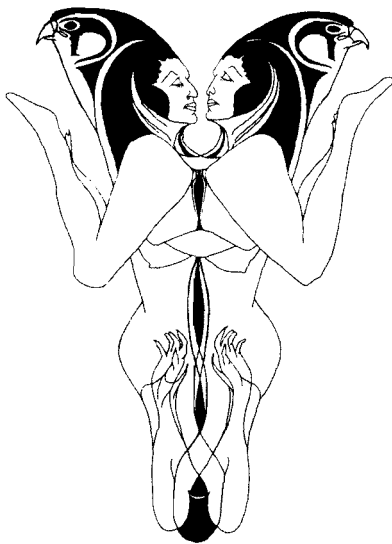


OPUSCULA MAGICA

Volume I

*Essays:
Witchcraft and the Sabbatic Tradition*



Andrew D. Chumbley

With Illustrations by the Author

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Opuscula Magica

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“An Interview with Andrew D. Chumbley”

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Editorial Preface to Volume I

The writings of the Essex magician Andrew D. Chumbley (1967-2004) stand distinct in late 20th-century occultism for their sagacity and vision, specifically their treatment of the witch-cult. The three major texts published during his lifetime, suffused with a lucent apprehension of the arcane, continue to fascinate and command vitality in the field of magic. The first of these works, *Azoëtia: A Grimoire of the Sabbatic Craft* (1992), enmantled the Witch's Art in universal principles of sorcery, proceeding from the primeval atavistic well of the Sabbat. Informed by many years of magical practice and his own participation in traditional witchcraft lineages, the book was both a slaying and an apotheosis of the witch-construct in popular occultism, restoring her phantasmal and sinistral attributes. *Qutub, or, The Point* (1995), a mystical text of Sufic noësis, identified the continuity of magical inversion and transgressive ethos -- summoned as the godform of the Opposer -- in many historical forms of sorcery. As with *Azoëtia*, this book wove together diverse magical strands to crystallise a unified body of witch-gnosis. *One: The Grimoire of the Golden Toad*, published in 2000, treated solitary initiation in rural folk-sorcery, particularly the Toad-Bone rites of East Anglia, and their diabolic and transcendental aspects. Each of these works, brought forth by Xoanon Publishing, received widespread acclaim for their originality and insight. A smaller corpus of Andrew's published works, in the form of magical treatises, though lesser known, has been equally influential. These are the subject of the *Opuscula Magica*.

The genesis of the *Opuscula* lies in the Spring of 1996 when Andrew proposed a collection of his previously printed essays to several occult publishers in England. For many reasons the work did not come to fruition, not the least of which was the focus of his literary energies upon *The Dragon-Book of Essex* and the demanding magical practice required for its reification. Despite the fact that the essay-volume did not manifest at that time, he wrote considerable notes and supportive text, many of which have been drawn upon here.

In late 2002, Andrew and I were occupied with the work of preparing the second edition of *Azoëtia* for press. As part of a wider conversation about the aims of Xoanon Publishing, I asked if he planned to bring his collected essays to print. His initial reaction was surprise, deeming the articles of a markedly different magical calibre than his Xoanon works. I raised the point that, given the growing interest in Sabbatic Witchcraft and the published work of the Cultus Sabbati, as well as the rarity of many of the articles, this widely-scattered corpus of work demanded a formalised and artful gathering. Citing commitments to Xoanon, his doctoral research, and overseeing a magical order, Andrew was unable at that time to commit to the endeavour. Yet we agreed that these works, some of which had been published more than a decade prior, still wielded considerable magical and literary power, and were worthy of a prudent reincarnation.

After the second edition of *Azoëtia* had taken flesh, the book of collected articles was revisited as a long-term goal. Andrew wished to keep this corpus of work separate from that of Xoanon, with its highly-specified focus as the outer voice of the Cultus Sabbati. Thus an imprint was forged, Three Hands Press, initially for the purpose of publishing works of Cultus Sabbati initiates outside the parameters of Xoanon.

Work began on a suitable ordering of the articles: Andrew made minor revisions to several essays, and wrote an additional introduction. However, in the final year of his life, work on the article-compilation was eclipsed by the greater concerns of his doctoral thesis, the magical work of the *Cultus Sabbati*, and completion of *The Auraeon*, his final grimoire intended for outer publication.

The present harvest of essays is entitled 'Witchcraft and the Sabbatic Tradition', and indeed one may trace, wending through their procession, not only the historical and folk magical components of the Craft of the Wise, but threads of its more subtle underpinnings as well. Of particular import is the iteration of *sorcery* as the basis of witchcraft-praxis, rather than a putative 'nature-religion', and its primal link with the ecstatic reveries of the Sabbath.

Arrangement of the works in this volume, and others in the *Opuscula Magica* series, is generally thematic, but within this rubric they also appear in chronological order to preserve the evolution of Andrew's autochthonous magical themes. Many essays treat areas of overlapping concern; the present arrangement of texts is thus also governed by considerations of narrative flow, largely following Andrew's structural notations of 1996 and 2003. In most cases, complete handwritten originals of these articles are extant, as well as hand-corrected typescripts, which provided additional texts and editorial insights for this collection.

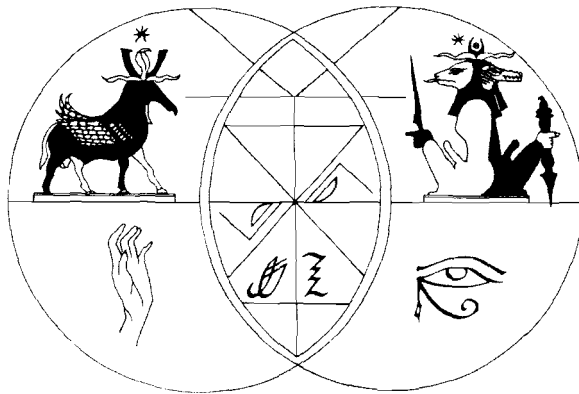
The illustrations which appear herein are taken from published and unpublished sources. Many of the latter are various recensions of *Azoëtia* written between 1990 and 1992, adorned by numerous magical diagrams that reflect a nascent artistic style which defines that work. Others originate from the fertile period of illustrative activity of the mid-1990s

that marked the interstitium between *Azoëtia* and *Qutub*, a flowering of Andrew's skills as an artistic visionary and draughtsman.

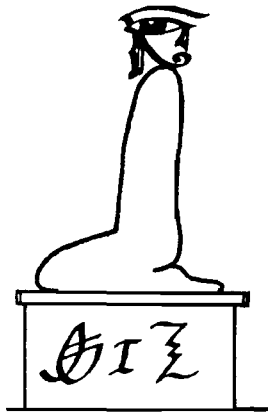
In the labour of bringing these works to print, I have been graciously assisted by a number of individuals whose support of the Work cannot be underestimated. I give especial thanks to Elizabeth Spedding for her collaborative ingenuity on the present project and access to the original manuscripts. My appreciation likewise goes to Clive Harper for his editorial counsel and the thorough work of archiving the publications in which these articles originally appeared. Robert Fitzgerald, whose keen editorial eye and constant devil's advocacy was a welcome presence, must also here be given due credit. Sincere thanks go to Gavin Semple for his impeccable advice on the manuscript, as well as his bibliographic work in the monograph *From the Peacock Quill*, produced with Mr Harper, which underscored the necessity for this collection. My heartfelt appreciation to James Dunk for his assistance in illustrative production, and the faithful restoration of some of the obscure images which appear herein. Finally, with every honour I thank Robert Ansell of Fulgur Limited, and Michael Howard of *The Cauldron*, for their sage editorial advice on bringing a work of this importance to light.

Daniel A. Schulke
January 2010, e.v.

Witchcraft and the Sabbatic Tradition



I



Proem

There are marks upon the magical path: signposts which teach us the Way and its deviations. These signs can come in many forms, as omens, words and sometimes as people. They teach us continually, if we are open to their existence and remain alert and receptive to their voices. People can act as the messengers of the path, narrating to us the comic and tragic tales of fate, demonstrating to us how to act and how not to act. We can therefore thank even those who would throw obstacles in our path, who merely want to dispute the Way instead of seeking it. We can thank all, for within both sage and fool alike the Invisible Initiator can disguise and teach. It dances in and out of many worlds; its essence abides in some as 'home' and in others it is just passing through. If it dwells awhile amongst these pages, then only you, the Reader, will know.

For myself, I learn much through solitary contemplation in wood, graveyard and meadow; that for me is solace. I also learn from my companions upon the path and to them I must offer my gratitude. My companions are the Night and those who walk within it; they are amid the world, but they are not of it. Amidst all I have sought to make the path my own, to eschew the folly of solely following in others' footsteps, and thus I have found the secret of the path unique. We can share the path, but not all of our steps upon it. The articles within this book indicate but a few 'steps' which I have taken personally, their words narrate the realisations I have experienced. In writing, the process of realisation has served to crystallise my understanding more completely and this is hopefully to be reciprocated through your own act of reading. Amidst these words and pictures I hope that there are way marks for all.

The articles within this book are gathered together from the various journals of magic, folklore and occultism wherein they were previously scattered. The diffusion of knowledge through such diverse channels was intentional. I wished to address a broad range of people within the entire field of the esoteric, from the traditional cunning-man to the modern magician, from the master to the apprentice. This gathering together is likewise intentional. For having engaged the interest of a variety of people who are sincere in their pursuit of the magical path, albeit through very different approaches, I thought it appropriate to collect together these various articles so that all may read them in a single, unified context. This is really a metaphorical way for me to talk about the diversity of magical beliefs, the wondrous spectrum of their differences, and the pleasure of being able to address the whole. For there is a design of power which flows and weaves in subtle undercurrents throughout all. The secret of this design is to be realised by each aspirant, uniquely and alone. The seeker must immerse himself entirely within the current of magic and, in turn, magic will merge entirely with him. This is the secret of the Magical Quintessence: an instant of gnosis cast through eternity; an initiation from the primal source, passed on by the many hands of chance.

Aside from the desire to encourage insight and share magical inspiration with the many seekers of the Way, I have some personal reasons for this collection. As a practitioner of the Arte, my predilection is toward the sorcery of the Crooked Path and it is through my direct experience of this path that these essays were conceived. Although I consider that the initiatory source of the Crooked Path lies outside of temporal lineage and is revealed within each

uniquely, I elect to identify that source within the context of various initiatory streams. It is thus that I participate directly within various magical traditions most notably those of the cunning man and the witch. Throughout this book there is lore pertaining to this personal stance. I hope that such information will give the reader a context for this presentation and also impart some *first-hand* experiential knowledge into the mentality of the Wytchan Sorcerer.

If the content of this book causes you to think about the *Arte Magical* in new ways, then its primary purpose will be achieved, for magical work of any nature must initiate evolution in consciousness. To give oneself the freedom to set aside preconceptions and to simply consider the path and its direction anew, that is a gift we can all afford to grant ourselves. If, by gaining new perspectives, we can realise more fully the scope of magical creativity, we can likewise understand more expansively our own nature writ large amid the infinite possibilities of *Mystery Herself*. If this book assists any upon the way to freedom, then its work is at one with the very spirit of magic.

May the Blessing of the Crooked Path be upon all... and ever according to its own nature!

Andrew D. Chumbley
Chelmsford, 1998 c.v.



A SHORT CRITIQUE AND COMMENT UPON MAGIC

Magic is said by some to be a Science. I think that in actuality Magic is a precise art and that there is but a resemblance between Science and Magic in their Method, that of verifying Knowledge by Observation. But Science is a rigid and theoretical construct dealing with empirically observable fact whereas Magic is concerned with the control of hidden energies via a complex cipher of Archetypes, Symbols and Correspondences.

Science cannot quantify Belief or, for instance, the energisation of Sigils, but Magic can; not with a standardised system of measurement but through the precise intuitive sense on the part of the individual magician. Science demands proof of its theories and hypotheses but Magic has no need of proof since this would nullify belief in it. Belief is the presumption of a Truth in order to induce its Reality. Magic depicts Universal dreams that they might become Manifest Realities. The 'Art' of Magic is to control (and channel the energies of) Belief to realise Desire. It is of note that the word 'Art' in the sense of 'artfulness' implies Cunning and it should be remembered that the old name for a male witch was a 'Cunning Man'; it is a fitting name and Cunning is indeed a principal virtue of Magic, although sadly exchanged by some for common treachery.

There is a tendency to make Magic inclusive of far too many things – Philosophies, theories, and attitudes; some people seem to want Magic to include everything in its vast field of Knowledge. I am of the opinion that Magic is a Universal Power, but it is a Secret Power, of Mystery, and that there are secret means of using it. Magic is not for All. It is to be respected and guarded, and not generalized to

the point of becoming lukewarm; it is of no use to make magic popular if it weakens its power, cheapens it, and only increases its commercial value.

Many can practice it and perhaps improve the quality of their lives but only the few can work its Mysteries with the conviction of a Born Sorcerer. Magic is not for everyone, if it were then it would be a commonplace vulgarity. Fortunately no matter what is written or spoken the True Secrets are always kept Secret!

The Arte Magical as a thing of subtlety, of grand poetic ardour, of Awe and of fierce beautiful inspiration is something of exceptional rarity; perhaps this is best.

For Myself the Purity of Magic is found in Solitude amid the Glory and Wonder of Nature. Through this primitive fascination, which for many is missing or crushed by Society's culture and sophistication, can be found the fountainhead of Untainted Inspiration. The more 'primitive' or the more simple magic becomes the more effective it is.

E.g.: The Working of Rites derived from the innate oracle of Dreams, the use of basic fetishes of wood and stone for magical instruments, divination by Signs and Omens, such wisdom as is evident in the earth and stars.

This does not mean the spurning of the intelligent articulation of Magic's complexities in favour of a basic craft-magic that works well yet does not understand itself, but rather it is a 'Sigillisation' of specific abstract formulae of magical thought to Primal Obsessions and Glyphic Fetishes. By working through the Whole Nature the nature of the Individual is found.

But Nature's Spirit must be rediscovered, it is lost to most of us, and yet is our vital source of Inspiration. This

Inspiration must be sought in earnest and if you are to succeed then it must be sought alone. The Solitude required is intense and curiously pleasurable despite its painfulness and desperate loneliness; it is a Forge in the Soul, of searing flames that enrapture the Mind and Body tempering and shaping it into a Vessel fit for the Work. It is costly and rare, taking its toll upon the individual, exiling him from all that is of conventional worth, and yet is its own reward.

Such Solitude wherein the Individual is closest to the Spirit of Nature varies according to the predilection of the Individual, I myself sought it in the activity of Drawing, 'Art' in the more usual sense of the word and yet as my own Sacred Art it is my foremost method of magical working. The Self remains distant from the Work; it is absent, immersed in isolated contemplation; it is the Hand that is possessed of Inspiration driven by Nature's Spirit.

Art, in the aesthetic sense, when truly inspired is Illuminative. It has the ability to cause a reevaluation and reassessment of our perceptions of the World, and can both clarify our attitudes and change them. It can contain our belief, giving it a concrete form that faith can focus upon, and yet Art can also transcend the forms of traditional idols and icons to grant us a glimpse of the Primal Dream that is the root of all Myth and Faith. The First Artist is the most important in History and fortunately is unknown, I say fortunately as he she remains thus the more mysterious and magical. The importance of the First Artist is that he opened the way for Art to demonstrate its powers and gave rise to the awe of others in the artist's unique abilities – thus making him a Magician. To early mankind the first artists must have seemed as mysterious as fire and the

miracle of birth in their ability to translate aspects of Life and Death into the Visionary Permanence of Pictures and Carvings.

The Artist was the first to convey Desire and Dream to an objective state, he thus manifested the exteriorisation of our earliest fantasies that by the sympathy of Image to Reality they would become True. The role and function of the First Artist and the First Sorcerer are identical and inseparable, that is to fulfil the Dream and bind it to Reality. The more we embrace this primitive function the more effective we become as practitioners of the *Arte Magica*.

It is such Sorcerers or Divine Artists in their Solitude that constitute the True Order of Magic. It is an Ideal, the 'Great White Brotherhood', it is without a single true name, its initiates are those born unto the Art, some meet together and some do not, but the Ideal of the network of power-zones forming a Nameless Abstract Sodality has existed through the Ages and will, no doubt, persist through many more. It is not necessary to bring together a Unity of Magicians to work towards the unification of the many currents of Magic but it is of the utmost importance that the individual practitioners are in themselves a Unity – that each is an autonomous cell of the Whole Current. Thus whether in Orders or in Covens or alone, the Individual is the Vessel of Magic, Unique in expression and yet capable of working co-operatively when necessary.

Through my own Art I have sought to uncover the fundamental initiating energies of Magic, to look beyond the Images of Deity and of Archetypes in order to gain access to that which gives them power. Behind corresponding God-forms there is an Identical Energy but its subtleties are infinite and this is evident in the countless forms and

aspects of Deity in the Ancient Pantheons. The One Current dwells in many houses, flows through many channels, and is comprised of many streams.

The more I draw the greater my abstraction of magic becomes, this being shown through the automatism of the Hand; the resulting pictures often transcending the conventional *strategies of perception and of recognition*, they convey the Inconceivable. Yet in distinction to this I can become immersed in the imagery of Totems and Fetishistic idols, these surfacing in certain pictures and thus expressing the reciprocation between the Highly Evolved Formulae and fundamental/primitive aspects of ritual.

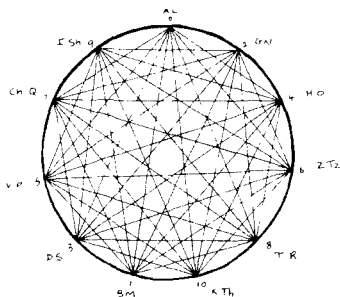
I, by the Hand as the Vessel of All Sorcery, by the Silent and Telaesthetic Pathway, discover the secret image of the Initiator and reveal the Inconceivable Word:— Alogos. Thus I give Reality unto the Dream as Flesh Embodied and as an Image Pictorial.

Finally, there is the realisation of Magic as the Origin and Type of all Sapient Endeavour, and; returning to the subject of Science, it has set the patterns where-by all Knowledge has been sought. Magic was the root of Science and still has certain 'scientific' aspects such as Alchemy and Astrology, likewise Magic is the root of Art and Inspiration. It is the starting-point to which those that are hungry and a-thirst for the Spirit of Original Vitality may return, that is, if they can find it!



INVOCATION

*In Cycles of Orbit and Revolution,
 The Gods' Round Dance of Nature's Whole,
 Where Chaos and Order are ever from the Truth astray,
 Where betwixt Star and Stone and Spirit spun, a Web,
 A Complex Net Incalculable, of Vast Unreason'd Geometry,
 The Pulsing Veins of Aether hung, on Primal Man's Divinity.
 Of this my Dreaming Spirit glimps'd
 A Sigil upon all Space engraved,
 Called the Map of Possibility.
 On four sides of the Sigil stand,
 Four gods watching hand in hand.
 Two Male, Two Female, One at each Quarter—
 Father, Mother, Son and Daughter.
 And in a Fifth their Unity seal'd,
 The Dreaming Shaman's Soul Concealed.
 Fire and Water, Air and Earth,
 In Myself Encircled as a Womb Gargantuan,
 Swarming births in emanation, in volcanic potency,
 Suffusing Spirit throughout Matter, by Self-Sexuality,
 Transcending, embracing the regiment'd sexes
 — Male, Female and Androgyné,
 And through co-eval aeons expanding, a Self-Pantheon Divine!*



THE HEART OF THE SORCERER

Many, if not all, practitioners of the Arte Magical pursue their individual Great Works by traditional and systemological routes which are pre-determined by the very fact that one is given a Path to follow. If one is born into a tradition, then this is all well and good, but for those who are desirous of a reunion with native tradition and yet have been distanced therefrom by modern cultural influence, it remains a difficult task to find one's true way. In a sense we must all walk the Paths worn smoother by the passing of Past Adepts, but there is a time when one's individual pathway wanders and takes a unique passage through task and ordeal. Upon such lonely tracks there are none to guide, neither books nor living souls, and so one is required to gaze deeply within oneself and realize the innate predilections and affinities of one's Soul as an integral part of All Nature.

Whomsoever is Wise practices no magic — but Becomes it.

Personally I have been led unto my own Path in two ways. Firstly, by birth in the Essex countryside I have naturally gravitated toward the native magical practices and beliefs of my own area -- the traditional English Witch Cult -- with which I have identified and associated for some years and which is my exterior contact with the Sabbatic Mysteries and is thus my means of assimilating the essence of that tradition. Secondly, I have in Dreams witnessed and partaken of these self-same mysteries of the Witches' Sabbath in all its phantasmagoric splendour. This is my interior contact with the Sabbatic Mysteries, and it is within those Dreams that I have sought the Arcana that lie at the Heart of All True Sorcery.

I have, by my natural inclinations, always tended toward Eclecticism, have always been exulted by the realization of Universal Correspondences, and have long felt that underpinning all Traditions of Magic there are a clear and precise set of Principles. It has been the chief objective of my Work to define these Principles and set them out in such a way that they could be used and applied by a fellow practitioner of any tradition – thus I have sought to locate the Quintessential Body of All Magic and reify it within my own lifetime.

In my greater dreams, which are set at the Cross'd Roads of Waking, Sleeping, and Mundane Dreaming, I have witnessed Visions which I believe hold the Keys I seek. In that Dreaming, which is the very Continuity of Awareness, I have participated in that which for most is but Mythology, and have danced in the Circle of All Nature, the like of which is mirrored in the Earthly Circle of the Witches' Sabbat.

*In the Ourobouros-Bound Mirror of the One Dream,
That is the Oracle of Visions – Infernal and Divine,
I have beheld Eternity's Circle-Dance call'd 'Nature',
Whose Patterns have bespoken all Sacred Myths of Man.
And within Immortality's Border I have danced,
Hand in hand with all Worshipped of Man,
With every God and Goddess revered of Our Mortality,
Yea, I have known their Touch and Sight,
In Conclaves of Blest Carnality.
Yea, I have danced through forbidden depths of Night,
In the Coven of Witchblood's Arcane Sodality.*

*And within the Fiery Core of Spirit,
Within the Fire of the Circle's Heart -
That First Flame before the Shaman's Gaze,
I beheld the Very Face of I,
That spake of Primal Sorcery.*

*It spake to me, and charm'd me,
And lead me through the Fire's Breach,
And Named me and foreswore me,
The Sabbat's Arte, to learn, to teach.*

The Crux of my vocation is to restore and complete, as best as I am able, the Arcana of the Sabbatic Craft, and in this endeavour I am truly indebted to all that have walked its Paths, both the Living and the Dead.

From a theoretical point of view I seek to realign and find some unity between the seemingly disparate views of the Witch-Cult –that is, between the High Sabbatic Principles of the Ancients and the Pagan Ritualistic Principles of the Traditional Witch.

The late Austin Osman Spare was an initiate of the Sabbat and his Portrayal of its Mysteries was and still is of immense value, and yet much of it is at odds with, or at any rate is much more sophisticated than, the Portrayals of the Witch-Cult given by those such as Doreen Valiente or Gerald Gardner.

From my own experience of the Traditional Witch-Cult, I have found that within the Ritual Texts there are methods of reification and sorcery that are not readily visible. From one perspective the rites may be interpreted as Pagan religious ceremony and spellcraft, and on another level they may be seen, as portrayed by Spare, as a precise means to Desire Reification via the Sabbatic Ritual and Revelry.

