

# OPHIUCHUS

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OF SEKHEB-BAST-RA LODGE  
ORDO TEMPLI ORIENTIS

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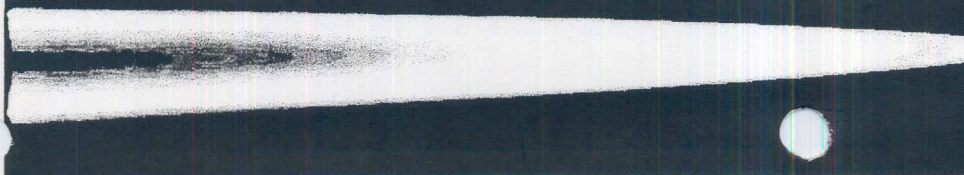
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VOLUME 6, NUMBER 3







## The Delicious Confessions of Co- Body Masters

### Wine, the Sacrament of Gods and Men.

#### Part II.

By Hunaphu and Ixel  
Balamke

As you may know, Greece played a rather interesting role in the history of wine. Ancient Greece had two main exports, olive oil and wine. These two commodities were extremely lucrative for the Greeks and Greek wine was especially sought after. According to the archaeological record, from the world of the Celts to all regions of the Mediterranean and even further, Greek wine was highly treasured and traded for. One of the most remarkable pieces of evidence of Greek wine trade is the Great Vase of Vix, which was found in 1952 between Paris and Burgundy in the tomb of a Burgundy Princess. The Great Vase of Vix is the finest example of Greek Bronze work that the world can view today. The Vase

is a wine-mixing bowl, which stands 7 feet tall and has a capacity of 1,200 liters or about 45 amphoras of wine. Wine in Gaul



*The Vase of Vix*

was traded for slaves, one amphora for one slave. The fact that such a magnificent vase was found in France tells us two things, the extensiveness of trade for Greek wine and the French loved wine even then.

Greek wines were very specialized. The Greek peninsula and the Grecian islands had many varying climates and terrains, which produced many differing appellations. However, there were four producers of wine that were exceptional. The island of Chios in the eastern Aegean off the coast

of Ionia was the biggest exporter and according to accounts of the day had the best wine. Many wine historians called Chios, the Bordeaux of ancient Greece. Its characteristic bottle was a specialized designed pottery with the Chian emblem stamp of a sphinx, an amphora, and a bunch of grapes. Chian wine has been found in Egypt, Marseilles, Tuscany, Bulgaria, and eastern Russia.

Another famous wine was from Lesbos, which is north of Chios and home of Sappho, whose brother it seems may have been a wine merchant. Lesbian wine was highly sought after. Lesbos is also thought to have been the source of Pramnian, which is the Greek equivalent of the most rarest and delicious wines, Tokay Essenczia. To create an Essenczia the very ripest grapes are piled high on straw mats until their own weight squeezes out the thick drops of juice. The grapes are never pressed. Essenczia is so loaded with sugar that it ferments only slightly. It has a full body honey-sweet fluid and even is said to have legendary powers of healing.

On Cyprus, Commandaria is still made in the same spirit as of old. The grapes are picked very ripe, then laid out on straw mats in

the vineyard for a week or two. The sun dries out the grapes but concentrates the sugar. Archestratus described the wine as "its liquid locks thickly overgrown with white flower".

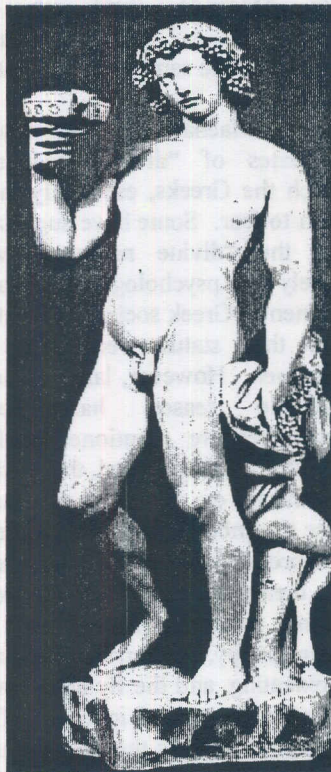
The last great producer of fine wine in Greece was the island of Thasos, off the coast of Thrace. It was said that this wine had the scent of apples. The rest of the other regions produced bulk wine, which would be similar to our jug and box wine of today.

