all moist substances which Aristæus was concerned with. On occasion they also received the sacrifice of a goat). On these four altars Aristæus was to sacrifice four heifers and four bulls. He was then to leave the bodies where they lay for nine days, and then return with offerings of poppies for forgetfulness, a fatted calf and a black ewe. The ewe was to propitiate Orpheus, who had joined Eurydice in the underworld. Aristæus followed these instructions, and on returning on the ninth day found that swarms of bees had appeared from the rotten carcasses.

Oppian, a Greek poet of the 3rd century CE named Aristæus as the foster father of Dionysus. The holy choir of the Mystery rite he named as the daughters of Cadmos: Ino, Aguae and Autonoe. These women had taken the sacred coffer containing the infant Dionysus, wreathed it and placed in upon the back of an ass. They came to the shores of the Euripos (a strait dividing Boetia from the island of Macris, better known as Euboea) where they met with an old seafarer and his sons. These they beseeched to carry them across the water to the island. Having reached the island they carried the infant god to Aristæus, in his mountaintop cave. Here Aristæus dispensed his knowledge of the arts to the local people. He received the infant Dionysus from Ino's coffer, and reared him as his son with the assistance of beekeeping Dryades and Nymphs. He also received the assist-

ance of the maidens of the island, who presumably enacted this rite there, taking the part of the holy choir and nymphs.

Aristæus is also mentioned by another later writer, Nonnus of the 5th century CE, whose epic poem the *Dionysiaca* deserves wider attention. He records a contest between Dionysus and Aristæus, in which the gods compared wine and honey. Dionysus is judged the winner, although Zeus admires the honey and Apollo is jealous of the preference given his son's rival. Although late, Nonnus possessed incredible erudition, and the tradition appears to be old. It apparently records the triumph of wine over an older intoxicant, honey-mead. By this reading, Aristæus represents truly ancient traditions assimilated by the Dionysian mysteries. His role in the preservation of the god, as well as the death of Eurydice mentioned by Virgil, likely reflects this. The snake in this myth bears comparison with the snake as a common emblem of heroes and the chthonic realm generally.

In the traditions of Boetia and Euboea, Aristæus and his daughter Macris reared the infant Dionysus. He was also associated with Silenus and Pan. In these 'backward' local traditions Aristæus was the direct equivalent of Silenus, the mentor of Dionysus. In some traditions the figure of Silenus is multiplied, and one of these alternative forms – called Sileni – was named Astraios, and was associated with Aristæus. The Aristæus of Thessaly, which is likely his original home, is very close in nature to Pan. In Thessaly Pan sometimes appeared as twin gods, the Panes Agreus and Nomios. These un-Olympian traditions are the background of later mythology; they thus provide interesting pointers to the nature of Aristæus, but also the origins of the later gods. Evander is said to have introduced the cult of Pan and Silenus to Italy, where they became the basis of the festival named Lupercalia.

According to a tradition recorded by a Byzantine scholiast a Giant named Aristæus was the only one of that race of archaic gods to survive the war with the Olympians. The Giants and Titans are often confused in Classical sources, and Aristæus may originally be a Titan and son of Ouranos. The only male Titan to survive their war with the Olympians, according to Classical myth, is Prometheus. Aristæus survived as he was

hidden by Gaia, goddess of Earth, at Mount Etna in Sicily in the shape of a giant dung beetle (*Aitnaios kantharos*). Of this Suidas says: *the fire of heaven did not reach him, nor did Etna harm him*. Although very likely a late Hellenistic tradition, there are many interesting aspects to this account. Firstly, the connection with the beetle places Aristæus in the context of the systems of correspondences evolved in Alexandria; in these the beetle is a symbol of the Zodiacal sign of Cancer. In symbolism of more ancient date, the crab was associated with the Telchines, and its pincers with the tongs of magical metalworkers. The first places Aristæus in the magical traditions of late antiquity, and connects him with Hermes as the Olympian ruler of the Sign. The latter suggests links to Cabiric societies and rites such as that on Hephæstus' island of Lemnos. The connection with Etna is also significant: Typhon, also of the race of Giants was buried beneath it by Zeus. Possibly these are related themes, with Gaia's preservation of Aristæus and Typhon's supposed captivity there being earlier and later versions of the same story. That Hephæstus had his forge there is also important, he was assisted by the Cyclopes, likely identical with the giants in the pre-Olympian. Etna is also associated with the cult of Persephone, and forms part of the legend of Empedocles.

The motives of various later authors in reviving the fortunes of the archaic god Aristæus are obscure. That they succeeded in placing considerable emphasis on him is inescapable. What is certain is that the state cult of the Olympians had undergone a decline in this period, and the older chthonic rites experienced a renaissance, enlivened by their adoption by the now resurgent Orphic and Pythagorean cults.

Aristæus was credited with planting sylphion in Libya, this sacred plant figures in the legend of Phormion and his meeting with the Dioscuri. The plant, a form of fennel, is now extinct, but was an effective oral contraceptive in great demand in the ancient world. He was also initiated into the Mysteries of Dionysus, and according to some accounts accompanied him on his conquest of India. The involvement of Aristæus in the myths of Apollo, in company with Hermes, Orpheus and Dionysus, is highly significant. There are indications that the cult of Apollo underwent significant changes, along with the nature of the oracle at Delphi. The oracle was

originally chthonic. That a god whose nature was at least partly chthonic was associated or identical with the original Apollo, prior to changes at Delphi, is also a strong possibility. That Aristæus appears to have begun his career in Thessaly, to become, finally, a deity of a Greek colony in Libya is strongly reminiscent of the route of Apollonius' *Argonautica*. His history concludes with a mysterious disappearance, near another mountain with associations with Typhon. This was Mount Hæmus, which separates Thrace and Thessaly; appropriate for a rural god worshipped equally by Thracians and Greeks.

Silenus

Having thus far introduced Aristæus, it is well to consider the god Silenus, easily overlooked as a minor character in later mythology. Whether Greek or Latin, Hellenistic poets with their rural idyll were very fond of nymphs, shepherds, and of course satyrs. Pan, Silenus and other characters, including Aristæus were undoubtedly revived – and to a degree reinvented – at this time, but some very serious attention to earlier myth was also involved, concerning Dionysus as well as Pan. In this context older satyrs were frequently referred to as Sileni, but the prototype of them all was Silenus himself, the constant companion of Dionysus (or Bacchus as he was otherwise known), his mentor and foster-father. In common with the other satyrs the father of Silenus was generally said to be Hermes. Hermes birth and rapid growth in a cave already connect him with the Dionysian formula. According to others Silenus was the son of Pan himself, who like Hermes was a god of shepherds. This is curious, since this raises the likelihood of Pan and Silenus mirroring the Thessalian 'double Pan', perhaps with Silenus the younger of the two. The myth may well record a more primitive tradition of divine kingship – very much on the model of the Thracian Hero – with Pan and Silenus, and then Silenus and Dionysus being the roles of older and younger dynasts.

Another tradition has Silenus born from a drop of the blood of Ouranus when mutilated by Kronos. This may be a clue to the older nature of Silenus, as Aphrodite resulted from the same attack. There are also

some very odd resemblances between Silenus and Aphrodite's husband in Olympian myth, the god Hephæstus. Other accounts of his parentage also exist, and accounts of his birthplace are also varied. According to some he was born at Malea at Lesbos, the wine from that region being famous in antiquity. Others had him born at Nysa, like Dionysus, but there are at least ten possible places of that name to choose from. Of these one of the most significant is on the coast of Euboea, placing it in the Dionysian myth of Aristæus. Another Nysa was placed in Ethiopia, although curiously enough this name was supposedly once applied to Lesbos.

Silenus was at one point a water deity of Lydia, a god of springs and running water. As is common with water deities, including nymphs, he was also a prophetic god. This accounts for King Midas lacing a spring with wine in order to extract a prophecy from Silenus. His origin in Asia Minor also explains why he plays an important part in myths involving Phrygia. The Dionysus of this mythic line is the Phrygian Dionysus, Sabazius, rather than the Cretan, Thracian or other Dionysus, although these tend to be combined in the comprehensive literary accounts.

According to one such myth, while Dionysus is in Asia Minor Silenus became separated from his army, probably left behind while asleep. Phrygian peasants found him and took him to king Midas, the king knew who he was because he was an initiate of the Mysteries. He was much taken with his guest and entertained him for ten days. On returning Silenus to Dionysus the god was so pleased that he offered Midas whatever gift he desired, which was the occasion of Midas asking that all he touched turned to gold. When even his food was so affected he requested Dionysus to remove the fatal gift, and was instructed to bathe in the source of the river Pactolus near Mount Tmolus (important in Dionysian myth, and rich in gold). That Phrygia was rich in gold undeniably plays a role in the formation of this myth, but there is much to suggest a religious and ritual context for the myth itself. A variant of this part of the myth places Midas in a desert where the only fountain is spouting gold, and Dionysus grants his request to change it to water. While gold undeniably excites men's interest in these stories, the connection with water is more important to understanding the nature of the deities concerned. Dionysus, Silenus and

Aristæus are all 'moisteners,' the connection with wine is in large part a secondary benefit.