In the works of Kenneth Grant there is also an invaluable insight into the connection between the Sabbat of the Witches as portrayed by Spare and as practiced by the Ancients. Although, I feel, had Spare completed his aesthetic and philosophical expression of the Sabbatic Craft, these connections would no doubt have been made more apparent. It is of interest to note that Spare claimed to have been the Classical Pagan scholar Apuleius in a previous incarnation and even signed some of his work Zos Apuleius, and it is in Apuleius' Book *The Golden Ass* that a prototype of the central statement of the Pagan Faith is to be found, that is, The Charge of the Goddess. This places AOS at the meeting-place of both the Ancient Greek and Egyptian Mysteries, and also at the fount of the Sabbatic Tradition.

Besides working within the same tradition I have a personal link with Spare – Art. I have endeavoured to capture those vertiginous perspectives which he himself could not articulate and yet claimed that he would in a future time. Where words fail I express the Vital Sensations of the Magical Current and try to bind or 'ensorcel' them in pictorial icons. Drawing thus, in an automatic fashion, is truly contemplative in nature and has led me to many sudden insights into the Arte Magical. The greatest illuminative realisation concerns the Sacred Alphabet as the Fundamental Point of Correspondence between all Magical Traditions and Systems. The Witch, the Magician and the Shaman, all possess a Sacred Alphabet to encompass the Horizon of their Works and in this fact lies the Quintessence of Magic's Primal Interconnectedness.

If all goes well with my Work it is my intention to publish the Grimoire of the Sabbatic Arcana in which the

Mysteries of its Ritual, Contemplative Method, and Sacred Alphabet are expounded.

In my own studies I have sought to avoid the taking of leaves from other mens' books and have attempted to reproduce such material as I have received in Dreaming. Hopefully, my Work will in time be seen as a serious contribution to Magic, and in my own portrait of the Sabbat's Mysteries there will be seen a glimpse of Magic's Quintessence.



The Formula of the Hand as the Vessel of the Void

Being the Method of Sorcery whereby the Hand is possessed or 'ridden' by those dwelling in the Subtle Aires and by all manner of Spirits propitious unto the Arte Magical; as a Means to Automatic Art. This formula also represents what may be called 'The Death-Posture of the Hand', in that it is either the Synaesthesia of All Sensation in the Hand or of the Void focus'd in the Hand, these being the Positive and Negative applications of the Formula.

Hold Thy Favoured Hand of Drawing rigid and still in a Posture denoting the Sigil of the Spirit that is to be summoned, and upon the back of Thy Hand mark the linear form of the invoking sigil (in ink, water, or blood consecrated to thy purpose, together with such sigils as will bind the Spirit to Thy Will and to the Work undertaken).

The Hand becometh the Adamantine Vessel of the Void, a Silhouette - a Womb containing the gestating seed-sigil, a Shadow of Luminous Darkness that bindeth the Spirit.

(Also, let the Hand be bound with the Fetishes of the Invoked).

The Hand becometh these things as it ceaseth to be known unto thine own senses; as Feeling waneth in the Hand of the Artist, so waxeth the Presence of the Invoked.

When the Hand dwelleth solely in the Void, when its Life is given unto another, then release it from the fixed posture, yet in thy Mind hold fast to the Contemplation of the Void, that thy own Thought blemish not the Work to be undertaken, yet thy Will hath rein over the Invoked at its place of ingress, the Seed-Sigil within the Creative Void. As blood rusheth into the Hand and as feeling returns, the Spirit gaineth possession of the Sense-faculties therein and commenceth to communicate via the Quill. Utter this Spell at the beginning of this operation:

*O' Hand of Man, that by Gesture imparteth the Word of Truth –
 The Letters of the Sacred Alphabet.
 In thy Shadow be the Form of Our One Desire,
 The Sigil that is call'd Our God.
 By thy Automatism through Ecstasis be the Quill guided.
 In thy Motion is the Secret of Creation given
 And the Cipher of the Mysteries Hidden.
 In the Stillness of thy Outstretched Form
 is the Sign of the Fivefold Star given,
 Within these Angles abideth the Geometry of the Quintessence
 and the Gates of the Spirit.
 By the Forefinger rais'd unto mine Lips
 Is the Lightning of Heaven stay'd,
 The Word made Silent and the Truth spoken,
 Ever in this Sign of I.
 For I, by the Hand as the Vessel of All Sorcery,
 By the Silent and Telaesthetic Pathway,
 Discover the Secret Image of the Initiator
 And reveal the Inconceivable Word: Alogos.
 Thus give I – Reality unto the Dream as Flesh
 Embodied and as an Image Pictorial.*

THE QUESTION OF SACRIFICE

The Question of Sacrifice, its acceptability or its denunciation, is a sensitive issue in the moral climate of today, but since it is such a burning issue it is a question that must inevitably be broached. In considering this issue one must attempt to be conscious of the wide variety of viewpoints, taking into consideration the moral, social, and magical implications involved. One must be realistic and primarily accept that sacrifice has a role and a function in the whole field of magical work. By 'sacrifice' I mean the voluntary act of an offering, and this applies to the sacrifice of Time, Possessions and Personal Wealth, as well as to the sacrifice of Life. All genuine practitioners of magick, whatever their persuasion, would agree that Time must be sacrificed if one is serious about the pursuit of any magical discipline; this also applies to the offering and devotion of the individual's personal resources and assets to the Path. No-one would disagree with the necessity of these forms of sacrifice, but when it comes to the issue of sacrifice of Life -- the so-called 'Bloody Sacrifice' -- there is a great deal of contention between occultists, and indeed between any persons concerned with the subject of religious devotion.

Historically there are references, incidents and traditional practices of Bloody Sacrifice too many to mention or isolate if one is to judge from an accurate historical overview; each act having its own circumstantial and cultural relevance which must be seen in its own context and not from some modern pulpit of moral self-righteousness. The relevance we have to question is the role of such sacrificial practices today -- whether or not there is a role.

Can we justify the taking of another's life for our own ends? If we were to ask an authority of rabbinical law, he would say 'yes' and justify such a sacrifice by his belief that his God has deemed the bloody sacrifice an acceptable offering. Quite simply, his faith is the only justification required.

The same justification would be given by a Hindu devotee of Kali or by a Voudoun Houngan. And yet if we were to ask most Pagans they would probably give us the same answer as most Christians -- a categorical 'no'. Their justification would be that their God / Gods do not demand it of them, do not need or accept such offerings in this day and age, and that they themselves have no right to take another's life. The only right they assert in this matter is the right to lay down their own lives for their faith or their fellow beings.

In a social situation where one does not even have the necessity to kill in order to survive or even eat meat at all, then perhaps this justification has some ground, but if such Pagans were to find themselves dependent on hunting and gathering in order to survive then they would soon discover their 'right' to kill.

In societies where people raise their own livestock and are dependent on such for their survival, the slaughter of animals is necessitous, and in such societies the Gods play a vital role in the day-to-day struggle. So for them to offer their very means of survival to their Gods is a true and worthy sacrifice. The confusion in this matter sets in when occultists view sacrifice as 'technique' rather than a heartfelt and necessitated act.

To the Voudoun Priest, not to sacrifice is not to please your Gods and ancestor, it is not to live. To cease the offering of life is to starve your Gods and your family. So it

is not mere 'technique' in his way of life, but rather, it is a vital part of his cultural heritage. Neither is such a sacrifice a disservice to the slain animal, it is an honour for it to die to feed the Gods, neither is the meat wasted since it is eaten by the people once its 'essence' has been taken up by the Gods.

To the twentieth-century magician the offering of a specific animal to a god or a spirit is not given under the same exterior pressure. It is given out of a belief in some principle or technique which states that power life-force release is conducive to the manifestation of the evoked entity or is conducive to the attainment of some desire or other. If the magician is of the genuine persuasion, believing his magick is not a mere pastime or some self-glorifying ego-trip, but an all-consuming passion indivisible from his life, then perhaps the same justification as that of the True Priest applies.



A personal viewpoint of mine is that the present body of the magician is the sum of his past states of Being and thus his own blood is the blood of all beasts that he has been. Therefore to offer one's own lifeblood is as efficacious as the offering of another's. Some might think this is some sort of intellectual cop-out, an attempt to avoid the nasty business of killing animals in ritual – maybe! But in a time when magicians have no excuse for ignorance or lack of thought about these matters, I feel that this is perhaps one answer to the question of sacrifice. At least the offering of one's own blood is genuinely 'felt' and is a true 'sacrifice', a giving of oneself to the Gods.

This issue will not go away; it is of no use bowing under the moral pressure of one's Pagan peers or becoming a victim of the scandal-mongering hysteria of the media. We must each decide what we as individuals believe to be right; we must discover for ourselves what our Gods desire from us. Be aware that the actions of a single magician can reflect upon all of us yet if the acts of your faith exhibit reverence for Life and for the Living, then you may walk your Path with dignity.

ZETA

THE HERMIT

It has often been observed that the greatest of mages is the Solitary, that is to say, he who practises his arte in a truly hermetic environment, focusing himself within the evolving sphere of his own awareness until, through the fulfillment of the Great Work, his paradigmatic microcosm is of One Identity with all Reality. It has also been observed that such is the nature of a 'black brother' or Black Magician. For it is he who has cut himself off from the Universe and has refused to give of his own blood to the Graal of Saints. However, one should not be so swift to discern between the apparently isolate magician and the True Solitary, nor between the Black Magician and the White.

Behold! these be grave mysteries; for there are also of my friends who be hermit. Now think not to find them in the forest or on the mountain; but in beds of purple, caressed by magnificent beasts of women with large limbs, and fire and light in their eyes, and masses of flaming hair about them; there shall ye find them. Ye shall see them at rule, at victorious armies, at all joy; and there shall be in them a joy a million times greater than this. Beware lest one force another, King against King...

LIBER AL VEL LEGIS

We may attempt, using certain outer forms of symbolic language, to discuss and obtain a degree of insight into the Nature of the True Sorcerous mentality, but the psyches of such are unique to their own Entity and hence any discussion of them is somewhat predestined to be a generalization and remain so because of the necessary imposition of a terminology other

than that in which the particular psyche is wholly congruent (except upon the inner, where the cipher of symbols or Sigillated Truth is universally acceptable). This obscurity will only remain for those practitioners completely, albeit temporarily, absorbed within their own perceptive maps, or for those individuals who have no grasp whatsoever of prolonged magical discipline and its implications. Nonetheless... in an attempt to examine certain facets of the microcosmic power-zone which is manifest as a human magician, we may also touch upon matters which concern the nature of the collective effect and interactions between such power-zones, that is, upon matters concerning the exterior 'public activities and the inner secret activities of occult sodalities or the so-called 'Great White Brotherhood' in its various manifestations.

There is a point in magical development when there are no books or teachers to guide you, and it is indicative of the self-initiatory nature of our current aeonic period that this point-event is observed as a major crossroads by many who seek to walk the Path of Occultism. The point-event to which I refer is that of Self-Possession; for it is from that moment onwards that the Grimoire of Magick may be read in the form of any book and all the world becomes the Teacher.

Within certain initiatory traditions the Guide of the Aspirant upon the Path engineers the response of autonomy within the Student after self-control has been attained through rigorous discipline, and from thence guides the Aspirant into a state of holistic self-tuition from the 'World' by allowing the pattern of Chance to become the chronotype of the traditional body of teaching. The Guide serves to focus, to create the door to self-possession

and grant the Aspirant sufficient knowledge to open that door and go freely into the World. Within the experience of both the self-taught and the traditionally tutored occultist there are parallels of knowledge and the acquisition thereof: there are times of self-reliance from within and times of exterior motivation, whether from other individuals, entities, or simply the indicative augur of the environment affecting the magician's progress upon the Path.

Magicians self-taught and Magicians traditionally trained are different in their approaches to the subject, but at one point in the path all practitioners are forced into recognition of their necessary autonomy upon the Path of the Arte Magical. It makes no difference whether you have relied on books or people for your guidance; the Initiating Force is veiled by many and diverse personae and may be refracted by a mask of paper as well as flesh, and it will inevitably guide you into a position where you will either fall from the Path or stand firm as a conscious director of its power upon the earth. It is this essential quality of *autonomy* which distinguishes between those who are 'hermits' and those who are creatures of a herd mentality. It is not my intention to cast aspersions upon any particular individuals or parties, merely to impress upon the readers of this article the necessity of this quality; especially any who might be considering undertaking some form of occult practice or any who might consider themselves to be Magicians.

*Those who cannot walk the Path alone,
will be walked upon by those who can.*

These are complex matters and perhaps too complex for just a few pages of discourse – it is more than apparent to me that one must show immense discernment to distinguish between certain States of Attainment and certain emotionally-heightened simulacra of such; and as it has been observed by a certain Past Master of Arte: it is one thing to crown oneself King and another to be so.

There is a singularity of identity between the nature of the True Solitary and the truly autonomous magician. It is perhaps best realized through an understanding of the Sufic maxim: ‘To be in the World, but not of the World’.

The individual practitioner is literally a conscious focus of the magical current, and as such his activities are an expression and a direction of the current within the world. Whether as an anchoritic isolate or as an integral part of a large organization, the function of the Adept is as a unique power-zone of magical activity, that is, of evolutionary activity. The context of his activities should not in any way compromise or diminish his autonomy; the ability to maintain the congruent transmission of the current irrespective of the social context is a demonstration of flexibility; the Current itself is infinitely malleable, and it is only we who are otherwise. It is here that there is a test of one’s development and the maturity of one’s inner state; for often there is a confusion of identity which becomes apparent in the individual who moves from one context of activity to another. Where one is expected to lead, one should lead; where one is expected to instruct, one should instruct; and where to serve, there one should serve. One should fulfil many roles with an equanimity of spirit suited to the intrinsic nobility of the Arte: the true ‘hermit’ may move at will between the halls of convocation and the lonely peaks of contemplation.

The Guide or Psychopomp of the initiate is the Daemon or Genius: the process of attaining an understanding of the genius and of establishing rapport therewith has, in a familiar re-cension of western occultism, been called 'The Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel'; these matters are veiled upon every side with a mystical glamour of language. For the Artist the Genius is identified with the Muse and this capacity assumes the form of the Divine Lover and Bestower of Inspiration. In another form the Genius is mediated through the reverence of a teacher whose very image serves as the icon of highest inspiration. Or yet again the door may lie through the identification with certain god-forms – such as is revealed in certain spells from the *Egyptian Book of the Dead*. These many methods are but a hall of mirrors serving to reflect what is closest at hand.

Within the sorcerous mentality, the field wherein the Daemon is operative may be defined as the 'extent of the body' – being functional throughout consciousness from the highest to the lowest, and yet specifically interacted with upon the astral via the delegation of sentience to the field of elemental activity, that is, through the use of familiar spirits, and thus through signs and portents of chance. Once again it is the World Itself which is the Guide



– for all that is beyond the present instant of your perception is the *Other*, and your motion within it is the Path which you are upon. If reduced to the simplicity of *I* and *All-Otherness*, the Guide of the Initiate is all that is acting upon his field of awareness, and the present instant of self-possessed consciousness is the Doorway of its manifestation. At a certain stage in understanding these matters the fundamental axiom of ‘One-pointedness throughout all Consciousness’ is the sole requisite of knowledge, for here is a dissolution of the multitude of perspectives which both refract and reflect the aspiration towards an autonomy of the spirit.

It is the inability to fully attain the required degree of internal congruency within one’s own paradigmatic sphere of awareness which leads to the numerous pitfalls when attempting to construct or move within any group-structure of occult practice. One of the most obvious pitfalls is that the effort to attain to personal one-pointedness is so overpowering for some individuals that, once attained in an *initial* degree, it is mistaken for the sole means of subsistence for the magical psyche. Here is the beginning of conflict, born from the lack of respect for different forms and types of practice. It is at this stage that one must realize that no matter how hard the struggle for knowledge, one does not own but is the custodian of the knowledge. To taint it or develop solely within the light of one’s personal imbalance is wholly inappropriate, especially if one is sought out for guidance by the less knowledgeable. Respect for other practitioners’ experience, and the constant reassessment of one’s own knowledge in the light of collective insight, should create the environment conducive to the realization that the language in which magical knowledge is expressed must vary according to

context if one would truly endeavour to achieve any congruency of practice beyond the localized sphere of the individual awareness. Here is a fine line of division which is easily and frequently crossed; one must differentiate between the adjustment of knowledge in order to cater and pander to the weaknesses of oneself and others, and the refinement and adjustment of the language in which knowledge is expressed in order to permit the timely understanding and consequent development of the learning mind. There are many important distinctions to make: distinctions which are presented to the discerning mind through certain underlying principles of the Arte; principles which are perpetually modified by the context of their application and are thus unlike rules of nature which are fixed irrespective of context. These perhaps constitute the subtle tabu of the sorcerous mentality. An awareness of these subtleties would perhaps avert or preempt certain conflicts of interest which arise within various sections of the occult fraternity and within the various minds which constitute it.

There is a design which interconnects those power-zones which are manifest as Initiates. This design may be seen in perfection when uninterrupted by the superimposition or perpetuation of forms which have outlived their function – namely, systems, group structures and glammers of personality which, although once serving the purpose of the current's transmission, are now mistaken for the very thing they once served to mask. The flux and flow of the magical current only imposes such order as is necessary to rally the available energy of Chaos into such forms as are of maximum utility for the evolutionary activity of its transmission; aught beyond this is mere vanity and luggage for the would-be hermit, and yet the attraction of such

vanity is as much a snare for the commonly isolate occultist as it is for the tyro amid the glammers of populist dabbling, or indeed for the respected member of lodge, gild or coven.

Returning to a matter but touched upon in the first paragraph – the black and the white magician, and given the intervening context – I would suggest that the ‘black brother’ is he who has firstly failed to distinguish between the masks of the current as exhibited within bodies of tradition, books, social contexts etc., and its face as reflected through the light of inner experience; and secondly, has attempted to justify his own misconception by superimposing his unbalanced perspective upon others. The white magician, however, perceives the necessary function of the mask, and seeks to utilise and adapt such exterior forms in the most conducive manner for the inner reality of the current to be transmitted through and beyond the realm of personal experience.

In actuality, these ‘artificial’ types of occultist are outlined solely in order to illustrate the necessity of distinction between form and function, but beyond the point here illustrated the true nature of the magician may lie at either end of the rainbow!

A disciple once asked his master thus: ‘Master! Why is it that you write?’ To this the Master replied: ‘I write that Fools may follow words and not Me!’

HEKAS

In beginning this article upon the nature of the Traditional Sabbatic Mysteries it is pertinent for me to qualify my own position and thus make some statement of the initiatic *provenance* which permits me to write authoritatively upon these matters. It is therefore that I make some statement of my own position in the Craft; at the time of writing this article and for the past few years I have been serving as the Magister of the *Cultus Sabbati*; having received the formal *passing-on of the power* from two lineages of the Sabbatic Tradition, both of which pre-date those modern revivalist forms of Witchcraft which have become generically nominalized as 'Wicca'. Both of my informing catinæ of initiation are currently focused in Essex, though the members of various cells and the resources drawn upon by them are scattered throughout a *much wider area with the consequence that the zones of governance served by the Cult constitute a web unsuited to definition by temporal measures. The Cultus Sabbati is a present recension of the Craft Tradition constituted by various cells, each of which are using different formulae and modes of praxis covering the spectrum of the Arte Magical.* In stating my own position I should make it apparent that, as Magister, I am responsible for the overall direction of the Cult in its present phase of development; this does not infer a subjugation of individuals to a single figurehead, but rather, to the contrary, the functional role of the Magister

1. In old forms of the Craft where this term has been used or adopted, the pronunciation is as follows: Wicca is pronounced 'Witcha', Wiccan is likewise 'Witchan'; this is a notable distinction to the pronunciation of these terms in revivalist forms of Craft.

permits a cohesion of the earthly power-zones created through the autonomy of each initiate and thus a focus in an holistic design or matrix. Although the lineal descent of the *Cultus Sabbati* from sources, which are defined as belonging to Traditional Witchcraft, is here-in - given the present context - the moot point of interest, it is also pertinent for the reader to bear in mind that our lineal descent by other roots has affiliations with a catina of High Magicians dating back many centuries, namely the O.T.O., and has established links upon the inner with various other bodies of transmission and thus the contexts in which the nature and functions of the *Cultus Sabbati* may be interpreted are many and diverse. Beyond what I have stated here regarding myself and the Sabbatic Cult some readers may already be familiar with my work through the book which I had published in 1992 namely *The Azoëtia, A Grimoire of the Sabbatic Craft* - a work where-in I sought to define the Quintessential Principles of the Arte Magical as they are specifically transmitted within the Tradition of the Sabbatic Mysteries, and thus it is to this work that the interested reader may have recourse to refer in the course this article.

Of Form and Function

Within the various situations nominalized as 'Workings' by the numerous practitioners of Magick in all its varied forms there are obviously going to be numerous definitions of what actually constitutes 'Work'. I am myself curious to know about such definitions, if indeed they have even been considered by the majority; I am interested to know because it is this 'work' which constitutes the *function* of any magical practice. It is at this juncture that I will offer a brief

definition of what I myself might consider to be the vital nature of the magical 'working': -- Any Practice activity which *refines and develops* consciousness constitutes the Work of the Magical Operator, and it is this characteristic or distinction which underlies the true function of the Arte.

By this measure we may then determine that any practice or activity which does not refine or develop consciousness is divorced from the true function of Magick and is thus redundant.

I make this definition with a distinct purpose in mind, namely its bearing upon the current survivals and the present re-vivals of the Sabbatic Tradition with regard to the emphasis placed upon the preservation of old practices.

The *forms* utilised by the Sabbatic Cultus in the practice of its craft, the ritual choreography and geometry, the myths, the ritual instruments and so on and so on... are based upon a number of principles which govern function; principles which, although definable, are highly subtle in essence, being universal in their application, infinite in their means of application via their modification in accordance with the diversity of context, and which are the very *Letters and Numbers* which constitute the Witches' Alphabet and thus the Grammar of the Arte Entire.

In the various recensions offered to us as accounts of Traditional Craft practices there is often great emphasis upon the antiquity of the spell rite technique, etc., but little reference to the actual knowledge encoded in the practice; it is the preservation of forms irrespective of their function which seems to be foremost in the presentation of material being old and genuine craft. This is of value from an historical and an antiquarian point of view, but to an initiate of the Sabbatic Tradition it is a perspective

misaligned to its nature, and this is perhaps why in discussions of the Sabbatic Tradition those who are still using ritual forms designed with a function out of context to their own lives will often cling to these forms and defend them as if they were the very thing of Magick in itself. When the form used is bereft of the current which once informed it, it is merely a fossil and no longer of utility. The Sabbatic Tradition is continually evolving; nothing is lost when we slough off the outgrown skins of the past and move on; the intrinsic nature and functions of the Tradition cannot be lost because they are transmitted from initiate to initiate entire whenever *the passing-on of power* occurs. It is in this ritual act of transmission that the current is passed on in the circle; when this transmission occurs all of the knowledge of the Whole Tradition, from the First-born to the Last-dead of Witchblood, is passed on and it is the task of the receiving initiate to re-member the body of the Tradition in and for themselves according to the context of their place in this world.