Greeks were not hard drinkers. They nearly always mixed wine with water and usually seawater. Wine was expensive and adding water meant that you and your friends could drink longer. The word "symposium" in ancient Greece means, "drinking together". Plato had this to say about the symposium. "Wherever men of gentle breeding and culture are gathered together at a symposium, you will see neither flute girls, nor harp girls; on the contrary, they are quite capable of entertaining themselves without such nonsense and childishness, but with their own voices, talking and listening in turn, and always decently, even when they have drunk much wine." Besides mixing with water the Greeks mixed various herbs, spices,



and other items such as fly agaric mushrooms into their wine.

The Greeks made a god out of wine by the name of Dionysus. Needless to say, probably the most popular religion and cult in Greece was that of Dionysus. This god was different from all the rest of the gods and goddesses. You drank



*Dionysus*

Dionysus and he existed inside of you. With him inside of you your problems and worries seemed a little less bothersome. What a miraculous god!

The origin of Dionysus dates back at least 9,000 years ago in the Stone Age temples in Catal Huyuk, one of the first known cities. He is represented as the child and the Great Goddess. Her name is Kubaba. Later the name Kubaba reappears in Mesopotamia around 6,000 years ago, she had a consort or son known as Sabazius. Sabazius or Sabos were also other names associated with the Thracian cult of Dionysus. The rites of Sabazius are analogous with the rites of Dionysus. One ritual took place at night in the mountains or in the forests with loud savage music; the participants would dance a wild whirling circular dance not too unlike that of the dervishes. The participants were mostly women who dressed in "bessares", which were made out of animal skins. They would hold snakes that were dedicated to Sabazios and knives. At the point of "divine madness" they would rip apart into pieces the sacred animals such as bulls, snakes, etc. and they ate the raw meat. However in their minds, they were eating their god. An initiation into

the mysteries of Sabazius was depicted on a vase. The vase shows Sabazius with the headband of a snake and the Great Goddess sitting on their thrones. The priestess has a woman step before the divine pair. She is wearing a liknon (a ivy-crowned mask of Dionysus) covered by a cloth. Two women officiate. One is offering sacrificial cakes from a bowl and the other is holding a kantharos (a handed drinking vessel). The rest of the vase depicts women dancing, playing flutes, and in various states of ecstasy. Sounds like a great Mass!

From the mysteries of Sabazius, the cult of Dionysus was born. Every year in March the annual Great Festival of Dionysus was held. The city was filled with people, the stench of blood from the bulls that were sacrificed to Dionysus the day before, and the bouquet of wine. They would gather at the theatre. The Priests of Dionysus would sit on stone thrones on the circular stage. Around them danced women dressed as Maenads and men as Satyrs. A Satyr would try to capture a Maenad. Only for her to escape and prodded him with her thyrsis (a large staff like wand with pinecones on the end).

There were other festivals for Dionysus. Every second winter women of every age and class went on a pilgrimage to the Oracle of Delphi. From December to February the temple of Apollo became the temple of Dionysus. All who participated in the ceremonies were sworn to secrecy. At night Dionysus' priestesses and the women who were dressed up like Maenads went up Mt Parnassus. They probably preformed the same ritual as that of Sabazius.

Maenads are always seen in states of "divine madness", which the Greeks, especially men, seem to fear. Some have suggested that the "divine madness" was merely a psychological release. Women in Greek society, no matter what their status, were slaves to their men. However, lately a more plausible reason has risen. Remember we mentioned earlier that the Greeks mixed their wine with herbs, etc. It seems that there were a number of drugs that Greeks and probably the Maenads mixed into their wine. The Maenads wore coronet woven with seed heads of opium poppy, the berries of ivy are intoxicating, and the fly agaric was known to be mixed in wine. The most interesting is the possibly use of a parasite, the ergot, on barley



and other grasses. Its alkaloids are known today as LSD. Hugh Johnson, an expert on wine and its history, states that wine was rarely not mixed and that wine was one of a range of mildly narcotic cocktails.