Details of the myths concerning Midas are an appropriate adjunct to this examination of Silenus and the non-Olympian cults. These details illustrate how Thracian and Phrygian traditions influenced or originated Greek cults relevant to our study. The setting of the meeting of Midas and Silenus described above for example is notable. The Satyr was brought bound in flowers to Midas in his rose gardens. These were located on Mount Bromion or Bermion in Macedonia, where traditionally Midas was king of the Briges prior to his leading the migration to Asia Minor where they became the Phrygians. These rose gardens are recorded as a natural phenomena by Herodotus, who mentions the occasion in passing.

The Vision of Apollo

After leaving Phineus the Argonauts accomplished the passage between the Clashing Rocks by following the instructions of the seer, and were filled with confidence. They passed now into the Black Sea, where no Greek mariner had gone before. They travelled across open sea opposite the coast of Bithynia. After a day and night of labouring at the oars they drew into harbour at the island of Thynias. Here they saw a vision of Apollo. He appeared to them as a mighty and beautiful god, with his gold flowing locks, bearing a silver bow in his hand and having a quiver slung on his back. However, this was no mere ethereal presentiment, the earth quaked as he stepped upon the island, and the waves surged mightily at his passing. The context of this vision is important, for Apollo did not dwell always at one place. He was now travelling from Lycia, home of the fiery mountain of Hephæstus, to the land of Hyperborea, which is clearly identified here with the land of the Scythians, North of the Black Sea. This was likely his original home, for the Scythians had long ago invaded Asia Minor, and may have brought his worship with them.

Beneath the surface of Classical mythology, there is much mystery concerning Apollo. In his Classical form he is taken as embodying everything

later civilisations admired about the Greeks. Yet if anything about him is clear it is that this form was the product of layer after layer of superimposition. Take for example his association with the Sun, a major aspect of his nature in the later period. This apotheosis is achieved at the expense of the earlier Sun god, Helios. In Homer there is absolutely no trace of his solar nature, which dates to around 400 BCE. Indeed, our first glimpse of him in the *Iliad* is not as a bringer of light, but of plague. The inconsistencies surrounding Apollo are evident at every turn. The closer we look the more the older traditions and attributes concerning him clash with the later developments. To take the simplest of these contradictory elements, why should a supposed Sun god have a silver bow as one of their major attributes? Surely if such a symbol is suggestive of either of the luminaries it is the Moon? Reaching deeper into the mystery, his other major attribute is the lyre. This instrument, as has been mentioned several times, was thought to be more civilised than the flute, which was associated with orgiastic cults among the barbarians. The civilised notions he came to represent were stately, while the cults of the barbarians were associated with frenzy and loss of control. Yet Apollo is the god associated with prophecy in a state of frenzy.

A famous underground necromanteion, at Hieropolis in Phrygia, was sited beneath a temple of Apollo. The necromanteion however was not served by a Pythoness or by priests of Apollo, but by priests of Cybele. This is a striking departure from the usual image of Apollo, and given his important relationship with seers and Sibyls the darker side of the god requires urgent clarification.

The god Apollo in the Classical world (and to a large extent in the later Hellenistic world) is the god of light, reason and the civilised arts. There is however no trace of this in Homer, where the role of Sun god is wholly that of Helios. It is true that his ancient link with prophecy – a form of divine madness – was retained in Classical Greece. However his new image conflicts strongly with the old. His public relations makeover made him the icon of the new social model; more recently this image was endorsed by both Muller and Nietzsche as the original form, but the evidence against this is compelling.

Our first introduction to Apollo in Homer is as the inflictor of plague on the camp of the Greeks. His arrows bring disease, striking animals, then men, so that foul charnel fires smoke throughout the camp. One of his titles is Apollo Lykos – the root of lycanthropy – for the beast of the god was the wolf. These attributes represent a side of the god far from the radiance of the Sun and the light of reason.

When looking into his origins there is no apparent mention of him in Linear B, but his cult is widespread in Greece and Asia Minor by 700 BCE. Connected, like Dionysus, to Greek traditions involving initiations of youths into adulthood, he nevertheless has powerful connections with Middle Eastern deities. This is not to be sought at Delos, where the cult of Artemis clearly preceded his; and while he has strong connections with Lycia in Asia Minor this might originate in Greek colonisation. Though these connections are important, Apollo's relations with Middle Eastern deities are based on sounder footing elsewhere.

Apollo's plague bearing arrows connect him to the Semitic god Reshef, a god of war and pestilence among the Syrians; adopted also by the Egyptians. His arrows are firebrands, and his name is connected with burning by fire or lightning. Reshef was worshipped at Ugarit and in Cyprus where several inscriptions link him unequivocally with Apollo; indeed Apollo's epithet Amyclaeus appears to derive from that of Reshef (A)Mykal. There may be a link too in Apollo's slaying of Python and a similar dragon slaying legend from Ugarit concerning Reshef. As such Reshef is the forerunner of both Apollo and the angel Michael, for both of whom the attribution to the Sun is a later development. Scholars have found reference to Reshef – perhaps on his way to becoming Michael – in the biblical *Book of Habakkuk* where *RShF* (*pestilence*) accompanies Jehovah in a mythic battle (*Habbakkuk* 3:5) and a bow is specifically mentioned (3:9). In *Deuteronomy* 32:24 Jehovah sends Reshef against his enemies; in *Psalms* 78:48 Reshef destroys the flocks of enemies.

Both Reshef and a bow-bearing Hittite guardian deity, associated like Apollo with a stag, are connected with Apollo's evolution during the Dark Ages. During this period statuettes of both these deities found their way into Greece in fairly large numbers.

Also in Ugaritic texts is to be found associations of Reshef and the Akkadian plague god, Nergal. It appears as if Reshef may have been originally wholly identified with Nergal; his name being formerly a title of the Akkadian god, before splitting off into a deity in his own right. The monster slaying motif also occurs in the legend of Nergal, while his relationship with the King of the gods, Anu, closely resembles the role of Reshef as assistant in war to both Baal at Ugarit, and of Jehovah. At root therefore both Apollo and Michael are chthonic plague gods. This explains his oracular power and the possession states experienced by his devotees. Such states are the hallmark of chthonic figures such as the heroes and nymphs (among whom the Muses must be counted) as well as Dionysus and Cybele.

This background as a god of war and pestilence explains Apollo's role in the *Iliad*, where he is clearly a god of war and plague, and hostile to the Greeks. His name may well connect with the Greek word *apollonai*, meaning destroyer. There are also hints in Aeschylus and elsewhere that Apollo was *exiled once from bright Olympus* for some dark crime against the gods. His role as healer moreover evidently derives from his holding the arrows of disease. Other scholars have pointed out that the Middle Eastern association of Nergal in late antiquity with the planet Mars may explain curious connections between the cult of Apollo and the Latin war god Mars; all three are represented as a wolf, and Apollo received wolf sacrifices. While Apollo and the archaic Roman Mars have much in common this topic is too involved for discussion here, and largely unnecessary. It should be noted that Burkert distinguishes between magicians on the one hand and the prophets and seers who took Apollo as their patron on the other. However, not only is the line between divination and magic hard to draw but in Byzantine magical manuals Apollo is one of the most commonly invoked names. As a form of Nergal, lord of the Underworld and a god of disease supplicated for magical healing, many aspects of Apollo's original character and cult become clearer.

Acheron

The Argonauts continued to sail along the northern coast of Asia Minor for a day and a night, making landfall the following dawn. The place was the Acherusian Cape; this is an important location in the occult geography of their journey. Nearby was located a Cavern of Hades, an important necromanteion where necromantic rites were celebrated in order to consult the dead. As with the necromanteion at Cumæ and Thesprotia, here too was the mouth of a river named Acheron, one of the rivers of the underworld, which – like Olympus – had several earthly counterparts. It was across this river that the souls of the dead were ferried. At this site Heracles dragged Cerberus, the hound of Hades, to the surface as one of his twelve labours. The region bore the name Heraclea Pontica to commemorate his adventures there. Here the Argonauts met the local chieftain, Lycus, who spoke with them of Heracles who he had met during his labours. Heracles had come among them at the time of the funeral rites of Lycus' brother, Priolas. It is interesting to note that Lycus mentions to them that his people still regularly mourned this brother *with the most piteous dirges*. Significant in this context are their neighbours, the Mysians, who were reknowned for practicing such rites. The mention of these rituals attending the landfall beside the Acheron is not coincidental.

Lycus was grateful to the Argonauts for slaying an enemy of his, a feat accomplished earlier in the journey by mighty Polydeuces. In gratitude Lycus built a temple to the Dioscuri on the cape. Of course these twin brothers are important figures in the mythology of the Mysteries, and their association with this underworld river, with its necromantic shrine, is therefore significant. In addition the river was later named the Soonautes, or saviour of sailors, reflecting another role of the Dioscuri. The Argonauts were treated well by Lycus and feasted well, preparing to leave the next day. Before they could depart however a tragedy struck. Idmon the seer, who had foretold his own death at the outset of the expedition, was mortally wounded by a boar, who had been cooling his flanks in a water meadow when Idmon passed by. Apollonius supplies the interesting detail that the nymphs of this location feared the boar, and it

is worth comparing the death of Idmon with the mythology of Attis and Adonis. The Argonauts mourned Idmon for three days, burying him on the fourth. Accompanied by King Lycus they sacrificed sheep and built a funeral mound for the slain hero. At the top of the mound they planted a mighty olive trunk, beside the Acherusian cape. Specific mention is made in the text of the protective powers of hero shrines, their locality receiving their protection in return for due honours. Even while they performed these rites another of their number – their steersman Tiphys – took ill and died. The Argonauts built him a barrow too, at the same spot below the cape. In this way, within three pages of text, no less than three funeral rites of heroes are mentioned at this one location. Considering this emphatic juxtaposition, a very reasonable deduction is that hero rites and necromantic ritual are very closely related.