We may, to give further examples of derivations, cite certain terms and symbols familiar to Craft practitioners and show their analogous counterparts in the Arabic tongue:

ATHAME – the Witches' Knife – stems from the word 'Adh'hamme', meaning the *Blood-letter*; this name was used by the *Dhulqarneni*: a sect of magical practitioners in Morocco.

COVEN – the *Covine* – a name used for the Witches' circle of initiates, this stems from the word *Kafan*, meaning 'a winding-sheet'. A cerecloth or funeral vestment was the garment used by the aforementioned

sect in their rituals; this was indicative of the symbolic interconnection of Life and Death.

SGIAN-DHU -- the Scottish Knife -- speculatively analogous to the *Skan-do-la*, the Mandaean ritual knife.

SABBAT – the Witches’ Rite – stemming from *Az-zabbat*, meaning “the Forceful Occasion” and from the *Sa-ba-tu* – the Sumerian Lunar Rite of the Goddess Inanna; this term by means of linguistic confluence equates with the semitic *sabbath*. Note also that *Ahl-i-haq*, the People of Truth - a middle-eastern tribal group, preserve a rite called *Sabz* which means “the Making Green of Things”; they also sacrifice a cockerel at Dawn to mark the liminal edge of night: a custom which has become a glyph of a certain arcanum in Sabbatic Lore.

ESBAT – the Witches’ lesser rite of meeting where each initiate gives an account of their recent work to the Master and Mistress of the Circle; there is a Persian word identical *esbat*, meaning ‘to prove’ or ‘to give account’.

BAPHOMET - the ‘Idol’ said to have been worshiped by the Templars; its form was that of a goat’s head with a torch between the horns and thus is identical to the Sabbatic Goat: an Icon used in the Sabbatic Cult to denote certain arcane. In Arabic the word is analogous to *Abu-fi-hamat* – ‘The Black Head of Wisdom’ or ‘Seat of Knowledge’. And constitutes a cipher of certain secret practices used in sects and tribes preserving a gnosis of ancient origin in Persia and from thence disseminated through the migration of Arab peoples



and influences into Europe and Spain: the Arabic trilateral root FHM forms the words meaning 'to perceive, understand', 'Wisdom' and 'Black'.

The symbol of the goat with a torch, to indicate intellect, betwixt its horns was a symbol of the Aniza Tribe, as was a sign identical to that called 'The Witches' Foot' - this served as the tribal mark or *wasm*.

Therefore to begin once more with the 'Circle' - we may find that there are spells of incantation for circle-craft which date back to the earliest written inscriptions in ancient Mesopotamia circa the Early Dynastic Period (2400 B.C.). The magic circle in Babylonian Sorcery was called *zissurru* - meaning 'flour which makes a boundary'; this was because the circle was traced out by a trickle of flour - a practice still used in the Craft and the rites of Voudoun. The magician or witch was therefore 'the Encircling One' and this may be seen by looking at the names attributed to a sect of witches or sorcerers in Ancient Persia - the *Yatukan* - a sect believed to be of direct descent from the magicians of Chaldea and Babylon; this name is derived from the same roots as the name for sorcerers in the *Atharva Veda*, namely *Yatuvidah* - meaning 'Those who bewitch'; these early sorcerers were also called *abhicarika* - which is derived from the sanskrit *abhi-car* meaning 'to bewitch or encircle'. This infers a continuation from Babylon into regions both east and west - that is, into the Near Middle East and into regions of Asia, and it is highly plausible that from the area of Mesopotamia, and more latterly Persia, certain practices spread into Europe, Greece, Asia Minor and beyond. There are zones upon the earth's surface

which are the terrene corollaries of the physiological *chakras* and it is from these points that waves of transmission emanate at periodic intervals; these zones may be regarded as the clefts where-from the earth's menstruum issues forth in bloody libation to nourish and permit the replenishment of the stellar core: the World-heart. Upon these waves of transmission are borne the seeds of knowledge, oft' carried in the hands of nomad and wayfarer, they are cast out upon the receptive soil of many a-land and culture.

Although we may on further study find that certain applications and methods of circle-craft stem from specific cultural regions, this does not exclude the likelihood of primitive circle-craft existing prior to the syncretism of techniques via migration of peoples or individuals. I make this point for a simple reason, when Man observes the seasons around him, the wheel of the agricultural year, the circle of the moon in her seasons and the great cycle of the Polar Circumcession, he will base his spiritual expression, his magic, upon these perceptions and consequently the circle will arise as a central motif. This is a point to be taken into account and distinguished from the transmigration of techniques demonstrating very specific applications of the motif. We may also add a further interesting etymological note at this juncture, namely that the Sorcerer – being 'He who ensorcel's' is also 'He that en-circles', since 'to ensorcel', from *ensorcellement*, is 'to encircle', also we may cite *sortiere* – being 'to cast lots', and thus the Sorcerer is the *type* of magical operator who casts the Circle of Arte to bind and align the turning of chance to the design of will.

The emphasis placed upon the importance of basic circle-craft within Sabbatic Lore is indicative of a simple truth which is only to be known by those who have experienced it at first-hand – when you stand within the

circle cast true about you like the horizon itself, then you are at the very instant of the tradition's beginning; you stand there at one, through the power of the lineage, with the first-born of Witchblood, and your presence within the circle is testimony to the pact which preserves the lineage from today until the last-to-die of the line has stepped there-in: this is the course of the Tradition amongst the race of men. For myself I need to look no further than the Circle for the origination of the Way! There burns the first fire and the first vision amongst the flames, there the cipher writ amongst the forms of charm and wort, there lie both heart and hearth.

And yet I am myself curious to know whence came the wand and dagger, whence came the charms that I myself may know and teach; I am curious to re-member the steps of my ancestors around the circle's encompass and trace back through the centuries the weave of the tradition's design. In this curiosity there is a second realization known solely through the practice of arte: the tradition you draw upon is native to the land upon which you stand, solely because the power must ever be drawn direct through the earth where-e'er you might happen to be. The Circle is the Gate which opens into the earth and allows in egress through the power of the land.

There is more than one history here to tell; we might look to history of our techniques and seek to discover whom it was that introduced any one of a plethora of technicalities of spell-craft, or we might seek out the history of the names which we use to call our requisites of arte. These histories are re-membered in the very current itself; as each initiate of the tradition adds and refines to what has gone before and then, in their own turn, passes their knowledge on; the current is imbued with their spirit and

these live on in the passing-on of the power - the Mighty Dead live now within our own flesh!

From an etymological perspective we may trace back certain keywords in Craft terminology and by deduction and inference attempt to form ideas regarding the origin of practices and the evolution of symbols. This will only reach back to the time when names were first given and thus to the edge of mythic time, beyond this our practices alone may reveal that which is veiled to the intellectual acuity of academia. For between the histories that we may trace there is a hidden story, uncharted by mere books of paper and the memories of civilization; this secret history is that of the wandering few who exchanged knowledge at the isolate crossroads where-ever their peregrination of chance might cross paths with another. Return to the circle for there the ghosts of old still tread their Path and it is in your own breath that they find voice today!

Origins of the Sabbatic Tradition

In discussing the origins of the Sabbatic Tradition one may assume a number of differing perspectives – anthropological, socio-historical, metaphysical, mytho-poetic and so on... I have read numerous theories expounding speculative notions about the Craft's antiquity or modernity, and also a few pieces written by those with first-hand experience of Old Craft practices. In the former instance these differing perspectives tell us more about the people who wrote them and the 'truth' which they wish to make acceptable and are very often superimpositions of ideas already set in their minds before any actual experience has occurred: this is evident when the Craft is analysed from without. In the case

of first-hand documentation or comment upon the Traditional Craft we must be wary ourselves of presenting the particular recension of the Craft that we are at home with as 'the Way it has always been and always will be'. There is also a tendency, which approximates an inverted snobbery, to make something special out of 'peasant' origins and something shameful about the idea of a Craft Tradition which is not confined by a sense of 'folk' origination. Despite this being a slight digression I can state that in former days part of my own lineage came from Buckinghamshire and the few people who met together were more often than not simple womenfolk who set great store in the basics of circle-craft and wort-cunning, but nonetheless the current transmitted from these folk origins retains a knowledge which will adapt itself to accurate expression whatever the context. It would thus be somewhat unfair of me to insist that the practices of these womenfolk should be repeated today merely because of some artificial sense of nobility placed in their humble state; it is worthy nonetheless to remember them with honour and to preserve certain important customs and fragments of oral teaching. I could also make comment upon the influence and co-operation between old Witches and ceremonial magicians which stretched across the divisions of society and was unhindered by nominalizations which artificially divide the 'types' of magical operators, when in fact the difference between such types lies solely in the specific modes of application for principles which are common to all. To categorize and segregate one form of practice from another is only of use on occasion, in matters of discussion where distinctions are relevant and should be made apparent, but in my experience there are forms of old craft practices which are identical to those of both ceremonialists and shamans;

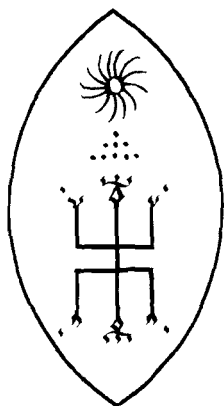
underlying the surface structures which establish the accurate function of a practice in a given context there are the Principles which constitute the very essence of the Tradition: the Circle of the Craft is the Arena of Eternity!

Returning more specifically to the matter of the origination of the Sabbatic Tradition, we may establish a fruitful enquiry by opening up more than one area of derivation and thus demonstrate a nativity of the Craft which is like both a seed-scattered field and a single ear of corn.

There is a distinct emphasis here upon the necessity of the *individual recension of the mysteries*; this on a surface level creates the scope for a number of diverse and even contrary interpretations of lore and modes of practice, but on the inner there is a congruency of the Tradition preserved in the Principles aforementioned; the 'scattered' effect of external diversity within systemic representations has an overall effect, that of permitting maximization of the Current's transmission in the Outer; upon the Inner the grammar of the Sabbatic Lore permits the most individualized recensions of the Tradition to function harmoniously within a group context. This has been proven true in practice and is not an attempt to represent an ideal framework.

The distinctions made above regarding *form* and *function* are sometimes difficult to detect since many of the *structures and techniques used by the Craft are consistent* and have almost always been used, but it is in their manner of application that one with discernment may note that these self-same forms, although having in themselves certain intrinsic values, are being used irrespectively of the knowledge which they encode and thus are being dealt with

upon levels other than those operated upon by the evolving consciousness of the aspiring adept. This however does not mean that these practices do not work, merely that their function is minimized by the context. I am stating these matters in this way solely in order to make practitioners conscious of their own approaches, but also with the hope that any readers of traditional descent may consider and perhaps grasp the fact that the Current in itself may use many vessels in order to facilitate transmission, but all vessels are only of importance in their own temporal context, beyond this they are without value to the Current; the methods you use may be centuries old – this is unimportant, it is their constant refinement which is the living and vital quality of the Tradition. I am in no way espousing any abandonment of such practices, merely the reassessment of their context and interpretation, for very often the old spells are the best and for very good reasons. I have deliberately been specific only insofar as will permit the maximum interpretation of these words by the traditional, or otherwise, and in as many ways possible with regard to their own work...



We may go on to give yet further examples which will provide links between words used today within the Sabbatic rites and mysteries and their counterparts throughout the world both today and in antiquity; it is here of use to merely give these few examples and thus infer the wealth of interconnection which the seeker may avail himself of.

The manner in which terms are spread like the 'scattering' of seeds and the etymology of certain code-words indicates that aspects of the Sabbatic Tradition are to be found in the Middle East, most notably within the tribes which preserve pagan forms of ancient Gnostic beliefs and practices. Within this concurrence there is a secret design of teaching which will in time unfold, revealing here but a fragment of its effect in disseminating knowledge techniques of specific *form* and *function* – through the identification between correspondent symbols that transcends cultural division and permits the timely vessel of an environment to serve as the silent host of power.

Further evidence may be seen in the practices of the Sect known as the Revellers and in the Persian magical sect known as the *Maskaræ* (from whence the word 'Mask'), both of whom are descended from Sufic lineages and whose connection to practices classed as belonging to the Craft will grant the enquirer a bridge between present-day recensions of the Cultus and its counterparts in the Middle-East. It should not however be concluded that this line of enquiry is sufficient to explain our own practices fully, rather it serves to elucidate one wave of transmission which has empowered the techniques of the Cultus; there are both previous and more recent connections which could also be unraveled, but these are all subject to the

aspersion of historical conjecture and will, for the present, be withheld. I will merely reiterate the point that the entire history of the Sabbat lies within its own circle; in our myths and rites there are the footprints, the witchmarks of eld, which will reveal these secrets at such a time when star, heart and hearth are aligned a-right. There is a thread of ancient gnosis which lies in the hands of the Sabbatic Initiate whether he know or not -- it remains there to empower his work.

We should however not neglect to mention Egypt, for it is from Khem -- *the Black Land* -- that we derive the word which is oft' the first word in a magical rite and which I have given as the title for this article -- 'Hekas'. Here the word existed in the form of *Heka* or *hekau* meaning 'the power of magick'; it is believed to derive from the sound of the frog and thus supplies us with a totemic association with the batrachia employed by the Witch and the Horse-whisperer.

'Hekas' also gave us *Hekate* -- the Greek name of the Goddess who keeps the Gateway of the Triple Cross-roads², *Hexe* -- the Spell, Mark or Charm, *Hag* -- the Black Goddess of the Old Moon, who in Khem was represented as *Hekt* the frog-headed mother of incantation. It was in Egypt that the role of Stellar Worship was at an apotheosis in

2. Re. The Threefold and Fourfold symbolism of the Crossroads in Traditional Sabbatic Lore see *Azoëtia: A Grimoire of the Sabbatic Craft*. Readers interested in the connections made in the course of this article might also be interested to read my book, *Qutub: The Point*, which deals in part with the symbolism of the Yezidis, Mandaeans and connections between Sabbatic and Sufic symbolism. Further information pertinent to these and tangential areas may be gained from *The Sufis* by Idries Shah, also the works of Lady Drower, and in regard to Babylonian Sorcery I recommend the work of R.C. Thompson.

recorded history; as Man looked to the heavens there turned the Great Dragon about the zenith, marking out the year and tracing the ancient circle in the firmament of Nu.

From thence recall the Dracontiaë – the Circles of Stone which mark the crossroads of hidden and secret tracks of force within the earth, reflecting the web of the star-lit heights; recall the Crooked Path which crosses this Sacred Isle of Albion and lies throughout all the lands of the earth – where-e'er upon the Serpent's back is placed the Witches' Step!

When next you tread the circle round, when next you face the Quarters and call upon their Guardians, remember the far-flung design of which you are a part; remember that the Path upon which you now stand goes both back and forth, across the traverse of all Time and Space, throughout that self-same design: Here lies both Hearth and Heart!

Remember too, that this is but one narrative of a tale whose tellings are as many as the tongues which bring it to voice!

THE SECRET NATURE OF RITUAL

The true nature of the magical ritual is secret; this secret is revealed within a cipher – a matrix of symbols; this cipher is hidden within the principles of the magical ritual itself. This circle is cast...

The summit of gnostic realization is a height to which many would attain; it is a depth to which few can fall. To gain insight into the very core of the arcanum – if that is our aim and if that is the very thing which we would claim for ourselves, then let us put aside all trappings and seek to learn afresh. You cannot learn of mystery if you have already decided upon the masks which it will wear.

Turn aside but for moment, turn aside from yourself, your self-image, abandon the house of reflections and walk, awhile in the clear air of the morning. Listen to the sound of your breath, to the sound of your body and the sounds of the world around you... without your opinions the world still stands, without your preconceptions the sky remains. Turn away for but a single hour from that with which you are familiar, grant yourself the chance to be more free than you have been. Seek nothing more than the freedom to seek with open eyes. If you succeed in the primary acts of opposition you may never return to the world of men...

Alone in a place of complete solitude, it is as if you are the centre of the world: this is the centre of the Great Magical Circle. All that may be known of Magick lies within the circle; this is the kingdom to which the Tradition is native. To walk the periphery of that distant horizon is to become the En-circler of the World -- is that not Sorcery itself?

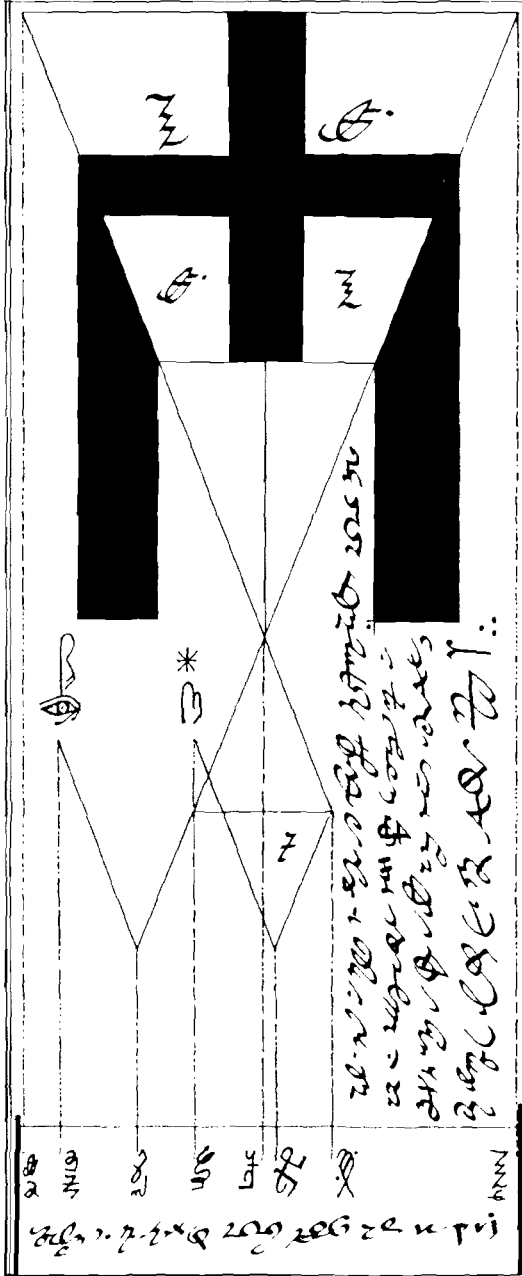
How then may the first step be placed?

The will to learn from all things, the freedom to imagine, the courage to embrace all change – such qualities are worthy in all men, but for he that seeks out the knowledge of the Arte these are but the basic requisites. Not all may tread this Path, but all may seek out a Path with Power. Intent is the director of the Way!

I will give examples of a practice which demonstrates the ideas which I have already mentioned. This practice is based upon a technique belonging to the Tradition of the Sabbatic Craft, and was told to me by a Witch of Essex who had used it with great efficacy. I will merely give such details as are relevant, those with knowledge of these matters will recognize its function.

One begins alone in the hermitage of the forest; naked of body one stands stripped of all worldly trappings. This is the centre of the circle and upon it you stand as if newborn from the earth. Taking soil and leaves you rub the skin until you are, head to foot, a Man of Green. One should take time and care in this deed, leaving no part of the body unclothed by the earth and verdant leaf. Thus is the flesh earth-shod and sky-robed, and upon this one should meditate.

From the Point the first step is taken; this is the Making of the Path. One begins to run, and to run without thought; you must not hesitate or care about the thorns, the coldness of the weather, the worldly interpretation of your act. You must run like the boreal air between the boughs, timeless and enduring, until overcome by the barrier of your personal limitation: the edge of power. This is the Making of the Green Man; you have stepped out of the world of men and are now at the threshold of knowledge; you must



now release the Cry of your Intent: Voice your heart to the World of the Gods! Where you fall is the Gateway, here seek signs and listen to the wind, here embrace the living skin of the earth.

From this technique the knowledge of many aspects of magick may be gained; it is an example of exposing the body to an act of power. Through repetitive acts such as this the body and the mind are given the freedom to perceive differently; one may dream of such things as shapeshifting, the lore of plants and beasts, the spirits of which myth talk.

In simply reading this you might be sceptical, weather-shy, cowardly, or all three; the technique was designed for people like you.

*The Feeler of Feeling, the Lover of Love,
his rites and his path are reversed;
who knows what he will do next?*

BAUL TANTRIC DICTUM

One must find the Path through self-overcoming; the Way is against the nature which you presently indwell and in apotheosis is against all that you consider to be Nature. In this sense the circle is a mirror, reflecting a reversal of the self; it is this Opposing Form which the aspirant walks toward.

Consider the aforementioned technique as an example; it is a means by which one walks upon the Path of the Sorcerer towards *That* which one is not: The *Other*. If one can capture the sensation of that *Otherness* in the freedom of the hand's motion in an automatism of pen upon paper, then has begun the text, the Grimoire of one's Arte. If you can capture that sensation and express it in a willed manner, you are channeling the energy of the Current.

The techniques by which the sensations of the *Other* are attained are superficially self-destructive: one runs naked through briars; one endures abstinence from food or sex; one engages in overstimulation by drugs and fornication; another bathes in the ashes of the dead; and yet another takes a knife to his own skin. Mind and Body are opened, merging with the Beyond and acquiring the extent of the Sentient Flesh in *Otherness*. Fortunately the techniques are such that only the worthy may survive them; many fall by the wayside, trapped by the practice instead of liberated by it. It is insufficient to overthrow the limits of perception, value and attitude, merely to sink into a pit of overindulgences – addiction, involuntary obsession and imbalance; one must attain sobriety in the midst of self-overcoming. The opposition of the normative aesthetic is the means and not the end of the Path. To mistake it for such is to mistake the vehicle for the destination.

Ritual encodes the spatial and chronological determinants of the Body's interpenetration with the Body of *Otherness*; it employs techniques which provide the means to align the senses into a new arrangement: to create a form in which the transarnation of the Void-body and the Flesh will occur. The area of the magical rite is the zone in which new time and place are made; it is the void-womb in which the New Reality of the Magical Will may reify.

For instance, the geometry used in Western ceremonial ritual reveals a specific means of chronological rearrangement, that is, a specialised manner of handling 'time'. The circle is cast so as to be aligned to the propitious influences of stars and planets, capturing their temporal power and focusing it within the ritual area. This chronotype may serve as the foundation for evoking times

other than the present: if the signs of the planets and zodiacal houses are traced around the circle for the desired time, past or future, then the abstract 'time' of that alignment is brought to bear upon the magician's present domain. We also perceive the manner in which space itself is treated within the ritual area of the ceremonial circle; the planetary circle is a delineation of the solar system and the cycles of the celestial bodies therein. If one incorporates the zodiacal influence, the circle acquires the extent of a much greater field of space; this zodiacal type of the circle may further be seen in terms of the real positions of the stars as in sidereal astrology or as in the formal arrangement of the tropical system. Both are distinct chronotopical forms of the ritual area.