In February was the Dionysian festival of the Anthesteria or the Flower Festival. The part of the City of Athens became the City Dionysia. This was when the new wine was opened and the water was mixed in. Priests would dress as Dionysus and arrive on the seashore. Drinking was the main event. Through out the city great amphora parties occurred, drinking contests, dancing, generally a great feast was happening all over the City Dionysia. By the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC ev the City Dionysia was adapted and expanded to the entire city of Athens. It was amazing because generally Dionysus' cult was regarded with disgust because it allowed women and slaves to behave wantonly. In one hundred years a minority cult suddenly had an enormous following. To such an extent that Pisistrates, a tyrant that ruled Athens from 546-527 BC e.v., realized in order to control a movement then let it be a state

sanctioned event. The theatres were built in Athens to be the new City Dionysia. The Greeks would drink and watch some tragedies and a little comedy.

For many the worship of Dionysus never died. We, Thelemites consider Dionysus a Saint of the Gnostic Mass. However we are not the only ones who revere Dionysus, many winemakers still make offerings to Dionysus to help ensure the greatness of their wines. Even in many parts of Greece wherever wine is made or sold Dionysian symbols abound. Some Greeks still think that he exists and pay tribute to him. We personally believe like those of old that we are consuming the god. So the next time you take that drink of wine unto Nuit remember that you are drinking in Dionysus and he is becoming one with you.

Hunahpu & Ixel Balamke

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## **New York City**

### **An editorial by Fra. ZTGA**

I recently spent four days in Manhattan. We went over most of the lower half of the island. Lower Manhattan, Tribeca, Alphabet City, Soho, The Village, Midtown, Central Park, and so on. I saw the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Well, technically, I saw about 20% of it, but I did go inside. I walked through Times Square, twice, went to the top of the World Trade—out on the roof, no less, which was much more peaceful than being inside on the top floor. I took the Hoboken ferry which docks at the World Financial Center and swings decently close to the Statue of Liberty. I went to the MOMA and saw *The Persistence of Memory* and several new model cars that are to come out for the new millenium. They look kind of like spacecraft. And they're all quite tiny. I walked by the Empire State building, the MTV studios (and saw a gaggle of shrieking pubescent girls howling at one of the Back Street Boys). And there was so much more I did not see. Grand Central Station, Wall Street, Broadway, the Central Park Zoo, Madison Square Garden, Belvedere Castle, The Chrysler Building, Battery Park, and so on.

I have to say, however, that with the possible exception of some of the things I saw in the Met, not one of these sights would rank anywhere close to what I consider to be the most amazing, mind boggling thing I saw while I was there. The most amazing thing was the people. Contrary to popular conception, the people of Manhattan are not rude. They are just very, very busy. I quickly discovered that you could not really start a conversation with anyone you didn't already know. I tried, several times. And I got the most curious reaction. No one told me to screw off. No one backed away in fear. No one laughed, or cried, or died. No one threatened or insulted me. They just looked at me blankly, as if I had spoken some kind of alien language, or perhaps just belched. Needless to say, I did not get any sort of response back. It was rather unsettling.

Most of the conversations I overheard, principally on the Path and NJ transit trains, were about one of two things—time or money. Without belaboring the details of the conversations that reached my ears, let me sum up by saying that people in Manhattan are extraordinarily concerned with both. I went there thinking that two hundred dollars, if I was

cautious, would probably get me through four days, but in fact, that was just enough to cover the cost of transportation (I was staying with a friend in Ocean Grove, NJ). Another three hundred dollars took care of food (I ate six times while I was there), gifts (three gifts), and entrance to the museums and other tourist attractions I allowed myself to be herded into. Manhattan is, I learned, quite expensive.

Contributing to the air of commercialism were the street vendors. Of all the things I went to see, these were the sights that actually interested me the most. I believe I can safely say that anything that's for sale anywhere in the world can be bought in Manhattan. I passed street vendors that had just obviously cleaned out someone's apartment—they were selling a pile of clothes, a blender, a toaster, some kid's soccer trophy, a TV/VCR, and some books. I passed a street vendor who was selling handguns for ten dollars a piece (in the garment district, no less). He wasn't selling the ammunition to go with them. Some of the vendors were selling video copies of movies that had come out the same day. I can't possibly explain everything I saw, it would take too

much space, and would likely leave me insane. My own personal proof that anything and everything is for sale in Manhattan cost me only \$6.50. I purchased, against all belief, a raccoon penis bone. I would like you, gentle reader, to contemplate this for just a moment. Consider what kind of place one would find a raccoon penis bone for sale. One might think a natural history museum, or perhaps a science catalogue. But if it's not one of these places, just what would have to be the case for anyone to be able to pay \$6.50 to buy a raccoon penis bone?