When the Argonauts sailed out of the mouth of the Acheron they soon came to the mouth of another river, named the Callichorus. Here Dionysus had paused on his journey back from India to Thebes. He had established a local cult with ecstatic dances held in front of a cave. Within the cave he is said to have spent *holy and unsmiling nights*, a powerful contrast to the revelry outside. In consequence of this event the river bore a name referring to a dance, while the cave was called the Bedchamber. Both the dancing and the cave are reminiscent of Cretan rites, partly Anatolian in origin. The cave is the birthplace of Zeus, and the dance that of his Curetes. The nights Dionysus spent in the cave suggest – among other things – a period of seclusion prior to initiation. An examination of Dionysus, a powerful presence throughout this study, is by now somewhat overdue.

DIONYSUS



DIONYSUS IS, OF COURSE, THE GOD OF WINE and of mystical ecstasy. The wildness of his cult; its strong connections with the grass roots of Greek religion; with mystery cults and private sects, whether Orphic or Bacchic; plus its connection with ecstatic states and mystical rites, makes him a natural subject in a study of the origins of goetia in Greek religious practice. He is also a most complex figure, deserving of a major study in his own right; it is noteworthy that both Harrison and Burkert devote whole sections of their studies in Greek religion to both Dionysus and Orphism.

The classic myth of Dionysus is that he was the son of Zeus and Semele. According to the best known version of this myth his mother was tricked by a jealous Hera into seeing Zeus in his transcendent form and blasted into non-existence by his fiery presence and attendant lightning. Zeus however rescued the unborn child and sewed him inside his own

thigh until ready to be born. He was raised in a distant place, referred to as Mount Nysa, the true whereabouts of which remain mysterious despite many claims to be its home. The various stories all concur in making him a foreign god who arrived from abroad, and who indeed travelled over most of the world as an unconventional but unstoppable conqueror.

There are some inconsistencies to this account, for example there are very early references to Dionysus in Mycenaean times. Some have argued that Dionysus evolved considerably after this point, partly based on the slight treatment accorded him in Homer. This is not entirely satisfactory, as Homer had no reason to enlarge on his account, and as an aristocratic poet may not have wished to. It has also been argued that Homer did not know him as a wine god. However, the two references to Dionysus on Linear B tablets from Pylos do appear to involve this role. Interestingly, the *Homeric Hymns* have the hymn to Dionysus in first place, although unfortunately only a fragment remains. That some evolution did take place – change is his nature and typical of his cults – is not in question. Nor are the foreign influences on his cult; with the proviso that grass-roots Greek religion may have had more in common with these in the first place than with the approved state cultus.

After being born from the thigh of Zeus, Dionysus was entrusted to the care of Hermes; or in other accounts that of Persephone or Rhea. He was then taken to the royal pair Athamas and Ino of Orchomenos; they were instructed to raise him disguised as a girl. Incidentally it was from the court of this pair that Phrixus had fled on the ram with the Golden Fleece. This androgynous upbringing was also a feature of the myth of the hero Achilles. The supposed reason for this disguise was to deceive Hera, who had already caused the death of Semele and wished to destroy Dionysus. Hera discovered the ruse and drove his guardians insane. It was then that Zeus entrusted his son to the nymphs of Mount Nysa, named Bacche, Bromie, Erato, Macris and Nysa. He took the further precaution of disguising Dionysus as a young goat. This last detail likely originates in attempts to account for the goat form of the god. Despite this the goat sacrifice in his cult was later misinterpreted and rationalised as destroying an enemy of the vine, rather than the ritual death of the god himself.

The nymphs of Nysa raised him in a cave, feeding him on honey. They were rewarded for nursing him, becoming a cluster of stars known as the Hyades. Other versions of the origin of this constellation may reflect similar cult origins, connected to the death of Hyas or of Phaethon; nurses, slayers and mourners in a ritual context can be represented by the same persons at different times. According to Homer's account the Thracian king Lycurgos persecuted Dionysus and his nurses upon Mount Nysa. Dionysus fled and took refuge with the sea goddess Thetis, just as Hephaestus had done when cast from Mount Olympus. The resemblance of these stories is remarkable, and is far from being the only point of contact between the myths of Dionysus and Hephæstus.

It was when Dionysus grew into an effeminate youth that he discovered the vine. Hera then drove him mad; her capacity for this in Greek myth is unending and may be a clue to her real nature. Taking with him the benefits of the vine, he wandered insane throughout Egypt and Syria, which part of his myth also explains the existence of similar cults in those areas, those of Osiris and Adonis in particular. He wandered the world over, accompanied by his mentor Silenus, with a great army of mythological beings and his faithful Mænads.

These female followers were known variously as Mænads, Bacchantes, Mimallonides, Bassarides and Thyiades, mostly names representing their dress and actions. Though variously named they personify two connected types. As with the Dactyls they represent both mythological figures and actual devotees of the cult. The first are the mythological companions of Dionysus or Bacchus in his travels. The second are actual devotees who worked themselves into frenzy during the rites of the god in archaic times. In both forms they wear the skins of tigers or of goats and fawns. Sometimes they are represented naked or scantily clad, and web-like designs and animals can be seen tattooed on their flesh. They carried either lighted torches or a wand or staff known as the thyrsus; this was tipped with a pinecone and wreathed in ivy. Ivy, vine leaves and snakes were worn in their hair or as a garland on their heads. Others bore serpents, swords, and also cymbals, this last, along with the pine cone, shows that they were associated with the rites of Cybele. Their glances and gestures

were wild in the extreme. Dancing with their heads thrown back and their hair disordered they uttered strange cries and chants. All their actions and demeanour resembled madness, a sacred delirium revered as holy inspiration.

With these companions, as well as the satyrs and numerous others, Dionysus wandered madly over the face of the earth. In Libya he is said to have met the Amazons, more likely goatskin-clad priestesses of a local cult. These he persuaded to assist him in a march on Egypt. After his victory there he marched through Mesopotamia, crossing the Tigris and descending upon India. Wherever he went he was victorious, and met little opposition, nation after nation surrendering joyously to the bearer of wine. This universal acclaim however was not always shared by kings, several of whom he brought to an unpleasant death. The formulaic explanation in each case is their conservatism and rejection of his divinity. Due to this element of the myth some modern commentators like to see in these deaths echoes of violent clashes between the cult of Dionysus and more orderly religious forms. The likelihood is, at least in part, that their deaths are mythic rather than historic. In this case they refer to the archaic practice of human sacrifice and ritual cannibalism; the slain king representing Dionysus himself. On the other hand actual conflict with state cults – both Greek and Roman – featured in the later history of the Dionysian rites. Dionysus is pre-eminently ‘the god of the exceptional’, and the rise of the individual in Greek society was marked by the rise of private Dionysian cults, practicing initiation, admitting both sexes, and with no centralised authority.

He was saved from his madness by expiatory purifications and initiation into the Mysteries of Cybele, a detail often omitted in accounts of the god. The wildness and abandon that distinguished the rites of both deities is but one aspect of their close association. That Dionysus was also involved with the rites of Eleusis suggests linkages – either mythical or actual – between her chthonic rites and those of the Phrygian Great Mother.

Dionysus Zagreus

The Mysteries associated with Dionysus were in part derived from his connections with Orphism with its origins in Thrace, and in part from Phrygian cults. They were also connected with the Cretan worship of Dionysus-Zagreus. This latter god is a Cretan form of Zeus, and his birth and death were celebrated there. The Cretan account of the death of Zeus – his grave was seen by Pythagoras at the time of his initiation – was rejected elsewhere in the Greek world. At least that is the impression from the literary record, which of course tells little of the private cults and associations and the older rural cults. The evidence for an early date is inconclusive, but it is likely part of the original myth cycle and was certainly important and influential, for example upon Orphism. The myth has Zeus father Dionysus on Persephone. It is interesting to observe that the form the god takes for this divine coupling is that of a snake; suggesting Zeus Chthonios or Hades.

As with the above form of the myth, the child – actually the juvenile form of Zeus – was persecuted by the jealous Hera and at her instigation the Titans sought his death. He assumed many disguises to escape them, adopting finally the form of a bull, in which form they tore him to pieces. The name of the Titans is said to be derived from the white gypsum with which his slayers whitened their faces. This whitening of the face was a feature of the initiation rites celebrated in his honour, in which first a war dance was performed guarding the god, and then a bull was torn apart and consumed raw. In ritual contexts therefore the Titans who slew him are identical with his guards the Curetes (it is no coincidence that there is both a Titan and a Curete named Melisseus). In the myth Zeus slew the Titans with a thunderbolt, and from the smoke that arose from their bodies the race of men came into existence. The nature of man was thus tainted with the substance of the Titans, but also contained the spark of the divine from the body of Dionysus which they had devoured. The heart of Dionysus survived, to be sewn into the thigh of the god, from which point the myth then resembles the form earlier described.