By examining the differing methods of dimensional rearrangement in ritual geometry one may see two basic forms – those which create microcosmic simulacra in order to reflect and focus the natural order of the world, and those in which Nature is reorganized to suite the direction of the Magician's Will. These two types of ritual structuring may be defined as assimilative and invertive. The first will incorporate the environment of the perceiver. An example of this assimilative procedure may be seen in the Voudon Tradition. The houngan or Voudon Priest will incorporate elements of belief which surround him and utilize them to maximum effect. In some cases, as in that of the Voudon assimilation of Roman Catholicism, it is done to present a socially estimable appearance, but in purely magical terms it is to utilize all forms of 'believing' in the world which surrounds the practitioner. The second form, the invertive or opposing type of ritual structure, will take the environment surrounding the perceiver and fashion it anew

irrespective of its natural construction. For example, the Sorcerer may reverse the prayers of the orthodox religion of the country in which he lives; as a cultural influence upon him the orthodox believing creates a perceptual bias which needs to be made functional within his own field: that of pure belief. This is not simple blasphemy but rather a deliberate 'emptying' or realigning of belief to functional direction. Often these two 'types' intertwine according to the requirements of locality and situation. One may cite the Sufic sect of the Mullamatiyah, the Jhakri of Nepal, the Yezidi of Kurdistan, the Dhu'l-qarneni of medieval Morocco, and so on, as examples of the assimilative/invertive procedures working together in ritual. Yet one may go further and state that each and every ritual performed is unique in its direction and manner of handling 'belief' and the dimensional arena of its interplay with the World of Flesh.

The principle of structure and thus of sequence is 'order', and this is the crux of the matter; reoccurrence may only truly occur in finite sequences, and these occur within the possible range of the infinite. Infinity is beyond ordinary perceptible design. Yet in the artificiality of the ritual area, the geometric finite zone is the 'as if' of the recurrent patterns of the infinite: a cipher for the Ideas of Eternity. The word 'ritual' itself stems from the Sanskrit root *rta* meaning 'cosmic order'. *Rta* is etymologically connected with *rtu* meaning 'menses'; this link demonstrates a fundamental level of ordering the world, that is by the periodic flow of woman: the Priestess. This in turn brings us to glimpse the erostatic orientation of ritual wherein the Lunar Triangle of Waxing, Sustaining and Waning *Force* receives the Solar-phallic Cross – the *Form* of the Fourfold

Seasonal God; those in unity are the sum Body of Flesh, whose perichoretic outreach is the stellar coition with the *Other*.

The primacy of Woman, the Great Goddess, within the fundamental systems of human believing demonstrates the elevation of *Otherness* personified. The Goddess is the embodiment of the primordial structuring principle within Chaos; she is the original establisher of the principles of directing belief -- the rhythms of the *rtu*: the Primal Ritual. Her blood is the colourer of the liminal horizon of time and her periodic reddening stains the tides of sea and moon within the mind and creates the pattern of change; like a stone which is cast into a pool it has ripples, these are the reciprocations on all levels of being, the echo of the menstrual voice throughout the universe. In response to this the Phallic Will extends: the embodiment of transgression.

In the five days of the menses there is no conception, no physical generative act; this is therefore the time of magical creation. In the pentagram there is an identity between the five of days and the five of senses; this is the symbol of perceiving in the time of bornlessness. In contrariety to the ordained time of conceiving, the phallic will of magick extends to penetrate the bloodied kteis of the *Other*: this is the Primal Sacrifice. The child of flesh is 'slain' since no opportunity for birth is given; the coitus is solely for the creation of a 'magical child of will' within the womb of the ritual area. The zone of creativity is here determined by the contours of flesh, for it is within the vessels of those participating that the manifestation of new birth is desired. The correspondence of flesh to the contours of ritual geometry is of single identity. From hence the bifurcation

of the Goddess and the God will become resolved in the singular body of flesh.

The interpenetration of the Flesh with the *Other* partakes of absolute sexuality: the line, form, gesture and word of magical ritual are its *language* - the Grammar of Gnosis. Where the boundary of self attains through en-ecstasis to a horizon beyond mundane sensory description, merging with a state beyond knowing and unknowing, there is an emotive intuit of Power and Entity in terms of symbolism: a living encryption of Gnosis. This sentient alphabet presents an interconnecting web which transverses the borders of any defined state of consciousness, it gives an appearance of synchronous or recurrent aspects of the unfathomable infinity of Mystery. The states of Dreaming, Sleeping and Waking are given noëtic points of reference transcending the limits of any one state; these points of transference grant the perceiver a personal basis for ritual construction and development. For instance, the chance possession of a talismanic object in waking may be reaffirmed in dreaming; the object is found involuntarily in both states 'as if' one were guided to it.

The object accretes significance by association of time, place, and feeling within both states of mind, and gradually assumes an identity within both waking and dreaming. With identity comes entity: the object establishes taboo within the psyche and thus a focus, an obsessional vortex, is created for the interpenetration of human and elemental states of Being. Such points are places where you may step from the world of familiar mundanity into the Unknown. For there are, at the sensor apotheoses of the body, gates of en-trance into a spaciousness of Being which transcends the limitation of the human form. The mutative extension

of the Magician is given communicable form within the structure of ritual, where ritual functions as the integrating and organizing framework of the personal fetishism: the tabu-obsessed perception.

There is amongst the linear pathway of the circle, triangle, cross and pentacle, a sigillated projection of the magician's potentialities, a hieroglyphic codex of his self-overcoming. The subtle geometries which link the words and deeds, the vibrations and sensations, of the magician to the trajectories of his *going-forth into Otherness* are visibly indicated by the mundane objects of the rite: the linear representations and iconography. These give *Form* to the invisible forces of alignment which are realized in the apotheosis of emotive intuition: the Gnostic revelation in the midst of the obsession-encircled heart.

What may another say of this arcanum?

Only they who share the language of its deciphering may speak of it and understand; the language of sorcerers is silent to those beyond the perimeter of the circle. The secret nature of ritual remains, as it was in the beginning, a secret. Whosoever has stepped into that time, into that space, through these words has stepped into the ring of understanding that we have cast together through the shared meaning of the secret nature.

This circle is bound...



WHAT IS TRADITIONAL CRAFT?

I

'The Traditional Craft is the Nameless Way of the Arte Magical. It is the Path of Wytcha, the heart's calling of avocation to Cunning Man and Wise Woman; it is the Hidden Circle of Initiates constituting the Living Body of the Elder Faith. Its Ritual is the Sabbat of Dream-made-Flesh. Its Mystery lies in the Land, below the feet of Those who tread the crooked track of Elphame. Its Scripture is the Way of Wort-cunning and Beast-charming, the treasury of lore re-membered by Those who revere the Spirits; it is the gramarye of ear-whispered knowledge, beloved of Those who hold sacred the secrets of the dead and entrusted to They who look ever onward... If any ask about the Traditional Craft, their answers lie in its native land: the Circle of the Arte of Artes'

Such are my own thoughts to this question and as such they are but mine own, but nonetheless they are the thoughts of a man who has walked the Circle of the Cunning-folk many times round.

To the question: 'What is Traditional Craft?', there are as many useful answers as there are practitioners of this mysterious persuasion. There is no single straightforward answer to such a query, and it is the wonderful diversity of possible responses which genuine practitioners may offer that is, for myself, most enthralling. The scope of practices and beliefs which may be encompassed by the name 'Traditional Craft' is unknown and shall ever remain so; and yet if a sense -- an ambience -- of this diversity can be gained through discourse, we may then perhaps intuit the hidden nature which unifies all.

When referring above to 'useful answers', I mean specifically those responses which may be of direct use and value to fellow practitioners. For the spirit in which this discourse is intended is that which may be of service to each and all of us to whom the very question is addressed. Although there exists a certain number of people who can give first-hand account about the nature of the Traditional Craft, such adherents are, in truth, few and secretive.

During recent times there has been an evident surfacing of the Old Craft into the public domain of published literature, books and articles. This public activity is an echo of an inner resurgence of knowledge. The wellspring of the Elder Faith is letting forth its vital lifeblood, effusing the underground streams of magical practise, granting its power to the veins that thread throughout the land, nourishing and nurturing the verdant earth of Albion anew. For we who partake of the Elder Faith's Mystery are the guardians of the land: our knowledge is the arcanum of its heart and our own. To this troth we must be true!

The public manifestation of the Elder Faith has not appeared in a uniform manner, but has exhibited a stimulating variety of forms. These various forms or streams of the Tradition, one may refer to as 'observances' or recensions of the Old Rite; each differing according to the Master or Mistress responsible for the dispensation of its knowledge. One might think that the very existence of publically available literature would indicate a tendency towards a weakening – a watering-down of the spiritual essence of the Tradition, but this has not been the case. In fact, the very opposite is true: the direction is toward a broadening and deepening in the spiritual wealth of the

Elder Faith. The Old Craft is emerging as a Path possessing a diverse array of aspects, ranging from the practical spell-craft generated at the level of folk-magic – the artes of wort-cunning and animal encharming, through a learned spectrum of magical techniques, reaching in apotheosis to the heights of genuine mysticism.

In order to clarify this diversity it is useful to cite and give brief resumé of specific exemplary observances which are at the forefront of our present resurgence:–

The Way of the Eight Winds: this is an East Anglian recension of the Nameless Arte propounded by Nigel Pennick. In essence, it represents a specific school of magical practise derived from, and continuing the Tradition of Cunning-folk indigenous to the general locus of the Cambridgeshire and Fenland regions. It is derived from the initiatory stream of 'Sigaldry', a runelore tradition incorporating both pagan and christian elements in a coherent magical synthesis. Its manner of succession is, according to Pennick, passed down from Master to pupil and is perpetuated by both oral and textual transmission of knowledge. It is of importance to note that in his book, *Secrets of East Anglian Magic*, reference is made to the Antient Order of Bonesmen, to the magical fraternity of the Horse-whisperers and to the solitary mysteries of the Toadsmen and women. These are other forms of magical practice still operative in the selfsame regions and which may be referred to, in broad terms, as 'Traditional Craft'.

Via Nocturna: the Spirit-hunt Covenant. This is the initiatory stream of Wisdom-teaching propounded by Nigel Aldcroft-Jackson, the Magister Janus ben Azazel. His

teachings are derived from both textual and oral transmissions of knowledge and, in their entirety, constitute a synthesis of many diverse aspects of witch-lore. In brief, the central core of the Covenant is enshrined within the state of magical gnosis in which the seeker undertakes the nocturnal spiritual pilgrimage to the Sabbat. The Via Nocturna is therefore the invisible conclave of initiates conjoined through parity of experience within trance-ecstasy. Its wisdom is accessible to those whom have passed through the transliminal gateways of this world and whom have undertaken the initiatory night-journey to the oneiric realms of the Sabbatic revelry. This particular stream of Traditional Craft is notable in its contribution to what may be called 'Witanic Mysticism', the corpus of lore derived directly through the gnostic experience of Sabbatic formulae. In its contribution to this field, the Covenant has been instrumental in extrapolating the inner mystical essence from the teachings of various other Craft observances, most importantly perhaps from that of the Clan of Tubal-Cain.

The Clan of Tubal-Cain: this is the Tradition of Craft Observance perpetuated by the late Robert Cochrane (1931-1966). According to Cochrane, the Clan was a body of initiates deriving their myth and methods of occult practice from old Norfolk witches. It is notable in that the components of its mythic construct show evidence of influence from late medieval daemonological sources, especially with regard to the Teachings concerning the descent of the Watchers, the role of Tubal-Cain and the reverence paid to him as the preceptor of initiatory genealogy or Witchblood. The importance of the Clan's contribution to the on-going evolvement of the Traditional

Craft is evidenced in the creative influence which it has brought to bear upon those who were directly involved within its work. The foremost example is Evan John Jones (1936-2003), who has done much service in expounding various aspects of the Clan's Teachings, especially those surrounding the mythic forms of the Castle, the Skull and the Rose, and the Roebuck in the Thicket.

Cultus Sabbati: this is a name adopted for purposes of communication and identity by an otherwise nameless body of Traditional Craft initiates. In its present form the Cultus is served by the author of this discourse in the role of its Presiding Magister. As such I shall seek to describe its nature and function with suitable objectivity.

The Cultus operates as the vehicle for the transmission of the Quintessential Magical Current and is active in the evolving recension of magical practice referred to in oral, ritual and textual transmissions as 'The Sorcery of the Crooked Path'. Within the Cultus several observances of the Craft are in concurrent operation; this is reflected in the structure of its constituent groupings. These incorporate the working contexts of both covines and smaller working cells; the emphasis throughout all being upon the autonomy of each initiate. An important function of the Cultus is to serve as a meeting-ground for various initiatory streams of the Elder Faith and thereby to act as the medium for the confluence of their magical forces of empowerment. Although its field of operation is presently centralised within the county of Essex, the Cultus is informed by a number of trans-cultural initiatory lines of succession from around the country and farther afield. The core wisdom-teachings of the Cultus Sabbati are passed down, both orally and ritually, through the Transcendental Sorcerie and Gnosis of the Sabbatic Mysteries.



These are only four expressions of the Elder Faith, but their diversity is testament to the rich texture of British Magical Spirituality. The historical validity of these four examples as 'Traditional Craft' is not wholly mine to affirm or question, but nonetheless the sheer creative impulse which they generate is, for myself, the worthiest form of authenticity, irrespective of aught else.

There is a notable impression of creative insight and syncretism imparted by the published work of these exemplars and this lends itself to the further 'answering' of my initial question. It is typical of genuine Cunning-folk to utilise whatever is closest at hand and to turn all influences, irrespective of religious provenance, to the secret purposes of the Arte. It is therefore that the Old Craft embraces for itself an array of attitudes and methods, ranging from the simple matters of spell-craft to the highest ceremonial forms of conjuration. In all contexts one may find pieces of magical lore and belief from many disparate times and places, but all are brought to function within the trans-historical arena of the sacred dimension, whether it be the magical circle of Witcherie or the ninefold plot of Sigaldry. From out of its roots in folk-magic, in all of its many aspects, the form of the Traditional Craft is continually evolving, and it is in this respect that one may perceive the trajectories of its own

possibilities. The spiritual landscape of the Arte is being moulded, through the power of its own current, by a potent aesthetic of mythopoetic eclecticism; its rich variety of ancestral lore is achieving a new definition of form, culminating in the refinement of a profound metaphysic of ecstasy: the true wisdom-teaching of magical gnosis. This may be seen as a natural evolvment from one stage of religious practise to another more sophisticated level, or yet – from an initiatory stance – one may perceive the emergence of Witanic Mysticism as the timely unveiling of knowledge which has always been at the heart of the Tradition. For even as the fire has always burned brightly at the circle's centre, so we and the circle must eternally turn around its axis through the many seasons of Time and Fate; and through the sacred dimension of the Arte, we are brought ever closer to the timeless centre amidst the changing whirl of aeon and hour.

It is possible that one might perceive a development towards the seemingly abstract heights of mystical thought to be occurring in rejection of the simple heritage of the 'good folk of Elphame' that have lived before us, but this is not so. For myself and in example, the basic skein of witcherie – the knotted cord – may be used for both healing and hurting, and also for the mystical task of contemplating the stations of the soul. The horizon of the circle is boundless and the extent of our real initiation is measured solely by our own Self-delimitation within its infinite compass.



II

To return to the initial question of this discourse and to follow another spoor through the maze, let us consider the Traditional Craft, its names and their significance in general discussions about magic, and also the means by which its Path is perpetuated.

In general terms and throughout this discourse 'Traditional Craft' refers to pagan magical and religious practices which have been passed down from at least before the beginning of the twentieth century. Geographically, the term herein applies to past and contemporary British folk-magic, but this may be extended to embrace beliefs and practices of European, mainly Northern, provenance. Despite the spatial demarcation assumed for the purposes of this discourse, the Elder Faith has innumerable forms and can be seen in many far-flung regions of the Earth. Furthermore, the cultural influences bearing upon past and modern forms of Traditional Craft in Britain are many and diverse, bearing marks of knowledge which testify to a distinctive admixture of initiatory streams from around the world.

In esoteric, historical and anthropological literature of the latter half of this century the term 'Traditional Craft' is generally used to refer to the forms of folk-magical practise which predate, or run in concurrent distinction to, the modern or 'reformed' recensions of Craft practice. The modern form of Witchcraft is known generically as 'Wicca', although it should be noted that many variations of this modern movement exist and are called by many other terms. In distinction to 'Wicca' the Old Craft is sometimes referred to by its adherents as 'Weikka' ; this is often pronounced in the parlance of Arte as 'Wytcha'. The common root of these variants is held to be the Indo-

European WEIK – said to signify ‘The religion of the sorcerers’. Other useful connections and derivations are as follows:– Anglo-Saxon *wicce wicca* ‘witch’; *wiccian* – ‘to cast a spell’, *witte* – ‘wise’, *witan* – ‘to be wise’; Old German *Wikkerie* – ‘Witchery’; Icelandic *vita* – ‘To know’, *vitki* – ‘a wizard’; Swedish *wika* – ‘to bend, to turn’; Norwegian *vikja* – ‘to turn aside; to conjure away, to exorcize’; Anglo-Saxon *wikken* – ‘to make evil’, hence *wicked* – ‘to be evil’ and thus to be *yfel* – beyond the edge of the mortal consensus of perception.

Much discussion is made out of such words and names; this can be made useful to the practitioner since it may encourage new perspectives about the path, but when this cannot be done such discussions are irrelevant to those engaged in the practise of the Arte. One should pay heed to what is of use within the circle and what is not.

Certain scholars of conventional academia have claimed that the word *wicca* was originally used solely in a pejorative sense, that is, as a term of abuse or slander against anyone disliked or suspected of *maleficia* or black magic, and that it has, in fact, been out of use in any form whatsoever until the modern witchcraft movement. One may nonetheless cite the non-pejorative use of connected derivations such as *witan* – ‘to know’ – in various historical instances. However, irrespective of such claims, it may be stated that the derivant word *Wytcha* has been in use during the twentieth century amongst certain contemporary descendants of the Cunning-folk Traditions in Essex. Whether the term has been passed down through centuries of secret practise or resumed as a identifying name only yesterday, it is pertinent to state some of the reasons for its present use. From the perspective of one practitioner the adoption of this term is a self-conscious means of stating

identity as one of the Cunning-folk, as a 'Knowing One', a bearer of wise-blood and thus as an initiate of the true witch tradition. Also *wytch* being 'to bend or turn' is appropriate in regard to the 'crooked' nature of the sorcerous path. If the pejorative use of *wicca* is accepted, then the present use of *Wytcha* embraces this. The Man of Arte moves at the edge of society; he walks within the world of Mankind but is truly 'outside' of it. A path of blame and slander will be trodden out of necessity when one moves beyond the normative parameters of society. Furthermore, one could say that 'Wytcha' is simply the correct pronunciation of the Anglo-saxon word *wicca* and that it is used self-consciously by contemporary Cunning-folk as a deliberate reclamation of unique and distinctive identity amongst the scope of modern magical religion. This being said, it is a customary preference of such practitioners to use the self-identifying terms of 'sorcerer' and 'sorcery' for themselves and their Arte, and more often than not to use no name at all.

Other epithets in use for the Elder Observances of the Craft are, as mentioned above, 'The Nameless Arte', 'The Via Nocturna', 'The Sabbatic Craft' et alia. All such epithetical names may be used in discussions of magic in order to give a name to 'something' which by nature has no name: names are functional for the purposes of communication and self-identity.

Whilst it is useful to define and therefore distinguish the various modes of the Old Craft from one another and from their modern counterparts, it should be borne in mind that in certain instances the Old Craft has merged with or adopted beliefs and practices from such reformed observances. Given the natural inclinations of the magical

practitioner toward syncretism, there is constant cross-fertilisation between those who interact in and out of the circle; consequently we have all borrowed ideas from one another. However, the various forms of modern Wicca are not the matter in question and although they have an important role within the history and development of magical practise in the twentieth century, it is the purpose of this discourse to enquire into the nature of those streams of the Craft whose provenance is of greater antiquity. For within such streams will be found a syncretism which has simply been operative for a longer period of time and is thus likely to have absorbed more influences and to have integrated these within a body of greater spiritual maturity. The integration of modern Wiccan influences into older magical streams is but one aspect of confluential development; there are many other influences upon Traditional Craft practices which could also be cited. In speaking about such integration, I must, for courtesy's sake, give full respect to those practitioners of the Old Craft who view their own observances as pure and distinct. The fact of influence from other sources is no blemish nor is it a necessary act of compromise: it can be a conscious part of an ongoing creative spirituality. Within the context of my own path I have had direct contact with initiates of other notable magical traditions and have always learned greatly from such interaction. Such contact has led me to active involvement within the Paths of the Uttara Kaula Tantrikas and, upon a subtle level, with the Sufi Tradition of the *Ovaysiyya*. This involvement has only served to enrich my work within the Conclaves of the Sabbatic Mysteries. Both through the *Cultus Sabbati* and as independent practitioners, myself and other initiates of the Essex

Cunning-folk Tradition have pursued trans-cultural initiatory connections and through such endeavours many important influences have been brought to bear upon the present-day recensions of our practise. A deeper consideration of such influences I shall leave aside for another occasion. Fundamentally, it is the motives which underlie the purposes of such interaction which, for me, distinguish the various streams of the Craft. In Belief, we are all driven by seemingly similar motivations, but amidst the Breed of Cain there is a distinctive methodology of Believing which has arisen out of natural disposition toward a sorcerous mentality. It is not for nothing that they are called 'Cunning-folk'!

When talking of Traditional Craft there is often much mention of it being something 'passed down' or 'passed on'. What is meant by this turn of phrase?

From my own experience as an initiand and initiator within the Sabbatic Cultus, I can recount several ways in which the Tradition is transmitted from one person to the next over the generations. The most obvious way is that of oral transmission: the spoken word. This is the 'ear-whispered knowledge' that is related from one practitioner to the next, whether from Master to apprentice, or in the manner of knowledge shared in discussion amongst contemporaries in a circle or clan. It is often in this context that the most precious pieces of lore are preserved and it is around such unwritten wisdom that an aura of taboo exists. For in being untranslated to the written word the oral teachings of the Craft exist in the realm between Thought and Text; they dwell with the spirits in the shifting realms of memory and re-membrance. When should such lore be written down? -- this is a question I have often asked

myself. In answer, I conclude that one should write down such things when there is a danger of their being lost or forgotten. Nonetheless, I believe that nothing is truly forgotten about the Arte, for within its own domain – the Circle – the spirits will speak to those with ears to hear. It is by word of mouth that the true and invisible grimoire of the Cunning-man is carried through the ages; it is a book whose leaves are scattered amongst many hands and yet is bound in a common cloak of skin and blood.