The most saddening thing I saw was on a train just outside Newark. We had been passing by dozens of old brick buildings at a high rate of speed, but for some reason the train slowed right next to a building that looked no different than any of the others we had gone by. The wall facing the train was blanketed in windows. I looked inside, and saw a large room filled with desks and sewing machines. Chained to these desks were children and young women, sewing. My mouth dropped; I knew I was looking at a sweat shop. My friend, who works for a large department store in Woodbridge (I believe they are a Manhattan based company), told



me later that he knew of dozens of such shops in the Newark area. The line from the book of the law: "...The slaves shall serve" came into my head and I felt sick.

Another curious thing I observed was how possessive people are of their significant others in Manhattan. I presume that this is because it's probably very difficult to find someone to fall in love with in New York. I actually observed an otherwise normal looking man escort his wife (girlfriend? Fiancee?) to the restroom in a restaurant and walk her back to the table. Just to dispel any illusion that it was typical male jealousy, I saw later that she did the same thing with him. Everyone who was with someone else was hanging onto them in some manner. I made the mistake of glancing twice at a woman on a train. She whispered something to her boyfriend, and I got an ugly glare for the next half an hour. The whole incident would have been funny—I glanced at her only because she was in the periphery of my vision and she moved—were it not for everything else I saw.

I recently read a statistic which said that the average American works at least one hundred more hours per year than the average Japanese.

Again, this is rather startling to me. The average American now works 65 hours per week. If you count the time it takes to get ready for work, and the drive to and from, this means that the average person spends 12 hours per day involved with their job. That's half the day! It's even more sickening when you consider that very few people actually work for themselves. They produce x amount of profit, only a small percentage of which is paid to them. The rest goes to the heads of the organization in question, who make in some cases thousands of times what their lowest paid employee makes.

It's a mistake to assume that the heads of companies work any less than those lower on the food chain. Some do, most don't. When is there ever time to spend all the money that's generated? I'm not sure I can figure that one out.

I shudder to think about what the consequences to human psychology this trend will have (if what I saw in Manhattan is any indication, it's only going to get worse). If one spends all one's time on one's job (and how many people really want to be middle management?), how can one pursue any personal interests to any

degree? It seems impossible. We had such a situation in the west beginning in the 1830's, lasting all the way to the 1950's, when the forces of labor finally won the rights we traditionally think belong to workers. That's all gone, now.

Given the spiritual bend of this magazine, I would have to now wonder what the spiritual consequences of such a pursuit of money for someone else will be. Spiritual pursuits, I should first note, take time. When will there be time, after you've spent literally half a day, accumulating money for someone else, to meditate, perform a Star Ruby (much less actually consecrate a talisman or do an invocation)? When will there be time for some simple reading of Molinos, Eikhart, Blake, Crowley, Vivekananda? When will there be time for connecting with the rest of the community? Will it come to the point that speaking with someone in Topeka, Kansas, will only get you a blank stare? Will you eventually see handguns for ten dollars a piece on the streets of Colorado Springs? Will you be able to buy a raccoon penis bone in Eureka, California? Will we be forced to put our children to work

in factories making sixty-five cents an hour?

I'm sure Manhattan isn't like this for everyone that lives and works there. And I should mention that I did see people relaxing in the Village—everything there seemed roughly normal. And, of course, people need human contact, and any system that attempts to eradicate that completely will collapse. But we do have model societies where contact and spiritual development is minimized. China comes to mind, and though I've never been there, I've heard it's pretty bad. And this is a monster that is coming for us all, slowly, yes, but inexorably. It's oozing over the world.

Will there be (can there be) freedom within such a society? The only answer I can give is that I do not know.