This legend was long thought to be a late Orphic development, and it is interesting to see it attributed to Onomacritos, the most famous author of Orphic books and prophecies. It is now widely accepted that it predates the advent of the Orphic literature and is a Mystery teaching of far greater antiquity. That initiates began as Curetes guarding the god prior to eating the god is found in Euripides' *Bacchoi*, which shows close acquaintance with Orphic beliefs:

*The raw-fed feasters' feast assayed,
And the mountain-mother's torches swayed.
Thus amid the Curetic band,
Hallowed alike in heart and hand,
A very Bacchos at length I stand.
White is the raiment that now I wear,
In birth and burial, have no share,
Nor eat of food, if the life be there.*

Thus the frenzy of Dionysian ritual had as its pinnacle the eating of raw flesh, or omophagy. In Orphic rites, as in Euripides' source, this is experienced only once before lifelong vegetarianism (allowing for variations in the equally uncentralised Orphic movement). By contrast, the celebration of this rite – while also part of initiations – may have been seasonal or periodic in Dionysian cults, and would not have involved any dietary changes.

Incidentally, the title Bacchus could mean either a human worshipper or the god himself. This is a unique occurrence of intimate identification of the human and the divine in Greek religion. The doctrine of the Titanic nature of man and the divine spark within formed the basis of Orphic redemptive ideas; it is this idea which underlay their purification rites. The equivalence to the Christian doctrine of original sin is striking; particularly so considering some leaders of Orphic sects were wandering magicians and the originators of a literary tradition of which the grimoires are the later expression.

Sabazius

A Thracian and Phrygian deity, identified with Dionysus, who prior to Romanisation invariably appeared as a Thracian Hero on horseback. He was commonly described as a son of Cybele or Rhea, probably indicating that after arriving in Asia Minor the Thracian god had been identified with Attis, the son and lover of the indigenous goddess. Like Cybele and Hecate his rites were only celebrated at night, which may well indicate ancient connections with Hittite religion. His nocturnal mysteries were termed Sabazia, and may have given their name to the Sabbats of the witches. These rites, termed *orgia*, were particularly wild, disorderly and according to their critics, debauched. That Phrygian orgia were renowned for being far wilder than approved Græco-Roman rites is undoubted, but the purely sexual connotations of the term orgy in our times is a reduction of the original meaning. Orgia involved frenzied dance, drumming, the obtaining of ecstatic states and other energetic celebrations. These exhausting activities earned these rites the name orgia which means work and refers to the energy and effort involved compared to more stately ceremonial or sober sacrifices.

Sabazius was called the son of Zeus and Persephone, and considered to be more ancient than the son of Zeus and Semele in the Classical form. The serpent played a major role in his rites, and Zeus is said to have taken serpent form to father him on Persephone. Another myth has Sabazius himself take serpent form in order to mate with one of his Phrygian priestesses, by whom children were conceived. In line with the identification of Dionysus with the youthful Zeus, the title Jupiter Sabazius was given by the Romans to the god. Similarly Dionysus receives the title Dionysus Sabazius. Sabazius too is said to be raised by a nymph named Nysa. Others identify him as a son of Cabirus, or of Dionysus himself or – perhaps most tellingly – a son of Kronos, like Zeus.

Sabazius like Dionysus was a horned god, but whereas Dionysus is often represented with the horns of a goat, those of Sabazius were always those of a bull. He also taught mankind the art of domesticating oxen, and yoking them to the plough. The Titans tore him into seven pieces and ate

him, for which crime they were destroyed by Zeus with a thunderbolt. According to the Orphics man was made from their ashes; and inherited the 'original sin' of the Titans, but also the divine nature of Dionysus. Initiation rituals involving the sacramental eating of the flesh of a bull appear to recreate the crime of the Titans; to me this implies that the heroes and villains in many of these stories are ritual roles, often played by the same individuals.

Dionysian Commentary

The supposedly foreign nature of Dionysus, which is undoubtedly an important part of his nature, presents some problems. For one thing his name is known from Mycenaean inscriptions; along with Zeus and other 'Greek' gods. Some deities from this period did not survive into the Classical period; making Dionysus one of the older Greek gods rather than a later import. His cult, under whatever name, was also present in Minoan Crete. These are the early levels of Greek civilisation and religion, and in this sense Dionysus is at least as native as the Olympians. Despite this, in Greece and wherever he is found, foreign-ness is an important part of his identity. That there are foreign elements involved in the character of Dionysus and of his rites is not disputed. However, the origins of Aphrodite in Syria and Cyprus, and Hephæstus in Lemnos and Asia Minor, does not bestow on them a foreign identity in Greek myth. Examination of the origins and pre-Classical identity of Dionysus or of the other gods always involves other cultures. With Dionysus however, otherness is not only part of the historical background, but a part of his divine nature at all times and places.

Dionysus appears twice in the *Odyssey*, and the occasions are important. The first is in the eleventh book, occasionally referred to as the *Necromancy of Homer*. The second, in the 24th book, is no less connected with the underworld. In the first half of this book Hermes guide of souls ushers the spirits of the slain suitors into Hades. In a conversation between heroes of the Trojan War it is mentioned that the urn in which Achilles' remains were placed was a gift of Dionysus, forged by Hephæstus.

The Classical Dionysus is undoubtedly a composite of numerous deities. In this he differs little from – say – Zeus, who assimilated various divine figures from the Mediterranean and Middle East. Due to this process there are many variations to the form of his myth, reflecting Phrygian, Cretan, Athenian, Peloponnesian and other traditions. The closely related Boetian and Euboean traditions represent a particularly important local variant, connecting with Silenus and particularly with Aristæus. Elements of this Boetian form – in which no blasting of Semele occurs – are represented in the *Dionysiaca* of Nonnus; given in the account of Aristæus. Another important aspect of Euboean tradition is their relation to Italian Cumæ, which had the title Euboicus, as the city was said to have been founded partly by Euboean colonists from Calchis.

The mother of Dionysus in the Classical legend is Semele, a mortal woman; she is identified as a daughter of Cadmus. This family is said to have been Phoenician in origin, and likely indicates Asiatic origins to the Boetian form of the legend. She has been tentatively identified with the Phrygian earth goddess Zemelo. Her return from Hades therefore was not as a slain woman rescued by her divinised son, but a goddess of similar nature to Persephone. This is also the likely origin of the supposed death and resurrection of Eurydice, wife of Orpheus. The legendary blasting of Semele in its original context was the sexually interpreted fertilising of the earth goddess by the god of the lightning and rain. It was from this conception or parentage that Dionysus derived the titles Pyrisporus and Ignigena, meaning fire-born.

Festivals of Dionysus

The festivals of Dionysus were celebrated at Athens in greater style and splendour than elsewhere in Greece. The early accounts record processions in which a vessel of wine adorned with a vine branch was carried, followed by a goat, a basket of figs and phallic emblems. The people dressed and behaved in accordance with the mythology and imagery of Dionysus and his mythic attendants. Some wore clothes of fawnskin, and

were garlanded with ivy, fir and the vine; carrying the wand known as the thyrsus. Others wore fine linen and mitre like caps. There was riotous music from pipe and drum, and the Phrygian flute. Some were disguised as satyrs, or as Pan and Silenus, and behaved accordingly. Asses were ridden, and goats driven for sacrifice.

Both sexes went wildly through the countryside, jerking back their heads ecstatically and dancing in frantic and abandoned postures, with a tumultuous chanting of *Evoe Bacche! Io! Io! Evoe! Iacche! Io Bacche! Evohe!* Behind them came others bearing sacred vessels, including one of pure water. Behind these came young girls carrying baskets of fruits; some of which contained serpents. Behind these came the *phallophoroi* or phallus bearers, a feature also of the rites of Osiris, said to have been brought to Greece by Melampus. These men sang festive songs and were crowned with ivy and violets and masked with herbs. Behind them processed other men known as *ithuphalloi*, with drunken gestures and gait; these dressed in women's apparel striped in white and reaching to the ground, their heads garlanded and their hands gloved in flowers. Behind these came the *liknophoroi* or liknon bearers; the liknon was a winnowing fan or long handled basket for separating grain from chaff, and an important emblem of the god.

The festivals of Dionysus or Bacchus were wild affairs, although not without a sombre aspect as befits a chthonic rite. They were also deeply egalitarian, both slaves and children took part. In the period of the so called tyrants, when aristocratic rule was curtailed, the Dionysian rites received a major boost from the new rulers as a means of courting popular support. It has been supposed that the Witches Sabbath received its name from antique festivals of Sabazius. While much nonsense has been written about witches, the popular nature of these rites may have led to pagan survivals among the lower classes.

One of the oldest Athenian festivals in honour of Dionysus was celebrated annually for three days in the month of Anthesterion. It was a spring festival celebrating the maturing of the wine stored the previous autumn. The days, as was usual with ritual occasions, were reckoned from sunset to sunset.

On the first day was celebrated the Pithoigia (opening of the vessels). The vessels of wine, a first fruits offering typical of chthonic ritual, was set in a sanctuary of Dionysus, known as Dionysus of the marshes. As no marshes were known in the area this name must have arrived from elsewhere, although there is no evidence the rite originated outside Greece.

Libations were offered from the newly opened casks to the god of wine. In keeping with the egalitarian nature of Dionysian cults the entire household, including servants and slaves, joined in the festivities. The rooms and the drinking vessels in them were adorned with spring flowers, as were children over three years of age.