In certain instances, the oral transmission of the Tradition is performed in the formal context of instruction. This is where the spoken mode of transmission is operative within the specialised context of ceremonial initiation. This leads us to the most important manner in which the Tradition is passed down: the ritually transmitted genealogy of spiritual power. This is a complex matter due to the variety of procedures involved, but basically the process to which I am referring is the fulfilment of an aspirant's initiatic induction via the ritual point known as 'the passing-on of power'. This is the magical act whereby the entire power of the Tradition is transmitted directly from an Initiator to his/her pupil, as from Master to apprentice. Within various bodies of the Craft, and also within Guild fraternities affiliated derived from Freemasonic Orders, the act of the 'passing-on' is fulfilled thus: the aspirant kneels upon one knee before the initiator, the left knee directly touching the ground and the right leg forming a square with the earth. The candidate holds in both hands the *gramarye* or Holy Book of the Order Covine. The initiator in turn places his right hand atop the candidate's head and his left hand upon their right foot, forming a greater square. The initiator then 'wills' all

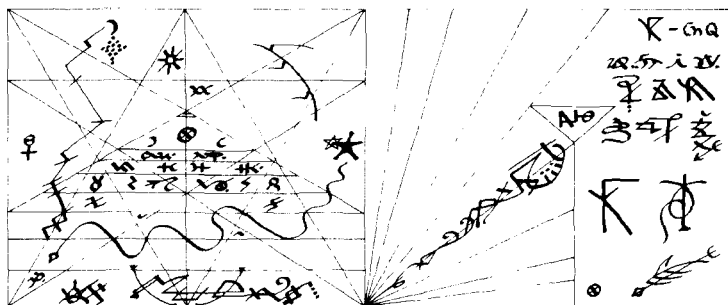
of the power of the Tradition into the receptive body of the candidate. This act, performed in many variations of the manner stated, is executed in order to 'seal' the teaching process through which the candidate has passed. The teaching process lasts for different periods of time and is constructed in accordance with that which is being taught. Within the Sabbatic Tradition, the teaching process is divided into two parts. Firstly, a nine month probationary period is undertaken, during which the aspirant is simply assessed for various requisites of character. When this is completed, the aspirant is invited to take a rite of dedication; this avows them to the path of the Tradition and begins the formal phase of tuition which lasts for one year and one day. During the initiatory year, the candidate is *literally led around the circle in a complete circumambulation of mind, body and spirit*. At the fulfilment of this circuit, the formal rite of initiation takes place; the central aspect of which is the act of aforementioned 'passing-on'. The act of 'sealing' the tuition process effectively creates the truly autonomous stance of the new initiate. For within the act of the passing-on the entire knowledge of the Tradition flows into the candidate in a state of gnostic transmission. It is then up to him or her to re-member the body of the Tradition according to their own predilection. It will be noted by those acquainted with this mode of transmission, that there are many variations to its execution; these are all equally valid, for it is the initiatic significance encrypted within the ritual gesture which is of sole importance.

A third form of the 'passing-down' is the textual transmission of lore; this is somewhat akin to the manner of perpetuating shastras or verses of holy scripture in

Tantrism. Within the Craft there are a number of manuscript books or gramaryes of the Arte which are handed down from one initiate to the next. Such books are the repositories of lore belonging to specific streams or observances. Various names are known for such tomes: *The Secret Granary*; *The Bonesman's Bible*; *The Devil's Plantation*; *The Dragon-Book*, et alia. Alongside these is the Book of Shadows, the generic name for the hand-written book of Wiccan observance. This name has, in some cases, been adopted by certain members of the Old Craft; its poetic resonance often being the main reason for this. In some forms of the Craft, each candidate must make their own hand-written copy of their Master's book, for each initiate's book of Arte is burned after their death. The essential nature of all such texts is that they are the personal lineal collections of magical knowledge accumulated through direct experience and understanding of the Arte. It is thus that their contents are the sole preserve of their owners; this is their natural taboo and rightly so. The Circle of Arte is cast on many levels and on all it must be cast without a flaw.

Akin to the manner of textual transmission is the handing down of magical artifacts. For instance, the passing-on of the wand or stave from Master to apprentice is a form of this custom active in Essex Craft. This establishes a link between initiates over successive generations and endows such objects with a distinctive numen or spiritual aura approximating personality. Such objects often bear names which testify to the belief that they have become the dwelling-place of a spirit. It is worthy of mention to note that transmission of magical knowledge can occur solely through the medium of such objects. This

may be because of their talismanic nature and also because their appearance may encode certain arcana through sigaldric markings. From an initiate's perspective, I believe that a magical object can convey knowledge through the activity of the spirit dwelling within it. This form of transmission can operate independently of any other means and can bridge the divide of both time and place. One might, for example, obtain an old scrying-glass from an antique shop or a carved wooden image from a foreign tribal source such as West Africa. Working cautiously with such an object may permit the initiate to engage incommunication with the indwelling spirit and derive therefrom, in trance or dreams, untold wisdom without any physical contact from the object's previous custodians. Such a method of working can bring new influences into the praxes of the Traditional Craft initiate and can activate deep strata of ancestral wisdom which have lain dormant within both the Circle and the body. Although a magically-empowered object partakes most obviously of the material plane, it can serve as a conduit for transmission of the most subtle and intangible kind.



The passing-on of magical artifacts is in itself a potent means for the continuation and accumulation of magical knowledge and power. It can occur through the seemingly chance acquisition of such, or else can occur in the formal context of the ritual initiation or may even be a matter of family inheritance. This latter form can operate through the initiatory kinship of spiritual descent and/or through the blood-line of an hereditary tradition.

This brings us to the next form of the 'passing-on': Hereditary Craft and Family Magical Traditions. This type of lineal transmission occurs within the context of familial descent: the knowledge, customs and/or magical possessions of a pagan magico-religious belief being preserved within the confines of a close-knit and insular kinship group. Such forms of belief can vary greatly from one instance to the next. Examples with which I am familiar range from the Traditions of American Hex-craft to the British Christo-pagan faith (sometimes referred to as dual observance) in the power of saints as spirit-guides. Such beliefs can be cited as belonging, although not exclusively, to Hereditary Traditions; for they can also be found transecting and becoming operative within other streams.

I am at liberty to relate from personal contact, an instance where a family preserved an interest in magical and occult matters to the point of collating material from classical sources, such as might be useful in conjurations of the old gods. When a daughter of the family became involved with more modern witchcraft, she then began to use the material passed down to her. The folk-magic, or whatever you might call it, of her family interest became directly operative and moved outside of its original parameters. Through subsequent initiatic generations such 'hereditary'

magical material has become integrated with other observances and has developed into its own stream of succession. Such an example contains elements of both familial descent and ritual initiatory succession; as such it must be regarded as a part of Traditional Craft distinctive in its own right.

The manner in which Hereditary Traditions are perpetuated varies from family to family and may be handed down using certain of the ways cited previously. Family Traditions are a rarity and can be highly secretive. In some cases they do not wish to be seen as part of, or as having any connection with, other forms of paganism or magical practice. This has to be respected as an intrinsic facet of their path, but nonetheless such survivals of pagan belief are all part of the spiritual essence which informs the Elder Faith. In instances where a Family Tradition interacts with Crafters from outside the family fold, there can be a mutual enriching of practical knowledge and an assurance of old lore surviving with integrity. Such interaction is, therefore, to be commended.

Aside from the previously described ways in which the Tradition is passed down, there are other ways of transmission such as those belonging to the subtle realm. The primary means is that of oneiric induction.

It is at this point that I shall cease to write about magic and begin to write *through* and *in* magic. It is folly to persist in discussing contexts without contents: the Mystic need not express his heart's revelation in any terms other than those of the heart's native tongue and neither should an artist spend so much time building his own picture-frames that he neglects to paint the picture. Translators and frame-makers will always follow after!

There is a manner of spell-craft which I shall relate and by it seek to invite the reader, irrespective of his or her

standing, to step *outside* and thus *within* the mysteries of which they are reading.

For this deed of Arte a leather thread and a hagstone are required: the latter being a stone through which there is a hole naturally worn through: a gateway graven by the hands of earth and charmed to open by the tongues of the river. Taking the hagstone in one's grasp, one should contemplate its opening and entreat it to be a doorway for your going-forth in dreams. One should then take leathern thread and, holding it in one's hands, should phantasise about the ways of the magical night-procession. Consider the spirits. Think of She who flies forth out of the body and into the freedom of the darksome midnight. Ascend with the spirits through the openings of the flesh; take leave of your mortal abode and roam abroad with the unseen companie of the *aire*. *Step upon the wind and lay yourself into the arms of the sky*. Hear the sonorous beating of bird-wing and spirit-wing; hear the rhythm of their flight echoing words of enchantment, patterning the nocturnal plains with sigils of forgotten desires. Behold the gateways to the *Other*: silhouettes glimpsed against the vault of the stars. Be at one with them; be at one with the night-wandering host of the sky. Let the coolth of the star-river enliven your soul and lead you to the scent-trail of the pathless path. Hear the wing-beats of the spirit and feel your heart-beats; hear the heart's drum and count your steps into the boundless dance of god, man and beast. Behold the companions of the round dance. Behold!

With each poignant atmosphere of phantasie, knot the thread and thus create a rosary of dreaming potentials. When the thread has seven knots, pass it through the mouth of the hagstone and tie to form a loop through which one's hand may be placed. The stone and thread

should be entreated with a final prayer for the spell to work. Then, at the end of one's waking day, the stone should be held in one's hand (generally the one most seldom used) and the cord wrapped around the wrist. The stone should rest within the hand like a child in its crib. Then I bid you forget about it 'til morning. Perchance in dreaming your spirit shall pass through the stone-mouth and wander abroad in the night-walkers' procession, flying freely to the place that some have called 'Sabbat'. Where-ever the dreaming takes you, the thread of knots shall guide and bring you home, once more to waken at the edge of day.

If no dreams befall you by night, then recall the deeds of the spell – for there in phantasie are the fore-echoes of that which is not yet remembered.

Such is a spell to enter the Dream of the Sabbat.

It is held by some practitioners of these mysteries that the true Sabbatic Rite or Circle-feast of the Arte is celebrated in a state of lucid trance. The Sabbat is believed in as a hidden realm beyond-between the worlds of waking, sleeping and normal dreaming consciousness; it is a secret domain to which the initiates of the Cultus can travel, passing through the crack in the worlds which opens at dawn, dusk and at the moment of midnight, to participate in the Convocation of Arte. The road to the Sabbatic trance is accessed by means of an array of procedures, often incorporating complex divertive and obsessional praxes of sexual magic and narco-aesthetic induction. The gnosis of the Dreaming Sabbat derives specifically from those initiatory streams of the Craft whose work is focused in Wytchan or Witanic Mysticism (Cultus Sabbati and Spirit-hunt Covenant). Therein, the Sabbat is perceived as the prototypal form of *all* magical workings and as the unifying circle of a living and vital symbolism, integrating all aspects

of witch-lore and magical technique. These aspects are re-interpreted via personal mythopoesis and thus re-vitalised by the direct experiential dreaming of the initiated practitioner. From the experience of the dreamer, specific elements are extracted and utilised as the bases for ritual procedures in the waking. The converse can also be useful: aspects of waking ritual can be translated into dream and therein can assume new and deeply significant meaning. It is thus that the Sabbat of the Witanic Mystic operates as the crossroads betwixt the worlds and as the arena for the reification of a primal magical power from its source beyond.

Initiation into the Dreaming-sabbat is unlike other forms of transmission within the Craft; it occurs outside of the context of temporal linearity and permits the entrance of anyone possessing sufficient magical ability. Although oneiric transmission is frequently a part of the tuition process within the formal mode of the ritual passing-down of knowledge, it is nonetheless a manner through which any true aspirant can attain entry to the sacred mysterium of the Arte. One might therefore suppose that anyone could claim initiatic status via this means, this may be so, but genuine contact with the inner current of magical gnosis is always apparent and cannot be simply assumed. One must be called forth by night, to leave the carnal house of the body and fly outwards with the Companie of the Spirits.

The call from the otherworld of the Sabbatic Convocation leads the aspirant directly to the source of initiatory power. Some may interpret this as a fanciful expression or an elaborate re-interpretation of controlled imaginal path-workings, but I can assure one and all that the Dream of the Sabbat – the Spiritual Convocation of the Night-wandering Souls – is a reality through and

beyond all Imagination! It is the very secret of the Great Return, whereby we may attain congress with the Arcanum of Primordial Being and thus with all and aught we may call the Tradition of Magical Wise-craft.

To return to our beginning: 'What is Traditional Craft'. If we have gained a sense – an ambience by aught in this discourse, then perchance an 'answer' has been given through nostalgic re-assemblance of truth. For we may seek through many ways, but it is often through the atmospheres of magic that its essence may be apprehended in a manner most conducive to the realisation of its substance. I have therefore sought to give brief intimation of the spirit pervading the Old Craft and allied forms of magical practise. With this intent in mind I have made reference to exemplary forms of the Tradition, together with an outline of their range of activity and a *précis* of five ways in which their knowledge attains perpetuation. All of these aspects transcend the limitations imposed by name and all are often interwoven in a profound contexture of living mythology – in a halo of mystery which surrounds the reality of the Cunning-folk. Some might say the question ought to be 'Does Traditional Craft exist?'. The fact of the title-question and the nature of this discourse are an assertion in the affirmative. The real answers are bound in books of skin and blood.

Now, who are the 'Cunning-folk', and has the initial question of this article really been given any form of answer whatsoever? Well, let each reader decide for themselves. As to who the Cunning Folk are, well... They are amidst the procession of They who walk by Night, whether they be called Witch, Sorcerer, Cunning-man, Wise woman, Wart-charmer or Old Mother Red-cap – they are all part of the magical and mystical heritage of Albion's Craft of the Wise.

THE GOLDEN CHAIN AND THE LONELY ROAD

A Typological study of Initiatory Transmissions
within the Sabbatic Tradition

Initiation, the passing-on of power, the step of the mortal foot across the threshold of the gods, the hearing of the watchword, the reception of the book, the dreaming-draught sipp'd at midnight, the lonely stand in the heart of the Wild... many are the ways of induction into the Circle of the Sabbat, many the waymarks – the moments of realisation – that lead the Spirit through the winding ways of all ecstasy!

In its essence, initiation is the entrance of an individual into a Mystery and the ingress of that Mystery into the individual; it is a simultaneous rarefaction and reification; a nuptial union of Self and Other in the mirror'd circle of Gnosis. Whilst the essence of the matter may be 'pointed to' by such a description, the truth of initiation is of necessity a secret that cannot be divulged; it is the Grand Arcanum, the *Mysterium* that forever dwells beyond... in Silence profound and deep. And yet, by considering the outward appearances of initiation, the forms which it assumes in terms of perceptible manifestation, we may enter into discussion and endeavour to arrive at a comprehension of its diverse arcana.

If justice would be done to its subtleties the manifold complex of initiatory 'forms', as extant within contemporary Cuning Craft praxis, deserves a broad and detailed study. In the following pages an attempt will be made to accomplish this, to distinguish between the 'types' of initiation which may occur for a Seeker upon the Path of the Elder Craft, and furthermore to define the various

strands of magical transmission which may be considered as 'lineages' or 'chains of gnosis' in and of themselves. In attempting to do this I shall admittedly be drawing directly from my own experience, specifically from that which I have gained as the present Magister of the Cultus Sabbati. Consequently, a subjective delimitation of the topic is inevitable. Indeed, because the 'Tradition' of the Elder Craft is of so many guises and localised variations, no definitive account of initiatory processes may even be tenable. Undoubtedly omissions and generalisations will occur and for these I offer an apology in advance. Nonetheless, it is hoped that the broad schemata as given below will serve to clarify and to deepen an awareness of the matter in ways hitherto unexplored. With this intent the following article is offered as a stepping-stone to the wiser future of the Way and its children.

Passing the Fire-brand of Tubalo-Lucifer: Ritual Initiation.

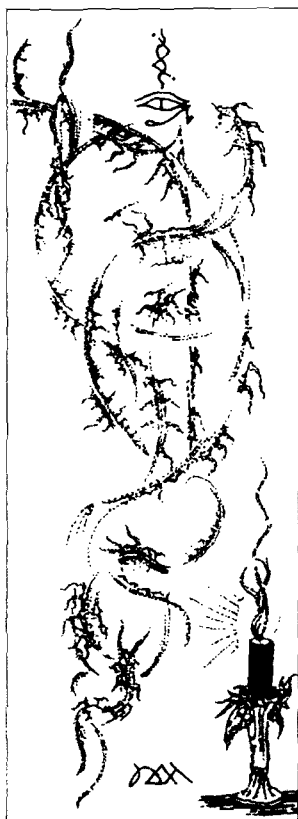
The customary method of entrance into the Sabbatic Tradition is *via formal ritual induction*. This can take various forms, ranging from the simplest act of ritual 'authorisation' to the so-called 'Grand Array' of the full Sabbatic ceremony. Within the Cultus Sabbati there are various concurrent lineal streams, and it is from their example that I shall draw in the discussion below.

The founding lineage of the Cultus is that of 'The Red Snake', descended from a Buckinghamshire stream of Cunning-craft practice and folk magic. In terms of its outward expression through ritual practice it has changed with each successive generation, but at its core a body of sorcerous principles is maintained and it is upon this

'Alphabet of Arcana' that each generation 'fleshes out' its own particular mode of practice. In terms specific to ritual initiation, the principles informing the general process are observation, dedication, formal tuition, and ritual focus. In manifestation these principles combine in a process lasting a minimum of twenty-one months, culminating in the focal apotheosis of a final initiatory ceremony.

From the previous Magister of this lineage I was taught that a candidate is chosen by signs and omens, and that it was forbidden for any outsider to ask directly for initiation. The omen-chosen candidate is firstly 'watched' for a period of time, no less than nine lunar months. During this time, called 'The Gestation', the candidate is observed for clear indications of the requisite skills and characteristics which the Path will demand. If deemed suitable, the candidate is then asked to undergo a ceremony called 'The Rite of Dedication'. This formally acknowledges their aspiration and magically 'places the step' onto the Path.

After the Dedication Rite a period of formal instruction begins, lasting one year and one day. During this time the novitiate and initiator embark on a pilgrimage which leads both full-circle around the horizon of the Sabbatic



Mysteries. For the candidate, the deed of walking the circle becomes a journey around the perimeter of the soul, a microcosmic quest to ensorcel the All-Possible of his or her own Self-existence. Having successfully passed through the period of tuition and the various ordeals and austerities which it demands, the novitiate is 'summoned' -- formally entreated to undergo the Rite of Initiation.

The Initiation Rite is 'the Seal of the Mysteries' and serves as the focusing context for all that has passed between the aspirant and the Initiating Power (the Initiator in all its forms: the physical teacher, the spiritual guide, the familiars and guardian-spirits of the path, the diverse lessons of praxis, the dreams, visions, and solitary realisations, et alia). All that constitutes the 'Initiator' confronts the Seeker and guides him into the True Circle of the Arte Magical. In the singular magical act called 'The Passing-On of Power' all is drawn within the One; the Initiate, Initiator, and the Mystery of the Rite itself are aligned to open the way for the 'new-born child of Witchblood'. The act of the 'Passing-On' confers the 'power' of all the Tradition, its knowledge, customs, and craft. Once this 'Power' has been received, it is the task of the newborn initiate to realise the arcana for himself -- to realise his own autonomy and to go forth anew according to the signs and omens of the way.

In summary, this is the way in which initiation occurs within our own circle of practise. The exact details of its process will doubtless vary from one instance to the next,

1 It is of interest to note that the 'Passing-On' is actuated by a gesture in which the Initiator places one hand on the head and one hand on the heel of the candidate to make the magical link in the initiatic chain. This gesture is comparable to that employed in the *Second Degree of Craft Freemasonry*; the old Password of which was interestingly 'Tubal-Cain'

but the core principles are maintained; for they are the very manner in which 'the firebrand' is passed from one generation to the next. In the fulfilment of his 'Making' the initiand is ritually 'authorised' to act as an autonomous participant and representative of the Tradition. His or her name is entered into the Book of Lineages² and the names of fellow brethren are communicated.

Within the ambit of the lineage in which the above process is actuated there are no grades or degrees beyond the principal initiation ritual, although it must be stated that some traditional lineages, such as The Black Boar and The Serpent-Cross, do utilise graded structures. In the case of the Black Boar lineage, for example, a Three Degree system is operated, broadly based upon the Apprentice, Journeyman, and Master grades of Freemasonry and medieval Craftsmans' Guilds. In this system the First Degree corresponds to the Dedication Rite; the Second Degree marks a mid-way stage – suitable if someone does not possess the requisite ability to receive the full empowerment; and the Third Degree corresponds to the final Rite of Initiation.

Although it may be affirmed that in the Cultus Sabbati there are no additional grades of attainment that apply to all individuals, it must paradoxically be stated that a strict hierarchical division of roles is traditionally operated. The offices of Elder, Magister, Maid, Priest, Priestess, Summoner, Seeress, Verdelet, Chronicler and Ward, are based wholly upon the skills that individuals possess and demonstrate; the 'raising' of an individual to any such

² The keeping of the Book of Lineages ensures that the names of all brethren are known to the presiding Master or Mistress, and furthermore that any pretenders to initiatic status are immediately recognisable.

position is furthermore subject to the consent of both Brethren and Spiritual Patrons.

As aforesaid, within the Cultus different 'lineages' of Craft observance operate concurrently, sometimes crossing, sometimes remaining categorically distinct. What is it that distinguishes one lineage from another? It is primarily the particular knowledge and characteristic customs of a particular Master-Pupil chain of transmission which marks one from another. Because of this, a single practitioner may study under different teachers to receive different bodies of knowledge and to receive the 'power' of distinct lineal paths of the Sabbatic Gnosis. So long as each lineage is appreciated for its own autonomous integrity, an individual can possess authority in a number of different streams without compromise. A broad experiential basis is commendable, but it is the unique transmission (see below) which validates the path of such a wayfaring Journeyman.

Of all the diverse aspects involved in the process of formal ritual initiation it is the focal role of the final apotheotic Rite and the ability of its central deed, the Passing-On, to act as the 'Seal of Power' for all initiatory relations which is of paramount importance. For those of the Path, the reception of the 'Power' activates the spiritual bloodline: the legacy of the Fire-brand from the Elder Gods, from Old Tubalo the Light-bringer, through the Race of the Watchers and the Companie of Faerie, down through the golden chain of hand-to-hand-to-hand... to now.



Midnight's Lightning: the Lineage of Unique Transmission

Vision! An Omen-bearing Bolt of Light held in the hands of the Daemonic Gods: an intercession trespassing fates, a revelation that brings forth to flesh the link between the visible heart of Man and the Invisible Heart of the Mysteries. Such is the Way of Midnight's Lightning!

The Spirit-bestowed Vision that reveals itself to the Mind of the Seeker incepts and passes the Power for the Lineage which we may call: 'The Unique Transmission'. Whether within the conclaves of a formal ritual catena of initiates or in the subtil 'cavern' of solitary practice, whether called forth by intent or made manifest by a sudden epiphany of the Gods, the Power of Revelation is bestowed solely to its chosen vehicle, the divinely-elected individual, and there-in it 'incarnates' – as a faculty, an opening of the inner eye that directly apprehends the Mysteries.

For certain individuals there is an innate capacity to comprehend the Mysteries of the Witanic Path, to understand without learning. Such may be an indication of rebirth within the transcarnational lineage of Witchblood, or a sign of new dispensation: a Master of the Lonely Road. For there are some to whom all outward rites are but a blessing, a *confirmation of that which has been attained* by interior disposition. Such individuals enjoy a rapport with the Gods and possess a clarity of Vision that cannot be learned or taught, such souls are born into the House of Cain and bear His Mark within.

Moment by moment, the Way of Midnight's Lightning is a tortuous path for its adherent. One is dependent upon

divine favour and openness of heart to maintain the continuity of inspiration, and yet its blessings far outweigh its bane. For there is a Solitude in this Path, 'a Marriage that divorceth all Other', in which Perfect All-oneliness may be realised.

Within the ambit of 'Unique Transmission' one may consider that an appointed individual may receive entire bodies of lore, whole Rites and Mysteries. In such instances, the ritual authority to teach others and to incept a lineage for a specific corpus of knowledge is divinely sanctioned. Whilst any man or woman may claim to have received a 'vision', the motives of such claims are made apparent by certain external signs; as the Gospel teaches: 'one must test all things and hold fast to that which is good'. If your path leads you to meet with a true beholder of the Mysteries, an initiate without mortal intercessor, then consider yourself blessed indeed. To learn from such a person could reveal more of the Craft than any store of knowledge accumulated through the passage of years. From experience I would counsel caution and prudence, but if truth be found then I believe we should respect those who have gained the favour of the Divine.