I cannot provide any answers, I don't want to sound like I'm angry at everything and willing to do nothing about it. But this is where I will have to leave things. If there is to be a solution, people worldwide will simply have to live with less greed, and realize that trading their lives for a new chair, a video game, or a larger house may not be worth it.



## A Brief Survey of Dionysian Myth

By Ixel Balamke and  
Hunaphu

The traditional version of the birth of Dionysus is that Zeus (disguised as a mortal) loved Semele, the daughter of Cadmus. Jealous Hera appeared to Semele and convinced her to trick Zeus into revealing himself to her in the full magnificence of his divinity. Thus Semele was burned to a cinder by the splendor of Zeus, who sewed Dionysus (the child of Zeus and Semele) up in his own thigh, to be born at the proper time. As a divine child Dionysus was brought up by nymphs and Semele's sister, Ino, on a mountain named Nysa. Dionysus came to Greece from Phrygia and Thrace; he is a latecomer to the Olympian pantheon. He brings happiness and salvation to those who accept him peacefully, but to those who don't madness and death. The Greeks had many titles for Dionysus; the Romans preferred the name Bacchus, which is a variant of the Greek name Bakchos.

### DIONYSUS-ZAGREUS

Dionysus is a god of mystery religion, with a message of salvation. As god of the mysteries, Dionysus was sometimes invoked by the name of Dionysus-Zagreus, or merely Zagreus, for whom specific dogma was established through a variation of the traditional myth about his birth.

The variant story says that Zeus mated with his daughter, Persephone, and she bore a son Zagreus (another name for Dionysus). Hera, because of her jealousy, incited the Titans to dismember the child and devour the pieces. The heart of the child was saved; Dionysus was born again, through Semele and Zeus, as recounted above. Zeus in anger destroyed the Titans, and from their ashes mortals were born.

### THE BACCHAE OF EURIPIDES

Euripides' play *The Bacchae* is fundamental for an understanding of Dionysus and his worship. In the play, Dionysus has come in anger to Thebes (the first city in Greece in which he has introduced his mysteries), because his very divinity has been

challenged and the basic practice of his religion repudiated. The sisters of his mother, Semele, claim that Zeus did not beget him, but that Semele became pregnant by some mortal. Her father, Cadmus, induced her to say that Zeus was the real father, and Zeus struck her dead because of her deception.

Through the power of Dionysus the women of Thebes have become possessed by frenzy and dressed in fawn skins. They raise the Bacchic cry on Mt. Cithaeron, to the musical beat of tambourines, with the thyrsis (an ivy-covered staff with pinecones a top of it) in their hands. Cadmus has retired as king of Thebes and his young grandson Pentheus is vehemently opposed to this new religion. Dionysus will later vindicate his mother's honor and prove his godhead with dreadful consequences for his enemies.

The cry of the Bacchae (the women followers of Dionysus) describes a pure and mystic joy in Bacchic worship. Happy is the one who, blessed with the knowledge of the divine mysteries, leads a life of ritual purity and joins the holy group of revelers heart and soul as they honor their god Bacchus in the mountains with holy ceremonies of purification.

The play turns upon Dionysus' victory over Pentheus. This hubristic and neurotic king, still in his teens, who is violent in his opposition to a religion that he cannot understand, becomes an easy victim for the god. He is lured to his destruction through the ambivalence of his sexual identity and by his desire to see the orgies, which he imagines are being celebrated under the pretense of mystic rites. Led by Dionysus to Mt. Cithaeron, Pentheus is torn to pieces by the fury of the Bacchae, with his mother, Agave, as their leader in the slaughter. She returns to Thebes with the head of her son affixed to the tip of her thyrsis and awakens from her madness to realize the horror of her deed.

In the last scene of the play (for which the text is corrupt), Dionysus metes out his justice, which includes exile for those who have sinned against him. As Agave takes leave of Thebes, she exclaims that she will go where Mt. Cithaeron will be out of her sight and where there will be no remembrance of the thyrsis. It is for others to become Bacchae and care for the things of Dionysus.