The second day, named Choes (feast of pots), was a time of merry-making. The people dressed themselves gaily, some in the disguise of the mythical personages in the suite of Dionysus, and paid a round of visits to their acquaintances. Drinking clubs met to drink off matches, the winner being he who drained his cup most rapidly. Others poured libations on the tombs of deceased relatives. On the part of the state this day was the occasion of a peculiarly solemn and secret ceremony in one of the sanctuaries of Dionysus in the Lenæum, which for the rest of the year was closed. The basilissa (or basilinna), wife of the Archon (basileus) for the time, went through a ceremony of marriage to the wine god. She was assisted by fourteen Athenian matrons, called *geraerae*, chosen by the basileus and sworn to secrecy. This marriage resembles the union of Dionysus and Ariadne, the Archon corresponding to the hero Theseus.

The Pithoigia and Choes were chthonic festivals, occurring in a period of ritual defilement and leading up to a sacrifice to Hermes Chthonios. As such they necessitated expiatory libations. On these days the souls of the dead came up from the underworld and walked abroad; people chewed leaves of whitethorn and besmeared their doors with tar to acquire protection from misfortune. But at least in private circles the festive character of the ceremonies predominated. Nevertheless the feast of pots was also a festival of the dead on which Hermes Chthonios and the dead received offerings of cooked pulse. As is well known the rites of Dionysus were intimately connected with the development of Athenian theatre, but no performances were allowed during these days, which at least in theory

were solemn occasions. However a kind of rehearsal occurred in which the actors for the ensuing dramas were chosen. Such prohibitions correspond to those in force at the Roman 'mundus patet', which were considered unfortunate for marriage and for business.

The Bacchanalian Affair

A curious passage in Livy's *History of Rome* dealing with an Italian manifestation of private Dionysian associations is illustrative of some important themes in this study. The passage occurs in his 39th Book, and is part moralising fiction, but amongst other evidence an inscription of a senatorial decree shows the events it purports to describe are historical. Shortly after the conclusion of the Punic Wars, in 186 BCE, the Senate violently suppressed a Bacchic association throughout Italy, with over six thousand executions. The reasons for the pogrom were evidently to impose total senatorial control on religious expression throughout Italy and the provinces. Livy's introduction of the episode, though part literary convention, contains some interesting elements:

A low-born Greek went into Etruria first of all, but did not bring with him any of the numerous arts which that most accomplished of all nations has introduced amongst us for the cultivation of mind and body. He was a hedge-priest and wizard, not one of those who imbue men's minds with error by professing to teach their superstitions openly for money, but a hierophant of secret nocturnal mysteries.

Here we see a plain echo of Plato's description of goetes as wandering magicians, at least some of whom were driven by genuine religious conviction. Other elements of his account match the thrust of the Senate's decree. It appears for example that the association grew, changing in the process from an all female Bacchic cult to one admitting men and women. According to Livy other alterations followed upon this one: celebrations changed from diurnal to nocturnal, and more importantly from the per-

spective of the authorities, occurred not merely three days a year but five days a month. The celebrants were exceedingly numerous, and present in Southern Italy with its Greek heritage, and in Etruria. Also objectionable to the authorities in Rome was another principal feature of the association; the binding of the members to their cult and to each other by mutual oaths.

Two terms describe this feature of the cult, with much the same meaning and negative sense in the eyes of the law. Translated into English words directly derived from the original Latin, these terms are conspiracy and conjuration, meaning respectively to breathe together and to swear together. It hardly needs pointing out that making a pact with or conjuring a spirit involves exactly the same meaning.

Judging from the available evidence it does not appear that there was any subversive plot involved in these events. What offended the Senatorial class was the independence of the sect from their authority. In other words, the term conspiracy did not imply anything other than loyalty to one another and their god; the authorities simply wished to regulate all aspects of religious expression in their domains. While in Archaic Greece the aristocratic class simply held Dionysian religion in scorn, pagan state religion in the Classical period was a more onerous matter. Quite simply, supposed pagan tolerance did not extend to liberty from central authority. After the suppression Bacchic religion was subject to scrupulous state control, size of gatherings was strictly limited, common funds prohibited and mutual oaths forbidden. In other words, it was emasculated as a social force while preserving a semblance of toleration.

While some licentious aspects of Bacchic rites are likely to have some basis in fact, the majority of Livy's charges against them are typical only of religious persecutions, whether of Jews, witches or heretics, throughout history. Religious wars or persecutions are usually a mask for political ambitions, which a secular state does little if anything to mitigate.

In our own day, there is of course much talk of separation of church and state and of freedom of conscience. Nevertheless, now as then, associations that organise themselves can be controversial. Congregating at a sacred site without permits, to celebrate an unofficial holiday, has brought

down the ire of the British state in living memory. It is no exaggeration to say that in the 'Free World', let alone elsewhere, withdrawal of labour or military service sixty days a year could be highly controversial, even dangerous. It could easily result in demonising as a subversive faction or cult, to be duly suppressed. We are free to do and think what we like, so long as it makes no difference.

ARGONAUTICA II CONTINUED



The Tomb of Sthenelus

THE ARGONAUTS NEXT SAW ON THE SHORELINE the tomb of a hero. The incident is dealt with in a paragraph, but holds considerable interest. We are told that Persephone herself caused the spirit of the hero to appear to the Argonauts, which prompted Mopsus the seer to advise them to disembark and *lay the ghost*:

Next they beheld the burial mound of Sthenelus, Actor's son, who on his way back from Heracles' war against the Amazons was struck by an arrow and died upon the shore. And they abode there awhile, for Persephone sent forth the spirit of the slain hero who so craved to lay eyes on men like himself, if only for an instant. And mounting on the edge of the tomb he gazed upon the ship, appearing as he was when he went to war; with gleaming crested helm upon his brow. Then he returned to the vast depths. They looked and marvelled; and Mopsus, with word of prophecy, urged them to land and propitiate him with libations. Thus they paid honour to the tomb of Sthenelus, and poured out drink offerings to him and sacrificed sheep as offerings to the hero. And besides the drink offerings they built an altar to Apollo, saviour of ships, and burnt the thigh bones from the offering. Orpheus dedicated his lyre as an offering, and thus the place bears the name of Lyra.

The intervention of the goddess is depicted as compassionate, but also creates an evident imperative. Mopsus is shown as the professional whose responsibility such events are; perhaps, outside of epic poetry, such seers reported their own visions rather than interpreted collective sight-

ings of wonders. There are variants regarding Sthenelus' adventures with Heracles. In other versions Sthenelus was a grandson of Rhadamanthus, an underworld figure of some importance; on the return from the Amazon adventure Heracles apparently made him king of a Thracian island. Given the underworld connections surrounding Sthenelus this may originally have been a White Island or kingdom of the dead.

The climax of the second book of the *Argonautica* brought them finally to the shores of Colchis. Before they entered the river Phasis at nightfall they passed nearby the rock where Prometheus was standing enchained, a gigantic eagle daily devouring his liver. The Argonauts saw the bird, and heard the screams of the stricken hero. (The artificial chronological integration of the *Argonautica* and the Labours of Heracles is relevant here. The Theban hero has already accomplished many of his labours, up to the seizure of the belt of Mars from the Amazons. After that adventure he is supposed to have joined the Argonauts, their paths then divided in Mysia. At this point he has yet to free Prometheus, which forms a part of his fetching the golden apples of the Hesperides. That labour coincides with events in the fourth book of the *Argonautica*).

Prometheus

In Classical myth a Titan, like his father Iapetus. Traditions vary as to the name of his mother, given as either Asia or Clymene, which appear to be synonyms. He was the brother of Atlas, Menoetius and, in particular, Epimetheus. According to the traditional Greek etymology his name means *forethought*, as that of Epimetheus means *afterthought*. According to some interpretations the significance of these names was related to the Morning and Evening star modes of a planet, probably Mercury. These traditions should not be dismissed merely because their etymology is imaginary, or to be kinder, a form of wordplay popular with the Greeks. In many cultures such etymological traditions often both influence and indeed represent genuine beliefs. However, the real derivation is more important in terms of fundamentals. The origin of the name is closely related to the Sanskrit *pramantha*, meaning twirler or fire-stick; this refers

to the rod of wood which produces fire by swift rotation in a piece of softer tinder wood. *Mantha* is related to later Germanic words for force and even torture, and *pramathyus* thus means the fire-robber. The Greeks evidently mistook the prefix of his name for *pro*, before; having either lost, or perhaps suppressed, the link to *pyro* – fire.

Prometheus is thus shown to be an extremely ancient Indo-European god. He is traditionally represented as the greatest benefactor of mankind, against the will of Zeus. One legend has him create the human race from earth and water, bestowing on them a portion of all the qualities possessed by other animals. In addition Prometheus taught mankind all the useful arts, in which he is plainly a culture hero, akin to Aristæus, the Dactyls &c.

In the most common legend he stole fire from heaven, as a gift for mankind, and fire is undoubtedly his foremost symbol, in common with Hephæstus. This beneficent theft came about when Prometheus taught religious rites to humanity. He taught them to divide the sacrificial victim into two parts, one of the flesh and intestines, over which the stomach was placed; the other consisting of the rich looking fat wrapped around the bones. He offered Zeus his choice, and he chose the second portion. On discovering the fat contained only bones he grew angry with Prometheus and mankind. To punish mankind Zeus took back fire – essential to sacrificial offerings incidentally – from humanity. He was then outwitted by Prometheus, who had mankind's interests always at heart. One story has him steal fire from the wheels of the Sun, in a hollow tube often said to be a fennel stalk. Fennel is a herb which when dry makes excellent tinder, but this is likely to have been giant fennel, related to asafoetida. Another has him steal it from the forge of Hephæstus on Lemnos. In order to punish mankind Zeus sent the first woman, named Pandora, made by Hephæstus and Athena and endowed with every female quality by all the gods of Olympus. Epimetheus was seduced by the gift, not realising she would unleash all misfortunes on mankind. Finally Zeus punished Prometheus by having him chained to a rock in the mountains of the Caucasus; to the north of the Black Sea. This task was, unwillingly, undertaken by Hephæstus.