To speak boldly, I consider that the Lineage of Unique Transmission, as incepted by the self-recognition of one's innate 'seed of light', is a prerequisite for all who practise the Arte Magical. Perchance all Beings may possess that spark within themselves, but the rubicon between initiate and uninitiate is the self-recognition of that spiritual seed. For unless that inchoate germ of the magical life awakens to itself there can be no growth, no quickening of the soul-fire. The Unique Transmission is Old Fate's blessing: the secret rapport between the Gods and the Soul; no other

may tell of it. Its outward signs are inspiration and knowing, married in an indefinable state whereby a man becomes Mage.

Within the Cultus Sabbati 'the Way of the Flaming Torch' and 'the Way of the Lightning-bolt' are known as 'The Dragon's Horns'. It is considered a worthy aspiration for a Wayfarer to realise the union of the twain: the non-dual path of the Double-way. Because of this dual emphasis, it is considered that only those with the capacity for receiving teachings and who bear the marks of 'unique transmission' – whatever the degree of manifestation – should be invited into the formal sodality. A witch born to the Path may still spend many years struggling to make manifest that which lies within and yet by vertu of the Traditional Rites an uncommon fate may be swiftly seized; unto such individuals the process of tuition is in truth a Path of Remembrance: a reclamation of ancient birthright.

Mystery Rites: the Lineages of Magistracy

A customary demonstration of 'Attaining the Dragon's Horns' (the Union of Unique Transmission and Lineal Empowerment) is for an initiate to compose a Grand Mysterium or Mystery-rite. Such rites are comprised of diverse 'oracular' utterances, magical ordeals, and highly specialised modes of initiation into specific 'states' of magical rapport with powers and entities. The composer of a Mystery-rite is known as its Master or Mistress, and it is at their behest that the rite is performed or its textual form is transmitted to others. In and of themselves Mysteria of this kind are Grand Initiations serving to convey the lineages of certain spiritual entities or magical techniques.

Within the higher body of our magical lore, known as 'The Gnosis of the Crooked Path'³, there are numerous examples of such advanced workings. For example, 'The Rite of the Turnskin'. This is an initiatory procedure intending the entrance of the aspirant into the circle of therionic atavisms: the Zodiak of Living Forms. By passing through its ordeals the Skin-leaper's Arte is impressed upon the flesh; the bestial ancestry of an individual is 'raised', made self-conscious in his sentient physicality; the animal-headed god is realised!

Another notable example is 'The Devil's Masquerade': the initiation rite of Draku-Ezhu, the 'Grand Famulus' of the Crooked Path Teachings. This particular Mystery-rite obtains the meeting, soul to soul, between the Aspirant and the Deity.

In the stream of Sabbatic Wisdom descended from Yelda Paterson through Zos vel Thanatos (Austin Osman Spare), there is a line of transmission facilitated by the 'passing-on' of a spirit-familiar. In its contemporary manifestation this arcanum has itself 'fleshed out' via the medium of a Mystery-rite, 'The Black Eagle Rite', simply named after the spirit itself. This instance in itself serves to illustrate that a certain type of magical lineage is principally conveyed via the inheritance of spirit-familiars. One might consider that the animal-totem, be it Eagle, Snake, Fox or Boar, functions as a 'mask' for the informing sentience of such traditions.

Mystery-rites, in and of themselves, communicate the Lineages of Magistracy and serve to transmit the states of

³ The Mysteries, Rites and Teachings of Crooked Path Sorcery are textually contained in a Grimoire entitled *The Dragon-Book of Essex*. An initiatic edition of this work was privately published by the author in 1997. Publication by Xoanon is intended in the next few years.

magical attainment needful for the on-going realisation of their diverse and specific currents. The absorption of thought, word and deed in the all-consuming process of such rituals (many being of great duration and procedural complexity) facilitates the saturation of the mundane self with the magical ambience of a state or entity. Herein the impress of the Unseen Initiator upon the matrix of sentience or 'Mind' is most powerful and efficacious. In practice, Mystery-rites comport additional 'degrees', adjunctive zones of empowerment, to which an aspirant has access and in which he or she may gain authority.

Self-initiation

If by predilection one is led to the Craft and the only means of entrance there-to is by an initiation self-performed, then let that gate be freely and rightly chosen. If the individual is led there-to by dreams and portents, and is told how to perform such a rite then a Way of Unique Transmission is revealed. If a person accomplishes such a task, then I do not consider anyone else – high or low – has the right to doubt that which essentially does not concern them. In fact, it is wiser for us to respect those who enter the Path by such means, for Witchblood's heart is reached by many veins.

Distinction should be made between those with Vision and those without. If a person is without signs or inner guidance, and merely engages in a prescribed formula of self-induction according to the dictates of some other mortal authority, then from whence does their apparent empowerment derive?

If a prescribed formula or text is used⁴, then one must truly engage with its spiritual essence and seek to establish an interior connection. Fulfilling an outward process of ritual is not initiation; unless the interior link between Self and Other (whether that Other be Man, Deity, or Spirit) is attained then no initiation exists. If a prescribed formula is used and signs ensue, then a link is assured, but it is best if a rite of self-initiation is principally constructed according to divinely-received lore.

Can a Self-initiate initiate others? If the basis of their Self-initiation is by a lineage of direct and unique revelation and if a corpus of teachings derives from such an epiphany, then we must be confident and affirm the ability of one to teach another, to pass on that which the Gods have revealed, if only to assist a student to gain self-initiation for themselves. If the Gods reveal themselves then it is with a courage that equals their blessing that we must claim our own spiritual authority and legitimisation. The truth of our vision is aptly tested by this need for bravery; to stand alone, a Masterless One among Men, is a fate most rare. Remember, a tree is known by its fruit; communicable inspiration is the proof of spiritual empowerment.

Imaginal Transmission

It is sometimes found that self-initiates suddenly 'invent' a history for their own legitimisation; curious tales of hereditary teaching or of meetings with nameless strangers may occur. Instead of dismissing such claims out-of-hand, we might be wiser to encourage such people to work with their imaginations and discover what it is that is trying

⁴ As in a formal lineage of textual transmission (see below).

to manifest through them. The 'falsehoods' may in some instances be adumbrations of something more interior, but first such individuals must be made aware of the inner process whereby phantasy assumes the guise of historical reality. A refinement of method is required in order for us to recognise the imaginal fore-shadowing of spiritual presence. As aforesaid, communicable inspiration is the simplest sign of veracity. Where a genuine interior activity is augured and imaged-forth in phantastical invention, let us consider that the Divine Imagination contains its own denizens – the 'messengers' of godhood, and that the shadows thereof may impress themselves in 'types' conducive to the perceiver's apprehension. The open mind may thus behold the whispering daimon as an ancestor – an elderly forbear, or as a stranger, a 'black man' bearing a curious gift of book, beast, or secret salve. The Sabbat is an astral conclave, a state of gnosis in ecstasy, its impress upon Mind is beyond all simple reckoning. If we can guide well in instances where its activity is fore-shadowed in the play of imagination, an individual may gain insight and succeed in establishing an interior link with the current, above and beyond the mere outward show of an apparent 'history'. Imaginal Transmission may therefore serve as a means of attaining a lineage of direct revelation.

For the sake of caution, it is perhaps wise for us to speak plainly: where genuine inspiration is absent and tall stories abound, we must beware. Whilst counselling a degree of closer analysis, I consider that those who make a deliberate pretence of initiatic provenance in any way or form are a danger to themselves, to naive seekers, and, in the broader sense, to the historical comprehension of the Craft as a whole. To such people the curse shall be of their own calling.

The Rites of One: Solitary Initiations

When talking of self-initiation, we are in a way guilty of using a misnomer. Initiation is always a matter of relation, whether between Master and Apprentice or between an Individual and the Deities and Powers of the Mysteries. This being so, a ritual performed by oneself is in truth never really so, for the gods and powers that one calls upon are, in union, the Other to our self: the Gods are the 'body of the Initiator'. There is always a relation between ourselves and that which masks the Mysteries. And yet we may say that we are alone in the flesh and in this sense call the processes of self-induction the 'Rites of One' or Solitary Initiations.

Aside from solitary rites which manifest by way of Unique Transmission, there are certain Craft rites which have strict prescribed formulae and which must, of necessity, be performed alone. The Toadsman's Rite called 'The Waters of the Moon' is a well-known example. This requires a man to find himself a toad, to impale it upon a blackthorn and thereafter to let its body be flensed by ants. Then, taking its bones to a stream on a clear full moon night, the would-be toadsman should cast the bones into the water. All the world will howl and clamour, a-seeking to distract the attention from the one bone that will move against the current; this is the Charming Bone, said to have power over animals. Thereafter the man should take this bone and keep it upon his person. The next three nights he should sojourn alone in a graveyard, seeking for the power of magic. On the third night it is said that the 'Devil' will come and try to tempt the bone away from its possessor. If the Devil succeeds, the rite has failed. If you can keep the

bone no matter what reward is offered, you are then an initiate of the Toadsman Rite⁵.

As can be seen, this is not a simple procedure and will inevitably place its operant in a position requiring independence and courage. Using the same principle is a solitary Mystery-rite of the Crooked Path called 'The Wreath of Seven Laughing Skulls'. This requires the practitioner to deliberately seek out lonely and frightening places, and there to call forth the 'demons' which produce the sensations of terror and danger. These demons are then ritually confronted, the task of the practice being to transform the apparent 'poisons' or mis-aligned sentiences into 'nectars' or benefic states of potent magical gnosis: to realise the Union of Purity and Perfidy.

Oneiric Initiation and Transmission: The Silver Thread and Road of Green

A principal way in which knowledge is transmitted within the Cultus is via dreams. Many of our rites are derived through the medium of lucid or clear-eyed dreaming; their messages being 'fleshed out' using the bases of traditional ritual structures, but enhanced and developed as the dream so dictates. It is indeed considered a talent and a blessing from the Gods if someone has the power to dream viridically – that is to dream true, with a mind made green, 'fertile as Old Eden'.

As in the matter of Unique Transmission, if someone receives a dream of initiation into the Sabbatic Mysteries, then that dream is considered to impart its own lineal

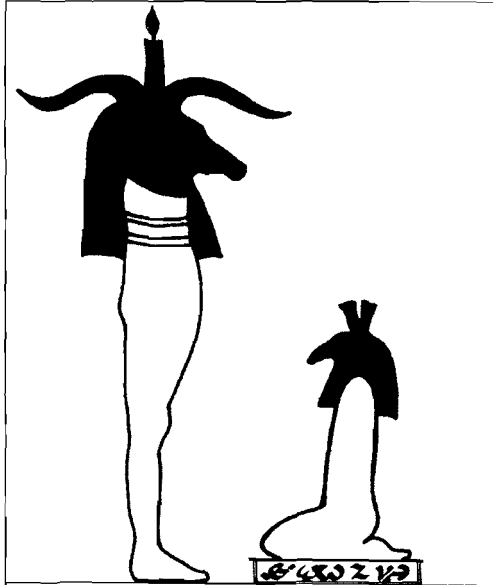
⁵ See Pennick, N., *Secrets of East Anglian Magic*, 1997.

transmission: the Lineage of the Silver Thread. It does not comport the same empowerment as that of formal ritual induction, but then neither does a formal rite carry the same power as a dream wherein one meets with the Gods face-to-face. Often these matters overlap and provide insights into the other. However it must be stated that dream-initiation is considered to be a valid mode of induction and as aforesaid constitutes its own path of empowerment. Where dream-teachings are ongoing, there the pilgrim may be said to 'walk the Green Road'⁶ -- the way of Elphame. It is considered a sign of magical veracity if one's magical name was dreamed, by oneself or one's teacher. Furthermore, an oneiric origin for a Mystery-rite is held in great esteem and is considered a guarantor of its spiritual provenance as a boon from the Faithful Gods, the Witch-Fathers and Wise-blooded Mothers.

Entheogenic Initiation: The Witches' Supper.

Another form of initiation is that which is bestowed through the sacramental use of entheogenic or psychotropic agents. Within Traditional Craft observance this is a method of psychic transformation used principally by experienced adepts as part of their on-going solitary initiation into the Mysteries. Here it must be stated that the use of such substances is the responsibility of the individual and that such practices must be undertaken with due respect and caution. Furthermore, the use of such substances is confined to reverential and sacramental consumption.

⁶ The reader is invited to compare the Uwaysi Order of the Sufi Tradition, whose lineage of 'The Masterless Ones' is perpetuated via oneiro-initiation. See 'A Shower of Stars' by Peter Lamborn Wilson, 1996.



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The range of the Wort-cunner's pharmacopoeia is as broad as the world-field itself. In practice, different practitioners develop a rapport with different plant-spirits and these become their especial advisors and dream-empowering allies. Amongst the most frequently used plant-familiars are those inhabiting Belladonna berries, Hemp, Syrian Rue, Black Hellebore, as well as the entheogenic forms of mycotrope such as Liberty Cap and Fly Agaric, collectively known as 'Crow's bread'. Also known is the Unguentum Sabbati or Devil's Salve. This is an ointment used by some practitioners to 'leave the flesh behind' and travel in the Wild Hunt.

In communal rites wine and bread are commonly used as the 'Sacrament of the First Murder'. These are consumed as the flesh and blood of Abel, the body of profanity which must be resurrected or re-integrated into the body of Cain or the Initiatic self. The incorporation of more potent elements into the Witches' Supper depends wholly upon the rite and its assembly.

In solitary rites, it is known that in some forms of Old Craft an entheogenic elixir has sometimes been used to assist in the creation of the initiatory apotheosis: 'The aspirant, after being mentally prepared by his or her sponsor, and drinking of the potion, is left alone to spend the night by three stones that stand overgrown in the centre of the wood' (Taliesin, 'A Wood in the West Country', published in *Pentagram*, August 1965). This is somewhat reminiscent of the medieval Alpine initiatory potion which provoked its drinker to have 'all of a sudden the sensation of receiving and preserving within himself the image of our art, and the principal rituals of the sect' (Ginzburg, C., *Ecstasies: Deciphering the Witches' Sabbath*, 1989). It is believed that unto those possessing the needful magical

capacity a plant-familiar will reveal itself – that it contains within its ‘bestowed’ state of consciousness the memory of all previous practitioners’ experiences: the leaf retains the tales of the pilgrims once passed by. This is of great use where a specific body of knowledge has become fragmentary and must be restored using magical techniques.

**Sexual Means of Lineal Succession:
The Agapae of the Wise.**

In some traditions of the Old Craft it is said that initiation into the ‘familial group’ or Clan was firstly by sexual intercourse between the aspirant and the seniormost initiate of the opposite gender. We may conjecture as to the veracity of this. It may have been used to ‘bind’ an individual into the kinship group, to make them of the One Blood⁷. Needless to say, we must exhibit great caution in matters so easily abused.

Regardless of historical provenance, if sexual union is employed as a general means for induction after the formal year and a day tuition, then absolute trust must be a prerequisite and all parties must see through their commitment, without question or faltering. However, to my mind, initiation via sexual action is generally best confined to higher rites as operated between individuals of suitable adeptship. To write from experience, I was taught that a Magister can pass on his power via sexual means only once in his life. This might be to his chosen successor, if female, or to his own Consort in the Craft.

We must also consider that sexual initiation can occur in the dream-state and that the ‘consent’ of the aspirant

⁷ Credit to Margaret Matthews for this insight into the ‘Family of Rose blood’.

may be an irrelevant consideration. It is rather a case of personal sacrifice to the deity. From my knowledge of both male and female adepts in the Elder Craft, the gods can and will take lovers and by their 'elixirs' convey strange knowledges, far beyond the grasp of mortal aspirations.

Furthermore, we should also give thought to the transmission of gnosis between adepts via their own sexual fluids. A fully empowered consort is a vehicle for the magical current, his or her blood and bodily fluids are media for the powers of the Arte and its patron deities. In rites performed by higher adepts of the Sabbatic Mysteries the Witches' Supper is literally of 'flesh and blood' – of semen and vaginal elixirs. For it is known that the seasons of the Moon are refracted through the vessel of the Priestess and that the issue of her sexual mouth contains the secrets (secretions) of the gnosis in a fluidic hypostasis⁸. Likewise the seed of a Priest is the numinous medium for the powers of the Godhead and for the concealed radiances of the Sun. In rites employing a Seeress as the so-called 'Ophidian Oracle', a trance-state is actuated by cunnilingus and the lucid post-orgasmic dream of the priestess is guided by external manuductive passes and verbal conjurations. As can be seen, if one considers it deeply, such matters cannot be operated effectively between inexperienced aspirants. As such I conclude that it is best for such matters to remain the preserve of those capable of deploying their arcana with knowledge and love.

See *Azoëtia* (Chumley, A.D., Xoanon 1992, 2002), *Cults of the Shadow* (Grant, K., Muller 1975). For an academic account of sexual gnosis in tantra, see 'Transformations in the Art of Love: Kamakala Practices in Hindu Tantric and Kaula Traditions' by David Gordon White, published in *Journal of the History of Religions*, 1998.

Textual Transmission: The Way of the Book

Although we may exchange money for text, money alone will never purchase initiation, neither will text alone permit us to enter the Sabbat. And yet, if one is possessed of the suitable capacity, lineage may be given by means of formal textual transmission. In such an instance, the pages of a rite are formally given by a Master or Mistress to an aspirant and the spiritual wardens of the Book are bestowed as familiars or guides to the Book's new owner. In cases where face-to-face tuition cannot be accomplished, a one-to-one mode of textual transmission is sometimes utilised, most often accompanied by a psychic linking between Bestower and Recipient. The Lineage of the Serpent-Cross is one such example of a Sabbatic lineage externally supported by textual transmissions and internally augmented via psychic connectivity. In its case, the original motivation of the lineage is oneirically derived and its method of implementation is in accord with dream-tuition.

Where the Lonely Road guides us, where the Black Book – the Grimoire Unknown – is revealed as a tome of some Mage's labours and from his own hand is passed on to another, there let the spirit pass all power by the leaves of the Book.

Omen and Element: Transmission of Spirit-Knowledge by Chance and Circumstance.

In addition to the above contexts, initiatory transmissions of another kind may be gained through sudden 'chance' events. Perhaps only those who have experienced such matters directly will possess an inkling of what I am attempting to convey, but sometimes the most subtle of

events – the fall of a feather, the turn of a card, the opening of a book -- can forth-show the presence of one's spiritual guides and bring to light an imminent turn in the path. The meetings between Man and Spirit cannot be confined to the formal circumstances of rite and ceremony; interaction will occur where the paths of fate cross and the aspirant is receptive, whether he or she knows it or not.

In addition to omens, magical initiations of an especial kind can be granted by the subjection or experiential immersion of the self in elemental power. To pass over fire is to learn the forge's secret. To fall amid the rushing waters and be spared is a blessing from the undines⁹. To walk at night through storm-wind and gale, to ascend a great peak of barren rocks; each possesses its own arcana. We can submit ourselves to such vital trials and seek them out with an intrepid heart. To the Master of the Lonely Road such ordeals are allies, companions and advisors upon a path with but few mortal compatriots.

Conclusion: Initiation is a Bridge with One End

Whilst it is evident that there is a broad range in the typology of Sabbatic initiations as operative in the contemporary observance of the Cunning-craft, such differentiation does not adhere to artificial borders; type is not strictly separated from type. In the reality of practice, one form overlaps with another and numerous combinations arise according to circumstantial requirements. Nonetheless, an awareness of different types permits us to gain a more refined comprehension -- a subtle discrimination between the myriad forces acting through a

Daniel A. Schulke, private correspondence. See also *Ars Philtron* (Xoanon, 2001).

situation, thus enabling us to state with greater clarity the spiritual provenance of our own individual work.

Although initiation obtains greatest intensity when focused through a single pivotal event, whether that be a ritual or a vision, the process of initiation is an on-going event, a tortuous road or 'crooked path' linking moment to moment, ecstasy to ecstasy in a continuity of being. Within the overall complex of this continuum we may define specific strands which combine to facilitate the transmission of gnosis to the individual:--

I. *The Lineal Transmission of Thought*:-- every nuance of the mental continuum which bears the fruit of realisation fulfils the lineage of Thought between the Primordial Mind -- the Skull-palace of Cain -- and the Present Mind, the Skull-vessel of the Initiand. The thoughts which lead a man onto the path, the thoughts which guide and serve in his choice-making, the thoughts which transform the mundane into the substance for the Praeternatural Gold of Noëtic Alchemy, the thoughts which re-cognise the State that is ours in eternity, the thoughts which flash forth in sudden ardour and goad a man to heights of inspiration; these and an infinity of others are the gateways of Liliya's Wisdom.

II. *The Lineal Transmission of Word*:-- the breath which carries the Password in the formal rite of induction is literally considered to be the same breath carried down through the bodies of each successive Master or Mistress; it is the 'Pneuma', the vital air of illuminative life; it is the 'One Breath', the Hyperborean insufflation from Cain to his kin. In attenuation, this Mystery is conveyed through every word -- every act of speech, whether in waking, vision,

imagination or dreaming -- which conveys the gnosis of the Arte Magical to the individual aspirant.

III. *The Lineal Transmission of Deed*:-- every action is an interaction between Self and Other, and is therefore a potential transaction between the aspirant and the Initiator. The opening of the eyes, the placing of the step, the turning to-and-fro between directions, the on-lay of the hand, the sojourn, the flight, the labour, the rest... all may show forth the Work of Mahazhael's Hand.

o IV. *The Great Lineage*: the Path of True Witchblood:-- Whether it is by kinship, rite, vision or divine election, that one is made a 'knowing witch', it is by birth and by birth alone that one is chosen and branded with the Sign of Liberty: 'The Mark of Cain'. Solely Those whose aethyr bears this seal of power partake in the One True Lineage of 'Witchblood'. Though its design is cast though countless ways, it is ever the Path of One.

The force of the Initiator, the Spirit of Perfect Gnostic Realisation, is perpetually acting upon the field of consciousness. Upon that great vista we call 'Mind' the impress of the Initiating Power is perceived in instants of direct revelation; the Spirit of Cain reifies at the 'cross-roads' of fateful possibilities, in axial moments which transect the borderlands of spirit and flesh. When each and every moment, in and of itself, is linked in a continuum of gnostic rapport with the ingressing force of the magical current, then we have attained Mastery upon the Path, but until that time we must seize each chance and turn each opportunity into a tryst between the soul of Man and the Spirit of Initiation. In the Name of the Nameless, so must it be!

INITIATION AND ACCESS
TO MAGICAL POWER
WITHIN EARLY MODERN
CUNNING-CRAFT
AND MODERN TRADITIONAL CRAFT

Invited Lecture:

The Museum of Witchcraft, December 6, 2003

Greetings, thank you to Graham King and the Friends of the Museum for inviting me to speak here today. The subject of this lecture is 'Initiation and Access to Magical Power within early modern Cunning-craft and modern Traditional Craft'. It will be in part both historical and autobiographical. I intend speaking for around an hour, after which there will be time for any questions.

For those of you who do not know me or my work, a brief introduction would be useful, so you know who is speaking to you and whence his experience derives. Exoterically, that is, in the mundane sphere, I am an historian of religions working in the context of doctoral research at the University of London. My present area of research is dream incubation rituals of early to late antiquity.