### THE NATURE OF DIONYSUS, HIS RELIGION, AND HIS FOLLOWERS

Dionysus is a god of vegetation in general, and of the vine in particular. The grape, the making of wine, and the drinking of wine with the exhilaration and release it can bring are all in his domain. He is the coursing of the blood through the veins, the throbbing intoxication of nature and the intoxication of sex. He represents the emotional and the irrational in human beings, which drives them relentlessly to mob fury, fanaticism, and violence, but also to the highest ecstasy of mysticism and religious experience. Within Dionysus lie both the bestial and the sublime.

Essential to his worship was a spiritual release through music and dance; in the history of religion, archetypal behavior demands music and dance as essential for the most exalted rituals. In Bacchic ceremonies, the god took possession of his worshipers, who ate the raw flesh of the sacrificial animal in a kind of ritual communion, since they believed god to be present in the

victim. This ceremony was called Omophagy, and the religious congregation was known as the holy Thiasus.

The female followers of Dionysus are called Bacchae; these are mortal women who could become possessed by the god. They are sometimes also called Maenads. These names, too, are given to the mythological nymphs, spirits of nature, who follow in Dionysus' retinue. Satyrs are the mythological male counterparts of these nymphs. They are not completely human, but part man and part animal, with a horse's tail and ears and a goat's beard and horns. They are also depicted as Pan-like creatures, which are half-man and half-goat. They are usually depicted nude and often sexually excited. Older Satyrs, some of whom have achieved wisdom, are called Sileni.

Animal skins and garlands are typical attire for the Bacchic revelers; they also almost always carry a Thyrsis, which is a pole wreathed with ivy or vine leaves, pointed at the top to receive a pinecone. It can become a deadly weapon or act as a magic wand by which to perform miracles.

## DIONYSUS AND ARIADNE

Ariadne gave the hero Theseus a thread by which he could find his way out of the labyrinth after killing the Minotaur. She escaped with him from Crete but was abandoned by her lover on the island of Naxos. Desperate and alone, she was rescued by Bacchus, who placed the wreath that she wore in the heavens, where it became the constellation Corona. This damsel in distress found deliverance through a god, not a hero; and this story of salvation, illustrating the love and compassion of Dionysus (benevolent god of the mysteries), has inspired great works of art.

## DIONYSUS, LOVERS, AND CHILDREN

After marrying Ariadne Dionysus and Ariadne had a number of sons - Eurymedon, Thoas, Staphylus, Oenopion, Peparathus, Phlias, and Ceramus. Several of them were counted among the Argonauts. Besides having a wife, Maenads, and Satyrs, Dionysus had many other lovers. Some gave him children.

Althaea gave birth to Deianira who later married Heracles and was later responsible for Heracles' death. Narcaeus, whose mother was Physcoa, was so proud of his father that he was the first in Elis to worship him. The nymph Nicaea celebrated with wine after killing a pursuer during her drunken sleep; Dionysus had his way with her. Telete was born from this union. Pallene wrestled and killed her lovers, until she met Dionysus. Aura, the Huntress and Servant of Artemis, was sleeping when Dionysus stole her maidenhood. She had twins but killed one. The surviving twin was Iacchus who was cared for by the Maenads of Eleusis. Even jealous Hera, who once tried to kill Dionysus, succumbed to Dionysus and gave birth to Pasithea, the oldest of the Charities. The most interesting relationship Dionysus had was with Aphrodite. They had a son, Priapus who became the god of the Phallus.

## KING MIDAS OF PHRYGIA

When a wise Sileni named Silenus was captured and brought before King Midas, King of Phrygia, Midas recognized Silenus as a follower of Dionysus and returned him to the god.



Dionysus was so grateful to Midas for the release of Silenus that he promised to give the king any gift that he wished. Midas foolishly asked that whatever he should touch might be turned to gold. At first Midas was delighted when he saw everything turn into gleaming riches by the mere touch of his hand. Soon this blessed power turned out to be a curse. Everything he tried to eat and drink was immediately turned into a solid mass of gold. His touch even transformed his daughter into gold. He begged Dionysus for release, and the god took pity. He ordered Midas to cleanse himself in the river Pactolus, near Sardis. His power of the golden touch passed from him into the stream. Midas afterward became devoted to the god Pan. Once again he showed his folly by preferring the music of the pipe of Pan to the lyre of Apollo, and his ears were turned into those of an ass.