So far much of this will be known to those with any knowledge of Classical Greek myth. However, there are numerous less well known and plainly archaic variants, evidence from images on Greek vases, and other indicators. These reveal several of the familiar details to have been refashioned from older material, in many cases quite drastically altering the original meaning. Much the same applies to Hephæstus, whose origin was not Greek at all. These traditions have led some scholars proposing the likely hypothesis that Prometheus was an older form of Hephæstus. Firstly, the tradition that Prometheus made mankind from clay, in common not only with the Jewish creator but the Egyptian Ptah. Against this we have the production of the first woman (comparable to Eve, who also supposedly causes misfortune to descend on Man), also with clay. This is performed by Hephæstus, in tandem with Athena, who, incidentally, was not always the eternal virgin as portrayed in Classical Athenian myth. On the contrary she was anciently partnered with Hephæstus, who in Olympian myth was portrayed as the cuckolded husband of Aphrodite. Images of Hephæstus and Athene were commonly found in the houses of Athenians, beside the hearths, reflecting their ancient relationship.

From Aesop and other traditions of Asia Minor it is apparent that Prometheus was the fashioner of animals, such as the lion. Thus the original myth probably represented him making both male and female, human and animal. The making of human beings with clay is one resemblance between Hephæstus and Prometheus, not to mention Ptah. Another such resemblance is more revealing. There is a legend in which Athena is born from the forehead of Zeus. In order for this to happen a bronze axe, a powerful religious symbol of the archaic period, is made by Hephæstus. In the best known version of the story Hephæstus then opens the head of Zeus and Athena springs forth armed and fully formed. Naturally, in order for this emergence from his head to occur, Zeus has to be absolutely colossal. In addition of course, there has to be a god Hephæstus. This is impossible if the myth of Hera producing him without male intervention in response to Zeus producing Athena is accepted at face value. This highlights the other tradition, wherein it is Prometheus who opens the head of Zeus. The colossal size of Zeus, and the interrelations of the two fire

gods takes us deeper below the surface of Classical mythology. In relating the legend of Cybele mention was made of goddesses of colossal size, and of acts of violence suffered by them. One depiction of such events has an enormous female head emerging from the earth, attacked on either side by two male figures, usually satyrs. A variant, on a vase now in Oxford, depicts Pandora emerging, crowned, from the earth. Approaching her, armed with an axe, is Epimetheus, brother of Prometheus. As in many such images above her head is another smaller divine figure, in this case Eros. Plainly Father Zeus has been substituted for the Earth Goddess in this adaptation to an Olympian and Athenian agenda. Note also that when Prometheus 'stole' the fire from the forge of Hephæstus, Athena was working there with him. A similar reversal has occurred in relation to Pandora, whereas in the Olympian legend the gods give her gifts, her name means giver of all; a title of the Earth.

A fact of very great significance in the Promethean myth is that during the period of his painful punishment he withholds a potent and mysterious secret from Zeus. The grandeur and nobility of Prometheus' defiance is truly awe inspiring. Cherishing his secret throughout his ordeal he contemplates the end of Zeus' tyranny; for from Thetis – a sea nymph loved by Zeus – will be born a son greater than his father. This theme curiously recurs in relation to two apparently distinct characters; Achilles on the one hand – who like Jason is a hero of Thessaly – and Dionysus on the other. In the Orphic myth of Dionysus Zagreus he was fated to be the successor of Zeus and the fifth ruler of the world. Aeschylus portrays events in a spirit consistent with Olympian orthodoxy; Zeus averted his overthrow by allowing a mortal to mate with Thetis who gives birth to Achilles. The 'Promethean successor' however could as readily be seen as Dionysus (during whose festivals, after all, the dramas of Aeschylus were first presented and enacted).

Before closing this examination of the fourth book of the *Argonautica* I wish to mention a mysterious fact concerning Prometheus. Sophocles in *Oedipus at Colonus* sets his play at a cult site primarily dedicated to the Erinyes, important underworld deities who were discussed earlier in this chapter. This was not however the sole dedication of the place. Sophocles

was born at Colonus and according to his testimony other divine figures were also associated with the site. It was owned dually by Poseidon, whose role as god of the sea was an Olympian simplification of his earlier nature; and Prometheus, Lord of Fire. Also associated with the site was a hero on horseback, curiously reminiscent of the iconography of the Thracian hero, from whom Colonus took its name. This is a most intriguing concatenation of divine figures which in Classical myth seem to have little to do with one another.

This is only the case in considering the gods in classical rather than archaic form. Poseidon was anciently partnered with Demeter Erinys. His role at sites associated with underworld figures is therefore natural enough to his pre-Olympian status, and he is in fact the patron of a famous necromantic oracle. Colonus, the hero on horseback, is very readily integrated with such underworld figures since heroes are prominent among the mighty dead. Heroes were of course ancestral figures originally, prior to becoming patrons of cities. Prometheus according to some authors was the father of a hero named Hellen, the ancestor of all the Greeks. Additionally, the closeness – to the point of inter-changeability on occasion – of Prometheus to Hephæstus, who was honoured with chthonic rites, shows the dedications of the site to form a unified whole. Although Euripides has been accused of magnifying the importance of the site and elaborating on its dedications, the relations between these apparently disparate figures are in fact perfectly harmonious.

GOETIC GALLERY: ORPHICA



Olen

OLEN, A POET – said to be from Hyperborea – who flourished before the time of Orpheus. According to Herodotus Olen was from Lycia, although he mentions him in connection with Hyperborean traditions. His hymns were recited at Delos and were adopted throughout Ionia. These hymns were also sung at Delphi on solemn occasions. By some he is credited with founding the Delphic oracle and being the first to give oracles there.

Hermotimos

Hermotimos (Hermodorus) of Clazomenæ (Harman Clazomenius in Cornelius Agrippa). Clazomenæ was a large city of Ionia on the Aegean coast between Smyrna and Chius. Hermotimos was a famous prophet whose soul had the power of leaving his body, wandering the world to obtain knowledge of the future. According to legend his wife betrayed him to his enemies, the Cantharidæ, who burned his naked body while his soul was absent. It has been suggested that the Cantharidæ were a Dionysian sect. If so then this incident reflects the Dionysian and Apollonian opposition also apparent in the legend of Orpheus. He was subsequently honoured as a god, a temple being erected in the city, to which – supposedly in recollection of the perfidy of his wife – women were not admitted. In reality the exclusion of women may have followed Orphic lines, in distinction to the Dionysian cult.

Poets

The concept of poetry in Greek religion and magic is a complex subject, whose importance to this study may not be immediately apparent. There is a frequently encountered idea in Plato that poetry was a form of holy madness superior even to Socratic logic, involving the intervention of a god. This form of mania was linked with the Muses, as the other forms of holy madness were linked with Aphrodite (love), Dionysus (wine) and Apollo (prophecy). Some scholars have gone out of their way to prove that classical Greek poets were in full possession of their senses when composing or reciting. On occasion their arguments approach the farcical. There is, after all, equally little proof that all Greek lovers were rolling their eyes and frothing at the mouth in a state of divine possession. On the other hand there is ample proof that the Greeks associated poetry and prophesying; considering them divine in origin. It is plain that poetry and divination were both considered separate from both reason and day to day consciousness, even allowing for the role of definable technique and personal effort. It is plain too that the composition of poetry, attuning ones mind to special language and metre, involves a mode of consciousness distinct from the norm. The Greek term *ecstasy* means standing outside oneself, while *enthusiasm* meant possessed or inspired by a god; both of these terms are appropriate to the poetic state of mind.

One of the Greek words for magician was *epodos*, meaning a singer of magical incantations. Archilochus, a poet of Paros who flourished 685 BCE was proud to be an itinerant follower of Dionysus. His satires were inherently magical, one such – recited at a feast of Demeter which favoured such license – is said to have caused the victims to hang themselves. Another of his adventures is strongly reminiscent of the folktale of Jack and the Beanstalk, relating how he took a cow to market, but met on the way the Muses, who vanished after taking his cow in exchange for a lyre. He introduced new forms of Dionysian worship, which were disapproved by the citizens of Paros, but vindicated by Apollo, a circumstance which sounds suspiciously Orphic.

Since the Muses are significant to this topic music too should be considered. Pindar, a poet himself (and incidentally not an admirer of Archilochus), founded a cult of the Mother specialising in music therapy, and some idea of its operation are probably implicit in the 5th century writings attributed to Hippocrates: *If the sick man bellows or has convulsions, they say that the Great Mother is responsible. If his cries resemble neighing, Poseidon is the cause; if they resemble the chirping of birds, Apollo Nomios is to blame; and if he foams at the mouth and kicks with his feet, it is Ares' doing. Finally, if he has evil dreams by night, sees frightful figures, and leaps up from his bed, they say that he has been attacked by Hecate or by some hero.* Moreover, as the author of this text makes plain, the treatment of these diseases was the preserve of exactly the same persons attacked by Plato as goetes; wandering priests, magicians and purifiers who treated disease with purifications and incantation. Like later magicians, these practitioners had special modes of disposal for the remains of their treatment. Ritual residues could be buried in the earth, cast into the sea or taken to remote places where they would not be touched or trodden on. In the work of Pindar music appropriate to one or other deity was used as a therapeutic aid in treating such conditions. These ideas concerning sickness and its treatment have strong affinities with both magic and with ecstatic religions which include possession as part of their worldview. Like such religions the wandering priests would also have used music, likely influenced by their cult leanings: the lyre for Orpheus and the prophetic god Apollo, the pipe and drum for Dionysus and the Great Mother.