Esoterically, I have been a practitioner of the Arte Magical for around twenty years; the last thirteen of which I have been honoured to serve as the Presiding Magister of the Cultus Sabbati - an Order of Traditional Craft initiates that functions as a closed context for particular brethren of the Old Craft in England, Wales and North America, and essentially operates as a crossroads-point for several distinct lineages of initiation and bodies of operative magic.

Cultus Sabbati is the initiatory body of so-called 'Sabbatic Craft' and Crooked Path Sorcery. Some of you may be familiar with our published works: *Ars Philtron* by

Daniel Schulke, who is Our Verdelet or Green Master, or you may know of my own works: *Azoëtia*, *Qutub*, *Grimoire of the Golden Toad*, or perhaps via the articles from several of our brethren which have appeared in that most celebrated of journals *The Cauldron*.

Now first of all I will speak about early modern Cunning-folk and then move on to modern Traditional Craft, if time permits. So you can see where I am heading, it would serve to establish a basic definition of what I mean by 'modern Traditional Craft'. By this I refer to a cluster of initiatory lineages of ritual magic, spell-craft, and devotional mysticism which trace their origins from early modern cunning-craft, but which, unlike the earlier forms of cunning folk, do not operate as a profession. It is also of note that, whilst sharing a common basis in ritual magic and Masonic influence, Traditional Craft does not share initiatory genealogy, nor partake in the neopagan religious dogma of Wicca. So, I will not be talking about modern 'pagan witchcraft'.

By 'early modern Cunning folk' I refer specifically to 15th-18th century professional magical specialists -- that is to literate cunning men and wise women -- who used formal ritual magic, grimoire-texts and Christian charms, and whose primary social function was the performance of magical services within a community in exchange for money or goods -- services such as finding lost property, thief detection, fortune-telling, love-spells, healing and in particular unbewitching of people and livestock, that is, acting against the purported malevolence of witches.

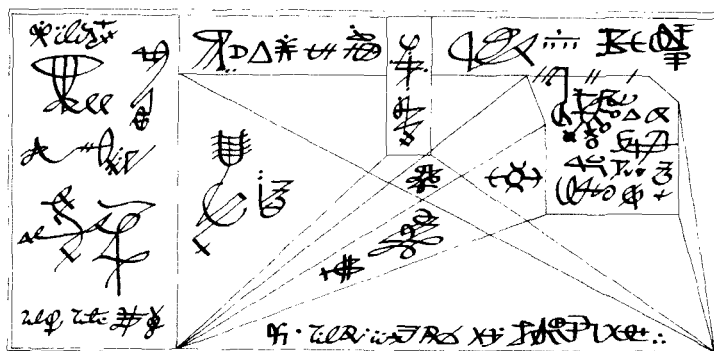
Though cunning-folk existed throughout Europe and in the Americas, I intend to speak primarily about those in Britain. Even so, there are regional distinctions and I must ask you to forgive any generalisations made in a context that demands brevity.

By British cunning-craft I refer to a wide range of differing magical specialists, some of whom operated professionally, some of whom did not, some of whom used texts, some of whom used spells and charms held in memory alone. This range includes: healers, charmers, herb-workers, white witches, pellars, ghost-layers, bone-setters, toad-doctors, the Welsh *Dyn Hysbys* and *Gwyddoniad*, the Curren of the East Anglian marshes, Toad-witches, Bonesmen, and to some extent initiated Millers and Horsemen of the rural Lost Word fraternities.

This understanding of 'cunning folk' is somewhat broader and more flexible than those offered by modern scholars such as Dr Owen Davies and Professor Ronald Hutton, but it is one which I personally find more tenable, inclusive and sensitive to the understanding of the subject from the perspective of someone – like myself – who works both as an Historian of Religions and as a practitioner within a magical context directly descended from early modern cunning craft.

Now to say a little about access to magical power. For early modern cunning folk magical power was held because one had knowledge and skill; literally one had cunning or 'Art'. Virtue being another name. Thus a working knowledge of how to read Latin and English, write charms, construct magical seals, read astrology, as well as a keen skill in reading people would have placed a person in good stead as a cunning-man or woman. Furthermore, the possession of magical books or set of charms distinguished a cunning man as someone with special skills and powers.

Prior to the 16th century, manuscripts dealing in ceremonial magic in Latin, Arabic and Greek were the preserve of but a literate few: monks, clerics, schoolmasters, noblemen and physicians. In the 16th century and



thereafter, as translation of grimoires and astrological texts began in earnest, books dealing with medicine, astrology and magic became increasingly present. Most grimoire texts, like *The Sworn Book of Honorius*, *The Clavicle of Solomon*, Agrippa's *Books of Occult Philosophy* existed until around 1650 as rare printings or as manuscript copies. In 1665, Reginald Scot's *Discoverie of Witchcraft* – a thorough condemnation of witchcraft beliefs and magical practices – ironically became one of the main sourcebooks for cunning-folk to learn and employ the techniques of ritual magic and gain an understanding of widespread witchcraft beliefs. Unlike in Europe where many thousands of grimoire chapbooks circulated in the 18th and 19th centuries, Britain's major magical texts were actually fortune-telling chapbooks and dream interpretation manuals. Nonetheless some British cunning-folk made it their prerogative to collect and accumulate substantial libraries of rare occult books. The libraries of Cunning Murrell in Essex, of the Harries in Wales, and 'Owd Rollinson, in Lancashire are the three most notable 19th century examples and all included works on High Ritual Magic, Medicine and Astrology.

Another type of magical grimoire that should be

mentioned is that of the so-called Black Book – by this I mean a hand-written collation of charms, spells, magical seals, and recipes. In Europe these existed in the hundreds from at least the 16th century and in Britain from a later date. Few exist today, some remain in museums, and a few are retained in private hands. They would rarely have names, though in Europe they went by the generic name of Black Book. This said, *The Devil's Plantation* is one notable example from 19th C. Essex. Nigel Pennick also cites a variety he calls *The Secret Granary*, each one having its own distinct content or grains. In the Cultus Sabbati, we have a similar notion, with a black book having its own arrangement of charms.

In terms of the transmission of magical power from person to person, the inheritance of books and written lore was one particular way that concrete magical practices were conveyed. The charms used by the so-called Physicians of Myddfai provide one of the best examples of an accumulating body of textual lore passed down in a family for several generations -- from the 13th century to the 18th.

In the instance of the famous Essex Cunning-man James Murrell his magical texts were passed to him from his teacher Neoboad. Interestingly, one of Murrell's books, with text in both his own hand and that of Neoboad was in recent years still known to exist in private hands. The lady who owns the book was one of the informants of Eric Maple, in his *Dark World of Witches*. I have myself a collection of Latin charms which were passed down from mother to daughter within a Welsh family from the late 19th century eventually becoming part of the lore passed on ritually in one of the root-lineages of Cultus Sabbati.

With Huw Lloyd, a 15th century Welsh Cunning man whose magical books came from the faerie-lady of Bridge

Lake, we have an important instance of textual transmission of magical books. Lloyd's books came from the faeries and were returned to them upon his death. This could be simply called a story, but from the perspective of a magician it means that the books remain available to one who might gain the favour of the Good Folk. This is a kind of textual transmission outside of literal history and partakes more of magical history.

Aside from books, magical power could also be obtained by a would-be magician through solitary rituals. These are a personal favourite of mine and provide means whereby anyone interested in traditional folk magic can find a means of access to witching power...if the omens and spirits permit that is. Some examples from folklore include:

Rocking of a logan stone - recorded in 19th century works of Cornish legends;

Gathering the Fern seed - first recorded four centuries ago in Shakespeare's Henry IV, 1596;

The ceremonies of the Toad-bone;

The recitation of the Lord's Prayer backwards;

The theft of the Communion wafer.

Notably in three of these examples, the power comes from the Devil and is gained by means of transgressive magic in a Christian religious structure.

As an aside, as an initiate of Traditional Craft, I am aware of a more subtle interpretation of transgressive magic, namely that blasphemy is merely a means to the end of

obtaining power. To feed the Body of Christ to the Devil is not simply to profane the Host, it is to appropriate its power to harness the Devil.

This being noted, it is important to state that ostensibly cunning-folk were generally good Christians with exemplary devotion. They used the Bible, particularly the Book of Psalms, as a source of ritual texts and charms. The Bible was more than just a book, it was a sacred object that told the truth, and so could be used for various kinds of bibliomancy.

This said, the paganistic elements of fairy beliefs and local legends which prevail in Cornish Pellar practices, East Anglian Sigaldry and Curren practices, Welsh Craft, and Scottish cunning-craft cannot be ignored. For example, in Bottrell's *Hearthside Stories of West Cornwall* we find the tale of a wise-woman, locally reputed as a witch, but whose power of Sight resided in an ointment or eye salve, which when smeared on the eyelids allowed one to see the faeries and to walk in both human and faery realms.

Another example of magical power from the faeries can be found in tales where a mortal man marries a faerie-woman. One such tale is the well-known legend of the Physicians of Myddfai, set in the 12th century but not recorded textually until 1841 -- where a man falls in love and marries a faerie from the lake of Myddfai, Llyn-y-van-vach. The lady from the lake teaches the fellow, whose name was Rhiwallon, the lore of plants and medicine, and sets in motion a hereditary tradition of magic and medicine which existed, as far as the texts reveal, until the 18th -19th century.

In addition to the presence of faery lore in cunning-craft, we should also be mindful of the presence of classical deities from both literary sources and astrological lore

would again have provided a pagan component in cunning craft practices, albeit at a symbolic and not religious level.

Now... let us turn to the transmission of magical power from person to person. One particular route of transmission is familial. In terms of hereditary transmission of power amongst early modern cunning-folk, most scholars I have spoken with contend that at most this only ever lasts three generations. The instance of the Physicians of Myddfai, who maintained a magico-medical tradition from the 13th to the 18th century are a strong example against this. Continuation can be supported within a family by praxis or strong interest in the Arte, and supported from outside by dint of reputation. There remain families in several parts of Wales to this day that retain the fame of being charmers 'who know the language of the birds'. In these particular instances 'initiation' was unlikely to have been used as a term, instead a would-be magician would think in terms of 'gaining the power' and this be accomplished most probably via a simple act of transmission or more commonly by a solitary ritual.

Initiation as a formal concept was more evident in contexts where specialist magical and professional knowledge could be shared in secret societies. Initiation was here conceived in the Freemasonic manner as 'being made' and thus existed primarily within the allied lodges of the Bonesmen, the Miller's Word and Horseman's Word societies. It is to be noted that the structures of the initiations in these societies was based to a great extent on the combined degrees of Freemasonry, with signs, grips, passwords and ordeals.

Scholarship presently argues that Freemasonry originated in the late 16th century Scotland via William Schaw, the Royal Master of Works, who organised trade

guilds into a formalised network of lodges with a basic three-grade initiation structure. Following the template of the increasingly widespread Masonic lodges, there arose in the 17th and 18th centuries a wide variety of Friendly Societies, like the Oddfellows, the Order of Woodsmen, The Shepherds, the Foresters, and so forth. In the marginal region of North-east Scotland, where Masonry was originally termed 'The Mason's Word', there was formed a trade-exclusive society calling itself 'The Miller's Word'. Unlike the Freemasons, the Miller's Word held its rituals at night and incorporated a range of intentionally diabolic elements into its initiation ritual.

A candidate for the Miller's Word would be invited to the Mill at night, and would bring a bottle of whisky, a loaf of bread and a pot of jam for a mock communion. The ceremony would involve the candidate being blindfolded, challenged by a series of questions by a minister, the swearing of an Oath to absolute secrecy, the secret word was then whispered in the candidate's ear and he was raised from a kneeling position by a grip of the Old Chiel's hand: a stick covered in phosphorus and animal skin. The blindfold removed, he was then met by a masked figure arrayed as the very Devil himself. The night would then progress in feasting and drinking, interspersed with the tuition of magical recipes and expert professional knowledge. The very image of a secret society meeting at night, presided over by the Devil, indulging in excessive drinking, and with much talk of magical spells for controlling animals and women smacks rather strongly of the supposed Witches' Sabbath.

The diabolic and willfully blasphemous features of the Miller's Word may simply have been in rebellion against the strict moralism of the Presbyterian Church, but the

context of the society amongst rural workers permitted a range of oral customs and folk beliefs to enter the society. Thus it is also to be considered that the diabolism may have modelled on the image of the Witches' Sabbath and thus various terms of 'sabbatic' nature became part and parcel of a rural quasi-Masonry.

In the 18th century, as the primary beast of burden in Scotland ceased to be the ox and the horse took precedent, the diabolic features of the Miller's Word carried over into the Horseman's Word, which in turn became a larger and more inclusive society. In the nineteenth century as Scottish farmworkers moved to East Anglia and other regions of England, the Horseman's Word travelled with them. Lodges of the Horseman's Word thus perpetuated a certain mock-diabolism as a form of private religious ceremony amongst farm-workers of the nineteenth century. Amongst the recipes and spells found in the Miller and Horseman's Word is the famous solitary ritual of the Toad-bone, providing an interesting cross-over between the isolated figures of cunning folk and lodge-based fraternities.

In a work entitled *An Exposition of the Miller and Horseman's Word, or The True System of Raising the Devil*, as well as in the widely published chapbooks of horsemen, we find various spells and details of initiatory rituals. One thing to consider is that cunning-folk and secret societies may here have had plenty of opportunity to overlap.

Furthermore, in the 19th century we also see the rise of urban schools of magic, as well as numerous hermetic societies practicing higher ritual magic in a form of rarefied freemasonry with elaborate mystery rites and degrees of initiation. We also have the advent of spiritualism where circles of people gathered to raise the spirits of the dead

and commune with them via mediumistic techniques and divination.

Given these permutations, it is unsurprising that there should emerge, here and there around Britain, social meetings of people with cunning-craft backgrounds, experience of ritual magic, spell-craft, mediumism, Freemasonic-style initiations, and the Witches' Sabbath-influenced diabolism of the Horseman's Word. Indeed, it is likely that in contexts of Hermetic societies, Masonry, or rural secret societies that the otherwise solitary practitioners of cunning-craft (especially those who possessed a strong literary interest in ritual magic) may have met group-minded ritual magicians.

If this hypothesis is situated in the period 1880-1900, it is exactly the time-frame to which most of the forms of modern Traditional Craft trace their sense of lineage and existence as formalised ritual groups with initiations, hierarchies and... in some cases, explicitly Cainite, Luciferian or what I have termed 'Sabbatic' elements.

Now let me explain a little about what I mean by 'modern Traditional Craft'. By this term I refer collectively to magical specialists who continued throughout the 19th, 20th and now 21st centuries to work with the spells, customs, texts, and ritual magic of the early modern cunning folk, but with some important differences. The primary difference is that Traditional Craft in the modern period operates less and less as a profession and more and more as a closed initiatory group of traditions. This is not to say that money is never exchanged for magical services in modern Traditional Craft, in some respects this aspect does continue but very few people actually earn a living from spell-craft and wortcunning. This is to say however that in modern Traditional Craft the knowledge of the Arte

Magical is never taught or passed on for financial gain; it is passed on via means of formal ritual initiations and instruction. Thus one of the other characteristics of modern Traditional Craft is that it operates as a self-conscious tradition, with a strong sense of its own magical genealogies and initiatory lineages. Another distinction is that whilst Traditional Craft maintains its foundation in solitary magical practice, it also incorporates a degree of lodge-based or covine-type rituals.

Traditional Craft is not a religion, it generally defines itself as an *Arte* – the *Arte Magica*; it is primarily a solitary-based context of practice, but also employs group workings – the covine being the best-known exemplar – for collective spell-craft and spirit-conjuration.

By 'Initiation' I refer to a range of formal practices which lead an individual to change their status from being an outsider to being an insider with privileged knowledge and privileged relations with fellow initiates and in particular privileged access to magical power.

Initiation can take many forms: it can be a formal ritual induction whereby one is tested, accepted and led within a secret society – lodge, covine, clan or convocation.

This may include various sub-divisions of initiatory transformations of status, that is, means of giving privilege to the candidate such that they change from being an outsider to an insider. These sub-divisions include: passing-on of specialist knowledge (secret words, signs, hand-gestures, recipes and magical spells, passwords, and fellow initiates' names), the passing on of text – a magical book or corpus of rituals; sexual induction – whereby ritualised intercourse marries a person into the familial Clan; the ritualised consumption of a sacramental substance – a potion or plant-substance.

Each of these can be treated individually as a means of initiation – a formal way of becoming an accepted brother or sister *within a secret society or magical fraternity*. I will return to these sub-divisions in due course.

At its most elaborate, Initiation can be in the form of an elaborate Mystery-rite or sacred drama, the enaction of which leads the candidate through a mythic pilgrimage of ordeals and encounters, and ultimately leads the candidate to a special relationship with the Divine. This new relationship, the bodily, mental and spiritual entrance of a person within a Mystery, constitutes the essence, the very thing, of 'initiation'.

But initiation can also be undertaken alone. It can be via the performance of a solitary ritual ordeal such as the famous 'Waters of the Moon' or Toad-bone ritual, or via the fulfilment of a test such as an all-night vigil.

All of these comprise the arena of 'initiation'. But we must be conscious that in using that word, we may be superimposing a construction of understanding upon actions which never identified themselves as such. In instances such as the Toad-bone ritual, the ritual is referred to by its practitioners as a means of 'obtaining power'. So we must be aware of our terms and where and when they belong. 'Power', its presence or absence, is the vital key to understanding what it is that differentiates an insider from an outsider, and in this subject, the old maxim rings true: Knowledge is Power.

Handwritten text in a cursive script, organized into 11 horizontal lines. The text is enclosed in a rectangular border. On the left side, there is a decorative vertical flourish that resembles a stylized 'S' or a calligraphic flourish. The lines of text are numbered on the left side with Roman numerals: I, II, III, IV, V, VI, VII, VIII, IX, X, and XI. The script is highly stylized and appears to be a form of shorthand or a specific dialect of a cursive hand.

AN INTERVIEW WITH ANDREW D. CHUMBLEY

By Michael Howard and Robert Fitzgerald

Michael Howard: How do you understand the term 'magick' and what does it mean to you in a practical sense?

Andrew Chumbley: I would like to give two successive understandings. Firstly, I would propose the following definition: 'Magick is the transmutability of the Quintessence of all Nature.' This is to say that 'magick' is the all-potential power of change characterising the root-nature of all that has existence. Secondly, I would suggest a distinction between 'magick' as 'power' and 'sorcery' as the means of manipulating that power through knowledge: 'Sorcery is the knowledge of the universal points of transmutation. Its Art is to cultivate the ability to manipulate these foci of power in accordance with Will, Desire and Belief.'

In practical terms, I consider Sorcery to be the knowledge of the fundamental principles or 'sacred letters' which govern the control, manipulation and application of magical force. These principles are the Sorcerer's Alphabet. When focused via ritual, they determine the very arena of one's unique self-existence. The Principles of the Magical Quintessence are used to coordinate force and form, to inform strategies of sorcerous behaviour and to empower expressions of creative aesthesis. Ritual, the magical 'art' par excellence, reveals new understandings of sorcerous knowledge and by the path that connects moment to moment --realisation to realisation-- it brings consciousness into Gnosis. Magick in this sense leads to the direct realisation of Truth, the mystical apotheosis of the Arte Magical. Yet in the most pragmatic sense, magick is the power to bless, curse, attract, repel, call, banish, heal, hurt, bind or liberate. I consider that the Sabbatic Craft unites both mystical and the pragmatic dimensions to form 'Transcendental Sorcery'. Thus, whether seemingly high or low in application, magick locates the step and connects the spirit to its location --wheresoever one wan-

ders in thought, word or deed. Finally, I would add this: Magick brings one to meet Death before dying and thus bestows an eternally living Wisdom. The Light Magia reveals Sophia most fair 'neath the mask of Thanatos most foul.

Robert Fitzgerald: Define 'Crooked Path Sorcery'. Where did this term come from?

AC: The term 'Crooked Path Sorcery' refers to a specific corpus of Teachings and Rituals transmitted from within an inner circle of the Cultus Sabbati. It is distinguished from other bodies of Sabbatic lore by its specialised mode of ritual praxis, its distinctly ophidian cosmogony and manifold pantheon, as well as by its particular ethos of sorcerous mentality. The major body of Crooked Path Teachings is contained in The Draconian Grimoire and in this form will be published in due course of time. In a general sense, 'Crooked Path' or *Via Tortuosa* implies the deviating continuum of gnosis, the lightning-path that links one moment of insight to another; it signifies the ability to serve with both hands alike – to both hurt and heal, cure and curse; it denotes the razor-like wisdom that arises from and transcends the conjunction of contraries. More specifically, the *Via Tortuosa* relates to a cycle of Mystery-rites which may be regarded as initiations into the Way of the Dragonist – into the Path of the Great Dragon Azhdeha. In essence, the Crooked Path Teachings intend a direct means of autonomous initiation into the Knowledge of the Magical Quintessence.

MH: What exactly does the Cultus Sabbati represent in its outer and public form?

AC: 'Cultus Sabbati' very literally 're-presents' the Sabbatic Craft Tradition; as a term in the outer it reorientates the actualities and inner dimensions of the Tradition via public texts and images – books, articles, and artistic forms. In this sense

it may best be described as a magical projection-- an imaging-forth of the Hidden to the Seen.

RF: Since the Cultus is a closed circle, admitting through formal invitation only, one has to ask the purpose of such an outer 'mask'. Why publish, why be 'seen'?

AC: This is a line of questioning we apply to ourselves in order to test our own rationale. In one very significant respect, the magical projection of the Cultus has operated as a pharos for the Curren; that is, a beacon or point of orientation for several manifestations of Traditional Craft. Diverse streams of traditional observance, which otherwise may have passed into spirit, have met, communicated and cross-fertilised, simply because the Cultus has been 'visible' in exoteric terms, whilst at the same time being recognisable in terms of esoteric knowledge. Magically composed works can convey many 'texts' at once; a singular word can open many unseen paths. When eye meets eye in knowing it does not matter if a mask is worn.

Personally I consider the merit of our 'outer' actions lies in the consolidation of the Tradition and the respectful communion between kindred souls of the Arte Magical. Indeed, it is important for one to recognise that magical books and images can --if presented appropriately-- work to quicken the vital seeds of initiatic awakening in fellow practitioners, whether solitary or covine in orientation, often opening avenues of direct spirit-contact and self-initiation. I consider that magical books and artefacts operate as entities in their own right, that they are familiar spirits and daimons who may serve, test, bring individuals together, birth new realisations, reveal dreams, function as omens; they can open a path of aspiration or close it forever. Speaking for myself, books like *Azoëtia* are mystical love-letters to strangers whom I would not otherwise meet.

Communicable inspiration is the guarantor of spiritual validity. The outer representation of the 'Cultus Sabbati' permits

the Curren to communicate and yet to remain, on the inner, a matter undisclosed.

MH: What exactly is the ‘Sabbatic Craft’? What are the origins of this name?