#### DIONYSUS AND THE PIRATES

The Homeric Hymn to Dionysus tells how pirates, seeing the elegant Dionysus on the sea shore, thought him to be

the son of a king, and carried him off on their ship. When they tried to bind him, however, the bonds miraculously would not hold. Only the helmsman realized that they had tried to capture a god, but his warnings of dire consequences went unheeded by the commander of the ship.

Great miracles appeared to the astonished sailors. Wine flowed through the ship and with it arose a divine odor. A vine entwined about the mast and grew up to the very top of the sail, luxuriant with flowers and grapes. The god created a raging bear and he himself became a terrifying lion, which seized the ship's commander. The sailors were in a state of panic, leaped into the sea, and became dolphins. Dionysus declared his true identity as a mighty god to the surviving helmsman, who had become dear to his heart. Dionysus pitied him, saved him, and made him happy.

There is another version of this story that the sailors had captured Dionysus and at sea became enamoured with him. They tried to sexually molest Dionysus. Dionysus made wine flow, a vine grow up around the mast, created a raging bear, he turned into a lion, . . . the story is pretty much the same after that.

## DIONYSUS AND HERACLES

Heracles and Dionysus had a couple of adventures together. Heracles once challenged Dionysus to a drinking contest. Needless to say the ending we prefer is that Heracles was completely drunk and could barely stand. Although having drunk a vast amount of wine Dionysus was still sober.

On another occasion a maiden was concerned that Dionysus was going to take her maidenhood from her. It certainly wouldn't have been Dionysus' first and it certainly was not his last. The maiden begged Heracles for his help. To help save the maiden he took her place. Heracles dressed in her clothes and spent the night in her bed with Dionysus. After that Dionysus called Heracles a transvestite. It seemed to upset Heracles a great deal, which was probably Dionysus' true intent.

### Bibliography:

Bullfinches' Mythology (pick an edition we have read so many)

The Internet, on which there are many sites of varying quality. All this information can be found by links through this url : <http://ancienthistory.miningco.com/msubmythgrecoman.htm?pid=2765&cob=home>



## Trying New Wines

By Ixel Balamke and  
Hunaphu

Tasting wines is a wonderful way to heighten the senses of taste, smell and sight. By learning to detect subtle differences in wine, we have noticed that our oenophilic senses have improved considerably. Improving one's ability to detect subtle details is always good, especially for anyone on a magickal path.

Formulating and expressing your opinion about wine does not require a large, eloquent, showy, wine-fortified vocabulary. Though it's nice to know what words like "terroir," "appellation," and "nose" refer to, simple terms work better if you want to get your opinion across. The four things to look at in evaluating a wine are its color, its scent (or bouquet, or nose), its initial taste, and its finishing taste. It's important to note that good wine will have subtly different tastes as it travels from your lips, across your tongue, and down your throat. For example: recently we tasted a Star Hill Merlot 1996 (the grapes

were from Stoney Meadow Vineyard in the Stag's Leap appellation of Napa Valley). The color is ruby red. The smell is of blackberries with a hint of spice. The initial taste was strongly blackberries, with a hint of spice and chocolate. There was only a little tannin (bitter compounds that lend aged wine complexity) in the finish, making it an exceptional, smooth Merlot. The wine is very drinkable now and with five years of age it will be an exceptional wine especially at the current market price of \$25.

Now it's your turn-- try some wines and take some notes. Email us and ask questions if you like. We love wine and can point you toward some amazing resources and buys.

This time, following the Dionysus theme, we would like introduce Star Hill Wines. Star Hill Winery's proprietor is Dr. Jake Goldenberg, who is not only a winemaker but also one of California's leading periodontists. He once commented to us that it is amazing the winemaking secrets people will give you once they are in the dentist's chair. Jake moved to the Napa Valley in 1974, planted the first vines in 1976, and produced his first wine in 1978, which won first place in its

division at the Town and Country Fair. Jake bonded his winery in 1986 and began producing for public consumption. As far as winemaking is concerned, Jake is a Priest of Dionysus. He turns water into wine everyday. His gift of creating wines with artistic demeanor is truly a remarkable talent. Even his bottles bear an inscription that tells of the old worship of Dionysus:

**"The Ring of Dionysus. Our Passion . . . Thousands of years ago the ancient discovered, possibly by chance, the art of winemaking. Today we enjoy, in museums and by travel, the beauty of past culture and civilizations. Star Hill invites you to join the 'Ring of Dionysus' and share the fruits of our labor as we dedicate ourselves in each vintage to the love of fine winemaking. Our wines are made by magical forces."**

You can reach Star Hill at 1076 Shadybrook Ln, Napa, CA 94558, telephone 707/255-1957, email [winestar@aol.com](mailto:winestar@aol.com), or visit on the web at [www.Starhill.com](http://www.Starhill.com). You can even order wines through his web page. Enjoy some wine. And always Unto Nui!!!