It should also be borne carefully in mind that right into the time of Imperial Rome divinatory methods, as well as hymns and religious songs, were associated with poetry. Private as well as public oracles were frequently rendered in verse, according with ancient tradition. Long after these early references to wandering magicians possessing magical books, these same traditions remained potent at a popular level and in private associations.

IMPLICATIONS FOR MODERN PRACTICE

Magical Weapons empowered by Spirits

Throughout Book Four and elsewhere in this volume are encountered magical weapons and talismanic creations made by Hephæstus and the fire wielding Chalybes. At its simplest the fiery deities, magicians and spirits are associated directly with magical weapons. As the reader of *The True Grimoire* will be aware, the equipment for operating that notorious handbook of black magic is specifically marked with the sigils of various daimons from its hierarchy. While exceptional compared to other grimoires, the association between the weapons and spirits in *The True Grimoire* becomes perfectly intelligible in this light. Given that the grimoire emphasises the Salamanders or fire spirits, these magically empowered weapons readily connect with those made by the Chalybes or Telchines. It is important to realise that these are at once ancestor magicians and spirits invoked by living magicians. In the paradigm revealed here the magical hero is enlisted among the underworld spirits when their work in life is completed. In the meantime the magician invokes the aid of these spirits when making magical weapons, and by implication, when wielding them.

Oils and Herbs

The making of libations and other uses of magical oils offers alternatives to animal sacrifice, just as Orphism substituted incense for blood offerings, with the exception of the initiation rites into the Mysteries. This however is the tip of the iceberg, so to speak, in the overall agenda of the current study. The precedents set in ancient Greece for ritual use of magical oils offers a very direct way of integrating 'Hoodoo' methodologies directly into modern goetia.

The making of Hoodoo oils involves methods readily mastered by the modern magician, without any necessity for complex alchemical procedures. Essentially the ingredients – including the oil – are first pounded

in a pestle and mortar; afterwards the mixture is put aside to steep for a few days, and vigorously shaken once or twice a day. If after a week the aroma is not sufficiently strong, the same amount of ingredients are added to the oil again. The mixture is then pounded, steeped and shaken in the same way. When the operator is satisfied with the results the oil is then strained and the solid matter is disposed of ritually, for example deposited at a crossroads.

Although some modern purveyors of such oils substitute other oils, use of an olive oil base is both traditional and appropriate in this context, for reasons which should be abundantly clear. One of the most appropriate hoodoo oils for our purposes is that known as Power Oil. This oil is used for anointing to increase personal power, on both the magician's body and on talismans or ritual items involved with psychic power and spiritual development. The ingredients added to this oil are lemon – either peel or flowers – and frankincense; both solar in nature according to Western correspondences, and thus appropriate to Apollo or to Helios, patrons of the Greek goetic magicians. Use in anointing, dressing of candles or as a poured libation is appropriate in almost any context with the spirits of the grimoire.

Personal research into herbs and oils, through both conventional correspondences and their ancient associations with gods and spirits, will take the operator further than the tabulated listing here. Care should obviously be taken with plants whose properties are either toxic or unknown, but the potential for expanded and enhanced praxis implicit in this area should not be underestimated.

Herbal Correspondences of some Verum Spirits

SPIRIT	STAR	MINERAL	PLANT	ANIMAL
Flerity	Algol	Diamond	Black Hellebore, Mugwort	
Flerity	Pleiades	Crystal, Quicksilver	Frankincense, Fennel	
Belzebuth	Aldebaran	Ruby, Carbuncle	Lady's Thistle, Woodruff	
Sargatanas	Capella	Sapphire	Horehound, Mint, Mugwort, Mandrake	
Astaroth	Sirius	Beryl	Juniper, Mugwort, Dragons Wort	Tongue of a snake
Astaroth	Procyon	Agate	Flowers of Marigold, Pennyroyal	
Musisin	Regulus	Garnet	Sallendine, Mugwort, Mastic	
Frimost	Alkaid	Lodestone	Mugwort, Chicory, Flowers of Periwinkle	Tooth of a wolf
Klepoth	Gienah	Black onyx (and similar)	Henbane, Comfrey, Flower heads of Burdock, Daffodil	Tongue of a frog
Khil	Spica	Emerald	Sage, Trifol, Periwinkle, Mugwort, Mandrake	
Khil	Arcturus	Jasper	Plantain	
Clisthert	Alphecca	Topaz	Trifol, Ivy, Rosemary	
Hiepact	Antares	Sardonyx, Amethyst	Long Aristolochia, Saffron	
Frucissiere	Vega	Chrysolite	Succory, Fumitory	
Morail	Deneb Algedi	Chalcedony	Marjoram, Mugwort, Nip, Mandrake	

Papyrus parallels

Another connection between the papyri and the grimoires lies in the field of aggressive love magic. In this type of magic spirits are induced to torment the object of the working until they accede to the magician's erotic intent. This is a constant theme in Græco-Roman magic and both literary examples and related archaeological finds are very numerous. Of particular interest to this study is an example from the papyri (PGM IV. 1716–1870) known as *The Sword of Dardanos*. Dardanos of course has appeared several times in this study already. He is the founder of a cult of the Cabirii and likely a Cabir himself, as well as the father of a Sibyl of Ionia. Magical texts bearing the name of *Sword* are more commonly associated with Moses, his association with such texts is due as we have seen to his imagined connection with Musæus. So once more the papyri show us that such texts are not necessarily uniquely, or even primarily Semitic. So also the text of this rite – involving Dardanos, Eros and Aphrodite alongside Jewish names of God and angels &c. – demonstrates that the idea that pagan deities cannot be invoked by rituals involving Judeo-Christian elements is a misnomer ignores evidence prior to the period in which the ancient methodology was reshaped to suit such prejudices.

The Sword of Dardanos

Rite which is called 'sword,' which has no equal because of its power, for it immediately bends and attracts the soul of whomever you wish. As you say the spell, also say:

I am bending to my will the soul of him NN.

Take a lodestone which is breathing and engrave Aphrodite sitting astride Psyche and with her left hand holding on her hair bound in curls. And above her head: ACHMAGE RARPEPSEI; and below Aphrodite and Psyche engrave Eros standing upon the vault of heaven, holding a blazing torch and burning Psyche. And below Eros en-

grave these names: ACHAPA ADŌNAIE BASMA CHARAKŌ IAKŌB IAŌ Ē PHARPHARĒI. On the other side of the stone engrave Psyche and Eros embracing each other and below Eros's feet these letters: ssssssss, and beneath Psyche's feet: ĒĒĒĒĒĒĒĒ. Use the stone, when it has been engraved and consecrated, like this: put it under your tongue and turn it to what you wish and say this *spell*:

I call upon you, author of all creation, who spread your own wings over the whole world, you, the unapproachable and immeasurable who breathe into every soul life-giving reasoning, who fitted all things together by your power, firstborn, founder of the universe, golden-winged, whose light is darkness, who shroud reasonable thoughts and breathe forth dark frenzy, clandestine one who secretly inhabit every soul. You engender an unseen fire as you carry off every living thing without growing weary of torturing it, rather having with pleasure delighted in pain from the time when the world came into being. You also come and bring pain, who are sometimes reasonable, sometimes irrational, because of whom men dare beyond what is fitting and take refuge in your light which is darkness. Most headstrong, lawless, implacable, inexorable, invisible, bodiless, generator of frenzy, archer, torch-carrier, master of all living sensation and of everything clandestine, dispenser of forgetfulness, creator of silence, through whom the light and to whom the light travels, infantile when you have been engendered within the heart, wisest when you have succeeded; I call upon you, unmoved by prayer, by your great name: AZARACHTHARAZA LATHA IATHAL Y Y Y LATHAI ATHALLALAPH IOIOIO AI AI AI OUERIEU OIAI LEGETA RAMAI AMA RATAGEL, first-shining, night-shining, night rejoicing, night engendering, witness, ERĒKISITHPHĒ ARARACHARARA ĒPHTHISIKĒRE IABEZEBYTH IO, you in the depth, BERIAMBŌ BERIAMBEBŌ, you in the sea, MERMERGOU, clandestine and wisest, ACHAPA ADONAIE MASMA CHARAKŌ IAKŌB IAŌ CHAROUĒR AROUER LAILAM SEMESILAM SOUMARTA MARBA KARBA MENABŌTH ĒIIA. Turn the 'soul' of her NN to me NN, so that she may love me, so that she may feel passion for me, so that she may give me what is in her power. Let her say to me what is in her soul because I have called upon your great name.

And on a golden leaf inscribe this sword: One THOURIËL MICHAËL GABRIËL OURIËL MISAËL IRRAËL ISTRAËL: *May it be a propitious day for this name and for me who know it and am wearing it. I summon the immortal and infallible strength of God. Grant me the submission of every soul for which I have called upon you.* Give the leaf to a partridge to gulp down and kill it. Then pick it up and wear it around your neck after inserting into the strip the herb called 'boy love.'

The burnt offering which endows Eros and the whole procedure with soul is this: manna, 4 drams; storax, 4 drams; opium, 4 drams; myrrh, [4 drams;] frankincense, saffron, bdellium, one-half dram each. Mix in rich dried fig and blend everything in equal parts with fragrant wine, and use it for the performance. In the performance first make a burnt offering and use it in this way.

In this ritual the elements of compulsion by a spirit is understated; it is visible in the intent of 'bending to my will' and in the mentions of torture, pain and fire. This example had been selected to illustrate the presence of the Cabirii in the papyri. Other rites are more specific, as PGM LXXXIV: *fetch N who [mother's name] bore; inflame her liver, spirit and heart and soul until she leaps up and comes to me, that is N who NN bore to [your name] who [your mother's name], immediately, quickly*; also in PGM CI 40–54, which speaks of the object of affection being seized and fetched, driven mad, bound with strong fetters, not eating, drinking, sleeping or enjoying life, but be driven constantly, away from her family, without rest until she come to him, driving any other lover from her and giving herself to the magician. The instructions attending this ritual are specifically concerned with Underworld powers and spirits – particularly the ghosts of children – conjured in a cemetery, where a binding spell is to be buried in a tomb. The physical type of spell is not specified, it is likely to have been a leaden defixione bearing an inscription, but a doll representing the woman pierced with nails in the appropriate places is also associated with this sort of magic. Both of these physical components of aggressive love magic are well known in archaeology from the Northern reaches of the Roman

Empire to the Middle East. Examples more or less precisely matching descriptions in the papyri are well known.

The defixiones as a text written on a lead sheet is closest to the following example from the grimoires. This example is taken from *The True Grimoire* and is plainly of a similar type, conjuring spirits to torment the object of the magician's affections, or that of his client. The presence of the spirit Zazel of ill fame is worthy of note, as are various Mercurial genii. Additionally the fact that the parchment is placed upon the earth illustrates the involvement of chthonic as well as celestial powers. In the older examples of the genre chthonic forces generally predominate – particularly aggressive ghosts – and it may be that this rite has undergone revision to emphasise the Superior Intelligences or celestials. However, such combinations can also be found in the Papyri, to the point that Betz imagines all gods involved to possess a chthonic role regardless of their various celestial associations. The language and esoteric references of the spell give it the appearance of Renaissance Cabala; however the Jewish god-names and talk of Superior Intelligences represent a veneer over a far older type. The Mercurial nature of the spirits might point to rituals from Byzantium or directly from the Papyri, invoking Hermes Kthonios to command compulsive action by the ghostly daimons; alternatively the presence of Zazel represents a suitable Jewish equivalent of the chthonic forces involved in this type of magic in its original form.

To Make a Girl come to You, however Modest she may Be

Experiment of a marvellous power of the Superior Intelligences. Watch for the crescent moon, and when you see it, make sure that you see also a star, between the hours of eleven and midnight. Before starting the process, do this:

Take a virgin parchment, and write on it the name of the girl whom you desire to come. The shape of the parchment is to be as you see in the figure on the right:

On the other side of the parchment, write MELCHIDAEI, BARESCAS. Then put the parchment on the earth, with the part where the name of the person is written next to the ground. Place your right foot upon the parchment, and your left knee, bent, upon the ground.

Then look for the highest star in the sky, while in this position. In your right hand hold a taper of white wax, sufficiently large to burn for one hour. Then say the following Conjunction:

I salute and conjure thee, O beautiful Moon, O most beautiful Star, O brilliant light which I have in my hand. By the air that I breathe, by the breath within me, by the earth which I am touching: I conjure thee. By all the names of the spirit princes living in you. By the ineffable Name ON, with which all was created! By you, O resplendent Angel Gabriel, with the Princes of the Planet Mercury, Michael and Melchidael.

I conjure you again, by all the Holy Names of God, so that you may send down power to oppress, torture and harass the body and soul and the five senses of N..., she whose name is written here, so that she shall come unto me, and agree to my desires, liking nobody in the world, and especially thus N..., for so long as she shall remain unmoved by me. Let her then be tortured, made to suffer. Go then, at once! Go, Melchidael, Bareschas, Zazel, Tiriell, Malcha, and all those who are with thee! I conjure you by the Great Living God to obey my will, and I, N..., promise to satisfy you.

When this conjunction has been said three times, place the taper to continue burning stood upon the parchment. On the next day, take the parchment, put it in your left shoe, and let it stay there until the person whom you have called comes to seek you out. In the Conjunction you must say the date that she is to come, and she will not be absent.

Magnets in Magic

The lodestone or magnet featuring in the *Sword of Dardanos* above lives on as a staple of Hoodoo; so too, its properties in medieval magic – real and imagined – derived directly from lore inherited from the Greeks and Romans. They were aware of course that it attracted iron and that it endowed iron with its own power via contact, in accord with the magic of contagion. Its properties were held to extend to the treatment of disease, and indeed magnetic bracelets and other supposed placebos are still in use today. It was held to have effects on the mind, and due to the properties of attraction it was used in love magic, and in tests of fidelity. The juice of garlic was believed to counteract the power of the magnet, and goat's blood to restore it. Diamond too was believed to counteract the power of the magnet.

The magical properties inherent in magnets make an appearance in *The True Grimoire*:

Take a lodestone and make the sign of St Andrews cross 3 times. Above the wand and around the stone make a circle, within the circle make a square and at all the angles put the sigil of Surgatha, and around the circle put 4 branches of the lunar plant, and while holding the stone say piously in a low voice these words over it: BESCHAT. SURGATHA. MENAIC. REMISCHAT. REGAMER. AND CHIRMUTS. And afterwards cover everything with lead filings. If you carry this lodestone on you or before you, and if you place it before all closed/locked things they will quickly open!

The ascription of such properties to the lodestone is present in older works, as might be expected. *The Book of Secrets* attributed to Albertus Magnus recommends the powdering of lodestone, which is then sprinkled in the four corners of a house, causing the occupants to flee, facilitating the stealing of their property. It may also be significant that while St. Andrew is attributed to Virgo in the 'orthodox' twelfefold table of Agrippa, his Orphic table attributes the sign to the Roman Ceres, which

is to say Demeter. It is not uncommon to encounter modern magicians claiming that the Christian formulæ in the grimoires deny them to pagan magicians. However, the use of herbs, minerals and animal parts throughout the genre may readily be traced to pagan authorities such as Pliny. The christianisation of the materials shows rather the dependency of the grimoires on pagan originals, and is readily reversed should the operator prefer.

The use of the magnet in Hoodoo is best exemplified by Magnet Oil. The manufacture of this oil involves firstly the feeding of the stones with iron filings, so that they become 'furry'. The two magnets are preferably one rounded and one long, representing the sexes, and are steeped in oil complete with their fur. The steeping process is much as with herbs, in that the magnets are kept in the oil for several days, and shaken once or twice a day. After a week the oil is taken off and used as a base in the manufacture of other oils – such as Power Oil – or by itself. The magnets meanwhile are then buried in dirt taken from a crossroads, in order to rest and recover their power. This process, similarly, is extended over several days, after which the magnets are ready to use again in the making of magical oils.

Given the relevance of both magnets and iron to the themes of this work, this process has much to commend it in modern goetic practice. The associations of both these magical substances are rich and directly connected with goetic tradition. In addition to the connection of the magnet with Medea already described, the relationship between Set and Horus deserves mention here. Iron is strongly associated with the god Set, while the magnet corresponds to Horus. The myth of Set's homo-erotic attraction to Horus can be readily interpreted – we might say demonstrated – by the attraction of iron to the lodestone.

Invoking and Astrology: Tyche

Although often forgotten in modern schools of magic, traditionally all magical work, including divination, operates through the action of spirits. Divination involves ascertaining the will of the gods, hence the divine

part of its etymology. Long neglected until recently in relation to magic, in favour of use for character analysis, the most highly refined system of divination in Western magic is astrology. This is no exception to the rule; just as geomantic charts begin with the drawing of the sigil of the spirit ruling the question, so many examples of Greek horoscopes surviving from antiquity begin with a brief written invocation. This consists of the name Agathe Tyche, known to Roman Neoplatonist magicians as Isis Fortuna.

Ritual Composition

The Word of the Magus, his incantation, expresses an intense inner mythology. It reaches to the outer through deep links with cultural currents and archetypes; which men fear, or honour, or worship.

There is an idea in contemporary understanding of the grimoires, and indeed other magical systems, that nothing is to be changed. According to this way of thinking, rigid adherence to the rituals regardless of incomprehension is a precondition of success. Such ideas are largely mistaken. Not only is incomprehension an obstacle, but inability to compose rituals is a tremendously limiting factor. If no antique example suited to one's purpose exists, this attitude leaves little leeway. Such deficiencies are the result of various causes, be they losses of ancient sources or changes in the times. In any case, the magician should never be without recourse.

Although there were certainly traditional rituals in ancient Greece, alongside them it was common practice to compose new poems in honour of the gods for major festivals. Similarly, major reforms and the institution of new rituals are present in the historical record. Certainly initial training in magic usefully incorporates emulation and repetition of classic forms, for dismissal of these based on modern prejudice is no way to learn anything. Nevertheless, the goal should be the acquisition of mastery of symbolic languages, in order to compose rites and texts for oneself. Misguided imitation of our predecessors and purely retrospective approaches fall short of an attainment that, while devoutly wished for by many, is lost if this is not well understood.

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