## A Tribute to a Soldier of Freedom

*Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law.*

On May 7<sup>th</sup>, 1999 e.v., Ebony Anpu VI<sup>O</sup> (Charles Reese) went into the ecstasy of the embrace of Nuit. Ebony had a long and distinguished career in our Order. He admitted frequently to us his love of OTO. He was born in Texas on September 6<sup>th</sup>, 1950 e.v. He originally intended to enter a career in music when he came to San Francisco Area, but instead he decided to devote his life to helping Grady McMurtry rebuild the Order. He helped put on some of the first Gnostic Masses at Thelema Lodge, served as the Grand Secretary General under Grady, helped put on the Rites of Eleusis, contributed to the OTO Newsletters, etc. Not only was he a devout student of Crowley, but he and others started and maintained Stellar Visions publications. Stellar Visions' goal originally was to make available Crowley material that currently was not available in print. Ebony later married. This was something completely

unexpected to us, but after meeting Liesl (his wife) we then understood.

Besides his devotion to studying Thelemic Texts, he was an expert in Ancient Egypt. He read hieroglyphs better than many Americans read English. He helped many of us with the basic understanding of the Egyptian rituals and texts. Many owe Ebony a large debt of thanks for his classes in Ancient Egypt. We still break out the Ebo tapes for a class at SBR every now and then.

Not only was he an expert in Egypt but his skills as a magickian were extraordinary. The energy and empowering that he did as a magician demonstrated what was possible and encouraged many of us to work harder. The time that Ebony spent at SBR in April of 1998 was wonderful. It allowed the members of the Lodge see a veteran magickian in action. His Star Ruby, Star Sapphire, etc were magnificent to watch and participate in.

There were three Greater Feast celebrations for Ebony for those who wished to attend in the Bay Area. The first celebration was an ecstatic Gnostic Mass at Oz House on May 21<sup>st</sup>. The second was another Gnostic Mass at Thelema Lodge on the 22<sup>nd</sup>, which

we had the honor of being Priest and Priestess. The third was a Memorial service at the Marin Masonic Lodge. Many, many people attended the events. It was good to meet with old friends, make new ones, and finally meet Ebony's family even Bill Heidrick and the lovely Kathy came. Ebony's mother, Matti, flew from China to be at the celebrations.

There were eleven speakers at his Memorial in Marin. Frater Superior Hymenaeus Beta said this about Ebony, "He was one of the most loyal members of our Order, and he was also one of the most disobedient." He also said that Ebony at one time told him that he was going to collect all the secret papers of the Order. HB, having gone through Ebony's files said that he was apparently successful. Bill Heidrick pointed out that Ebony is not really gone, that everyone there was a part of Ebony's life and we still carry his spirit with us. His daughter did a fabulous singing version of the Adorations from the Book of the Law. Ebony would have been proud. We too counted among the speakers.

Our favorite memories of Ebony are of sitting in his living room and letting Ebony talk. He would go on for hours about

magick, the Order, the history of the Order, ritual techniques, ancient Egypt, computers, etc. He was a virtual cornucopia of information on magick. We would laugh, drink, and carry on. There were times when we would bitch that he needs to take better care of himself. He never listened and threatening him wouldn't do any good (we did try). He was such a WILLFUL Thelemite.

Finally, we all admitted at times that Ebony was a pain in the ass, but we love him and he will always be one of our dearest friends in the Order. Ebony, we raise our wineglasses to Nuit that she may keep you in the Light and ecstasy that you deserve. We will miss you but will never forget you, Ebony, our Friend and Brother.

*Love is the law, love under will.*  
Hunahpu & Ixel Balamke