AC: At an outer level of definition, ‘Sabbatic Craft’ describes a corpus of magical practices which self-consciously utilise the imagery and mythos of the ‘Witches’ Sabbath’ as a cipher of ritual, teaching and gnosis. This is not the same as saying that one practises the self-same rituals in the self-same manner as the purported early modern ‘witches’ or historically attested cunning folk, rather it points toward the fact that the very mythos which had been generated about both ‘witches’ and their ‘ritual gatherings’ has been appropriated and re-oriented by contemporary successors of cunning-craft observance, and then knowingly applied for their own purposes. The term describes the way in which elements of witch-lore, Sabbath mythology and imagery were being employed in the cunning-craft tradition into which I was originally inducted. From what I have learned of previous generations in this and kindred streams of Traditional Craft, the utilisation of Sabbath-imagery had been in process for some time, but during the late 19th century and throughout the 20th century became fully self-conscious. When mythic imagery and direct magical experiences of spirit-flight, faerie convocations, and such like conjoin, the language of Sabbatic symbology is actually a very natural vehicle to employ.

It is useful at this point to emphasise that ‘Traditional Craft’ as a whole embraces many diverse streams of initiation, ritual, custom and spirit-allegiance. I know of at least seven lineages in Britain and am quite sure there are many others -- each with its own character and spiritual individuality. This being said ‘Sabbatic Craft’, as a unifying term denoting a ‘tradition’, relates solely to the specific lineages convergent and operative

in the *Cultus Sabbati* as an initiatic body. However, one can also speak of the 'Sabbatic Current' as an initiatory line of spirit-power that can inform all who are receptive to its impetus, and which – when engaged with beyond names – may be understood as a Key unto the Hidden Design of *Arte*. Being born of Vision, I would say the origin of 'Sabbatic Craft' lies truly in the Circle itself.

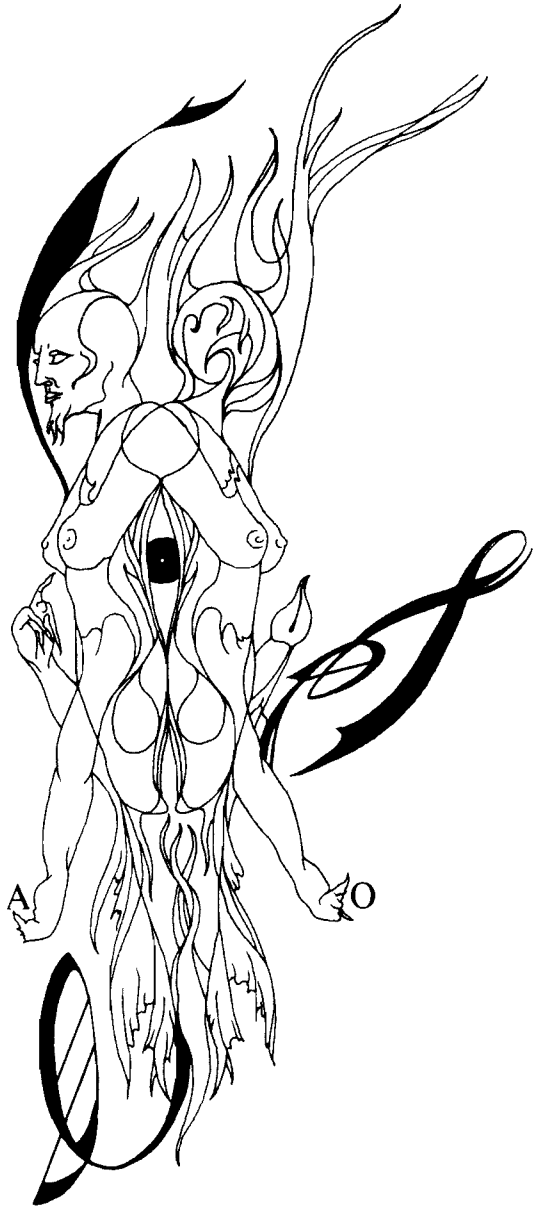
RF: Can you say more about the ritual symbolism of the Sabbatic Craft on an inner level, particularly in relation to consciousness?

AC: At an inner level of understanding one can speak of 'Sabbatic Craft' in more subtle ways. The mythic elements of the Witches' Sabbath can be treated as multivalent symbols, each capable of showing innumerable meanings, some historical-temporal, some pointing toward the atemporal actualities of the Sabbath as a field of transcendental magical existence. In *Azoëtia*, I wrote that the true meeting-place of the Sabbath was at the crossroads of waking, sleeping and mundane dreaming, and that the Sabbatic Rites were to be experienced and participated in a dimension of True Dreaming, in which one goes forth in spirit-flight into the Field of the Sabbat and there communes directly in its mysteries. Whilst one can write about this, the reality is rooted in personal apprehension which can only be gained if the spirits accept you and elect to call you out in dreaming, or if one is fortunate enough to be taught in a Traditional Craft lineage that possesses the requisite lore and spirit-patronage. In the final analysis, Sabbatic Craft is an initiatory tradition and only those who have been so inducted -- whether by man or spirit -- should speak about it, and even then guardedly.

MH: Can you explain a little about the actual practice of dreaming on a magical level?

AC: Every word, deed and thought can empower, magnetise, and establish points of receptivity for a magical dream, likewise any of these means can do the opposite – fixating perception in a manner that is not receptive – that seals the soul in the body instead of enabling it to go forth at will. Explanations of dreaming practices when given in a ritual context serve their own purpose – they reify the knowledge of the dream and empower the dreams of knowledge. Dreaming, like possession, trance and mediumism of various kinds, establishes direct communication with spirits and gods, and thus provides the vital means for the constant informing of one's magical work. The Sabbatic Craft employs the Arcana of Dream as a vehicle for the reification of spirit-knowledge: the materialisation of the spirit and the spiritualisation of the material.

If any aspire to this kind of spirit-relation and wish to gain knowledge of dreaming, let them go out walking by day – away from the company of men, out into the fields of their locality. Conscious of their step upon the land, let them ask for a sign or token. If the spirits of the place find you acceptable, an object or omen may be revealed. For example, you might see a white stag, a black dog, a magpie, or find a hagstone, a gnarled root, a fallen antler or a snake-slough. Fixate your perception at every opportunity on this object and ask the spirits to open the way for you. When falling into sleep, hold the object in attention and again entreat the spirits. By letting awareness wander in the onset of dreaming, but at the same time tethering consciousness to the talismanic object, a 'scope' of receptivity is established -- a field wherein new 'wanderings' may transpire. If you may walk knowingly in the fields of night, again entreat the spirits and, if they accept you in dreaming, a way shall be revealed. Here I point my hand toward the circle's edge of this matter, but in so doing I trust in the Wards to test all who would approach. A wise gardener once said to me: 'A true secret casts no shadow'. In this matter, even the secret's telling holds its shadow beyond sight.



MH: Do you see that there is any form of historical continuity between the so-called 'witches' of the past and Traditional Craft as it is practised today?

AC: Yes, I do, and in a number of different ways. Primarily I consider there to be continuities of basic ritual method, of spirit-community, and of oneiric locus.

In terms of 'method', the practices of Traditional Craft change and modify from one generation to the next, some things possessing greater continuity than others, but nonetheless certain spirit-borne threads continue to maintain the essential web. Speaking in a general sense, practices employing Words of Power, dual observance, Latin charms, Biblical verses for prayer, healing and divination, toad-bone magic, knotted cords, witch-bottles, are all attested by folklorists as having been used by the so-called 'witches', charmers, and cunning-folk of the past; and so – because of their oral continuity and implementation – they remain a part of some forms of Traditional Craft as practised today.

Speaking from a personal perspective, I consider it vital to realise, particularly in terms of ritual knowledge, that the experience of evoking the shades of one's lineal and local magical ancestors provides a very real sense of living continuity. It bestows the sense of belonging to a magical community in which both living and dead participate. This empowers the perpetuation of remembrance and maintains a direct understanding of one's personal and communal spiritual heredity. This is not just about the present linking to the past, but is about the dead and the living engaging in the present as one.

Using academic analysis as an adjunct to initiatic understanding can provide other perspectives about continuity. Judging from the historical works of Henningsen, Ginzburg, Behringer, Pocs, et alia it is evident that motifs and elements of the Witches' Sabbath relate directly to early modern folk beliefs, magical praxis, and attested interactions with dream-conclaves

and spirit-hosts. This being so, there is very clear comparison with contemporary Sabbatic Craft praxis. One might ask whether certain types of praxis yield comparable spirit-communion and thus, despite shifts in values, theology, names, and representations, the experiential actualities of magical practice, spirit-congress and oneiric locus maintain a certain constancy of reality.

To comprehend the forms of inner continuity one must not however equate antiquity with authenticity; the source of the Sabbatic Craft is of the Moment, beyond past and future. The linear perspective of 'time' assumed by historical analysis must be recognised as having limited value when considering and representing the manifestations of a-temporal contexts of experience.

RF: Have you any plans for new books?

AC: In many ways I think new books, or rather their spirits, have plans for me! I have never sought to write books 'about' magic, but rather to write magical books - to reify texts and images which are the vessels for spirits, powers and specialised kinds of knowledge. Such books are genuine Grammars of the Arte and are possessed of a life beyond the apparent manifestations of author, reader, page and ink. To answer your question specifically, there are a number of works in process. There is, of course, the new edition of *Azoëtia*. This is scheduled for publication during the latter part of 2002. *Azoëtia* forms the first volume of The *Trimagisterion*, a three volume set of grimoire texts; the second and third of which are *The Draconian Grimoire* and *The Aúraeon*. These three works deal respectively with the Teachings of the Magical Quintessence, the Crooked Path, and the Immediate Way. As with all magical works, their 'birth' must await its proper season and I can only ask readers to be patient; I have to be!

Other works like *Qutub* and *The Grimoire of the Golden Toad* are specialised adjuncts to the main series of works. Kindred to these specialisations is a new project I have begun and which I intend to work on in forthcoming years, namely, the Unique or Monadic Transmission Series. These are small grimoire-texts of which one copy only is made. Each is hand-written and illustrated, and accompanied by specific ritual items. These are then either sold, gifted or passed on according to their ritual orientation, thereby being sent forth as emissaries, messengers to carry specific elements of *The Trimagisterion*.

'Plans' for magical books are vortices of obsessional will that revolve around the gestating 'seeds' of gnosis. According to one's application to the work, visionary impetus is reified and the 'book' takes form. Every 'plan' is thus rooted in a sudden eruption of creativity – an epiphany of spirit-knowledge that originally takes one by surprise, forcing a deviation of intent and necessitating an attentive response to the new-turning path. If the source of one's vision is found, one should rejoice – for the sole object worthy of true devotion's love is revealed.

RF: Books emerging from the Cultus are all published by Xoanon. Could you give a brief description of Xoanon's birth and development. What does the name mean, and why did you choose it? Were other names considered?

AC: 'Xoanon' is an ancient Greek word, meaning an effigy or image of deity fallen from the sky to earth. It was chosen as the name for the Cultus Sabbati's publishing house because it depicts the process of reification of spirit into matter, the translation of unseen 'texts' to visible books. I think the name was chosen in a lightning-flash of inspiration and I don't recall any alternative names being considered.

Xoanon was founded in 1992 for the express purpose of publishing *Azoëtia* and future Cultus works, both internal and external texts. In 1995, Xoanon was greatly assisted by Fulgur,

who published *Qutub* on our behalf and by example taught us many invaluable lessons about publishing. In the year 2000, Xoanon underwent a potent resurgence with the baptism of fire that accompanied the publication of the Toad-book. In 2001, the year in which we issued *Ars Philtron*, Xoanon was established as a limited company under both myself and Daniel Schulke, the author of that work. This marked a further consolidation of Xoanon as a magical vehicle for reification, augmenting the freedom to move its focus of will betwixt the worlds of men and spirits.

The publication of *Ars Philtron* marked an extremely important shift; it began to move the focus away from myself as the sole 'authority' in the Cultus as it is outwardly perceived. I hope that in forthcoming years, as we publish more and more works by other Sabbatic initiates, our readership will begin to comprehend that the Cultus has several visionary perspectives and that each has an importance in its own right as well as in the context of the tradition as a whole. Both Daniel Schulke and Helen Oliver are exemplars in this respect.

RF. What inspired you to undertake the solitary initiatory ritual practices described in your *Grimoire of the Golden Toad*? Why did you decide to publish this seemingly private work?

AC. That is a good question! I first heard about the Toad-rite from the teacher of my own initiator. I then read about it in various sources like G.E. Evans, and Haggard, intrigued by its somewhat fear-evoking ambience and potential. I always thought it was an important ritual to perform as part of one's personal initiatory process if one is to fully cognise sorcerous power from a traditional witchcraft perspective. After engaging in a final series of rites for the Draconic cycle of work, I suddenly found myself preparing to do the Toad ritual – it was just what had to be done. As I engaged more and more fully with the rite I found that there were personal aspects to its un-

derstanding which required me to accomplish specific tasks relating to the understanding of the Path as a whole. Publishing the work in 77 copies was part of the ritual, and even though I can write or speak about the process, there is no possibility of any non-practitioner fully cognising the intrinsic arcana it conceals. It is not a ritual I recommend anyone to practise unless omens, intuition or a spirit's counsel direct them -- it will test to one's limit.

RF: Is there a code or cipher encrypted within the 72 verses of *Qutub*? If so, what is its nature?

AC: Part of the book's riddle is the possibility that a code of meanings lies within it. I could say that the verses of *Qutub* utilise a cipher that is alphanumerical, symbological and importantly 'moral' in nature, but one has to realise the context in which the riddle is being put to the reader. One should utilise The Rite of the Opposer from the book itself and engage thereby with the world via the 'code' of *Qutub*; I will say no more than that.

MH: Do you recognise the concept of 'self-initiation' or 'self-dedication' as a legitimate act or process for those who cannot or do not want to work within a coven structure and wish to follow the path of a solitary practitioner?

AC: Yes, I do, but I prefer to use the term 'solitary initiation'. I think 'self-initiation' is something of a misnomer: initiation is always a matter of relation and transformation, whether that be between Prentice and Master or Aspirant and Deity. One initiates the other and the relations between both are transformed to a new status, usually through the transmission of new kinds of knowledge to the initiand. In the Sabbatic Craft, solitary initiation or 'The Lonely Road' is recognised as a vital aspect of every practitioner's path and the understanding of 'solitude' is subject to many levels of interpretation. Autonomy

is the key virtue, irrespective of whether one practices in human convocation or 'alone' -- in the ever-present company of spirits. As regards the rituals of solitary initiation, I am aware of seven major forms of induction, the most well-known of which is probably the Toad-bone ritual. Whilst I recognise that anyone who follows the procedure of any of these rites is technically able to receive the full 'power' of witchblood thereby and without human mediation, I must stress that just performing the ritual is insufficient; the authority gained via the process must have the assent and acceptance of a rite's patron spirits. Certain of these rites are unknowingly shared by differing lineages of Old Craft, often being used as an adjunct to teacher-pupil induction. It is my intention to deal with the full heptad of the Lonely Road in *The Auraeon*.

MH: What are your views on the subject of blood sacrifice in our modern age?

AC: Firstly one would have to ask 'whose' modern age are we speaking of? Such questions presuppose a relation of all moral issues to what could be generally termed a contemporary western cultural and ethical environment. The ethics of an issue depend upon who, where and when it is contextualised. If one is actually asking about the issue of blood sacrifice in present-day Britain, that is a very different issue from asking about such practices in contemporary Nepal, Haiti, or West Africa. In Haitian Vodou, to take one example, the use of blood sacrifice is vital to the maintenance of harmonious relations between the living community and the spirit-world of loa and ancestors. To fail to give sacrifice is to starve one's own ancestors, to betray the relations with one's own spiritual forbears. To compare this to someone performing the sacrifice of a dove in a rite to gain the patronage of a goëtic demon would result in very superficial resemblance -- the cultural contexts of Afro-American religiosity are orientated toward

communal harmony between this world and the otherworld; the goetic theurgist is seeking an individualistic coercion of power to personal ends. Esoterically speaking however, there may be specific principles operative in both contexts and in such an initiatic context, I must state that as a sorcerer I can have no personal moral objection to blood sacrifice in the appropriate ritual contexts. As far as those magical or religious contexts which require sacrifice for spiritual and communal harmony, I see no difference what 'age' it supposedly is or isn't; the ancestors remain. I appreciate that the whole issue is morally sensitive, but basically I think that to partake of food and drink with the Gods and Ancestors is a noble and honourable matter – whether it be meat and beer, or bread and fruit. My thoughts on this issue are such that whatever you are prepared to eat yourself, you should be prepared to eat with the ancestors. If you break bread, share wine, take life and share meat, assume personal responsibility for your deeds. However, in terms of Traditional Craft in Britain I have no knowledge of blood sacrifice being used, other than the blood of the ritualists themselves – menstrual or otherwise.

RF: You are sometimes referred to as 'Magister' of the Cultus Sabbati, can you tell us what this means to you personally and in terms of the hierarchy of the tradition?

AC: The Cultus has several important offices of power which have been a part of the Tradition for as long as oral memory attests. In terms of general interpretation, these are positions of authority held by specific individuals, based upon the possession of specialised knowledge, skills, experience, and the command of respect. However, these offices may also be interpreted as the stations of the soul in its initiatic pilgrimage and thus relate to each and every initiate. You ask what it means to use the term 'Magister'. This, like many matters relating to hierarchy and power, is a complex issue. One must be

aware that responsibility, propriety, and service increase with one's role and sense of authority. To my mind, the True Magister (or Magistra) should hold fast to all that was taught unto him by his own initiators, be fully able to refine and develop the ways of the past according to his own vision, be able to speak clearly about the diverse bodies of lore within the tradition, and be *skillful to discern, teach, and assist fellow brethren*. Whilst every initiate focuses upon the unique ingression of the current into their own personal praxis, the task of the Magister is to perceive the design of the current as it ingresses into the Tradition as a whole. Accordingly he directs covine praxis and seeks to cohere the work of all as one. The work of the Magister is to serve in ruling, and thus he is the Living Stang. I hold up this paragon of what 'magister' means to me, not because I think all that about myself, but because it is a station of the soul worthy of aspiration. It signifies 'being' magick, not practising it!

RF: How did Cain and Lilith come to be associated in British Traditional Witchcraft as the Primogenitors of the Race of Witchblood?

AC: Different streams of British Traditional Craft have different patron deities, ancestors and spirits. If one is able to oversee this diversity certain strands of commonality may be perceived. If one may seek amongst these strands – amidst the many other kinds of shared features, one may speak about a *body of lore that exists in the Old Craft which incorporates a gnostic faith in the Divine Serpent of Light, in the Host of the Gregori, in the Children of Earth sired by the Watchers, in the lineage of descent via Lilith, Mahazael, Cain, Tubal-cain, Naamah, and the Clans of the Wanderers... onward to the present-day Initiates of Arte.*

Lilith is regarded as the spiritual mother of the initiated. She is the body of Woman in which the ophidian fire of the Light-

bearer has taken residence, transforming the mundane woman 'Eve' into a vessel of magical power. Like Cain, Lilith is a complex figure, in which many arcana reside simultaneously. She is the ancestress, the first woman to embody the sorcerous will, the light of the star-illuminated moon refracted into the blood of the kteis. As the 'mother' of the initiate, Lilith embodies the process of initiation – the entrance to the path and the reconfiguration of the prentice into a form befitting 'birth' into the Circle. The continuity of initiation for all True Seekers makes the womb of Liliya our constant abode; in that sense we are forever coming forth from her womb: the spirit-lineage marks the river of her blood as it courses our Eden.

Speaking from my knowledge of the Ophite-Sabbatic lore within the Cultus, its historical provenance is primarily rooted in oral transmission. Nonetheless, beyond the passing of word from mouth to ear, there are many diverse linkages which prefigure the complex form seen in the present-day mythos. In previous generations Traditional Craft has shared certain features with the Societies of Horsemanry; reverence for Cain is one such element. In turn, comparable ideas about the role of Tubal-Cain and Naamah can be seen in the allied rites of Freemasonry. Traditional Craft has also made good use of many ritual magic texts such as *The Key of Solomon* and Agrippa's *Books of Occult Philosophy*. These works also provide avenues for allied figures, such as Lucifer, Asmodeus, Lilith, and the Archdaemonic Guardians of the Magical Circle led by Mahazael. Although the emphasis of sacrality is reversed, another strand of genealogy is obviously to Biblical texts where various elements of the mythos are present. Biblical sources likewise connect to the Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha, Jewish folklore and even Manichaeic texts as avenues of influence. However, whilst one could 'explain' the presence of Cain and Lilith with recourse to such sources, contesting some kind of dependence of Sabbatic lore upon Christian, Jewish et al demonologies, this fails to appreciate the unique and self-sustaining complex of

the Craft mythos in itself. The Teachings of Traditional Craft utilise a cipher of luciferian antinomianism which renders Cain and Lilith, our blessed primogenitors, as the Bearers of Light from the Ancient Serpent. The overcoming of Adam by Lilith and the murder of Abel by Cain signify the transformation of the uninitiated condition or 'Clay' into the 'Fire' of Magical Knowledge. This is however the merest inkling of the breadth and depth of these matters.

As a parting tale, it is worth speaking about another fascinating path of influence into Traditional Craft, namely that of Gypsy beliefs. Indeed, I recall once being told the Tale of the Uncooling Nail by a Romany fellow:-- On the night before Christ's crucifixion, soldiers were sent out to have four long nails forged for the deed. They approached Jewish, Greek, and Roman smiths, but each refused once they had heard the nails were for Jesus of Nazareth's crucifixion. Outside the city gates the soldiers found a Romany smith. He didn't ask the need for the long nails so late at night; he just needed the money. The smith obliged and began making the nails, one by one. However, whilst heating the fourth nail in the fire, he asked who they were for. On learning they were for Christ's crucifixion, the gypsy ceased his work abruptly and fled. However, the fiery nail that had been in the forge never cooled down; it remained a glowing spike of blood-red flame. And, so it is said, the Uncooling 'Nowl' will follow the descendants of the Romany smith wherever they go. It is held that the Romany smith was himself a descendant of Tubal-cain, the first metal-worker, and he had in turn learned his Art from Cain. Personally, I consider that the Old Craft has now taken up this nail; knowingly! We have a saying: 'The way of sacrifice maketh man whole'.

MH: Is there anything you would like to add? Anything specific you wish to say to *The Cauldron* readers?

AC: Nurture irrepressible vision!

Notes to the Texts, Volume I

Proem

Originally written in 1996, following the submission of various publishing proposals for an essay collation, this introduction was briefly expanded two years later in 1998. It is published here for the first time.

A Short Critique and Comment Upon Magic

SKOOB Occult Review, Autumn, 1990

As Andrew's first published article, 'Critique' was modest in both word length and editorial placement, though substantive *in insight and magical conviction*. The cardinal themes of solitude as a tutelary genius, and visionary art as a vessel of gnosis would recur throughout all of Andrew's work. The essay contains a section relating to 'The Map of Possibility' from *Azoëttia* and what would later be known as 'The Vision of the Map' in the second (*Sethos*) edition of that same work (2002).

The Heart of the Sorcerer

Chaos International No. 11, 1991

'Heart' is remarkable for its early clarity of magical vision, as well as Andrew's role as the originator of the named magical concept 'Sabbatic Witchcraft'. The essay features several sections of the first edition of *Azoëttia*, all of which were revised or permuted in the *Sethos Edition*.

The Question of Sacrifice

Pagan News, 1992

Uncharacteristically written for a neo-pagan audience, 'Question' remains a provocative statement on an all too often

avoided area of magical inquiry. An excised portion of the article's conclusion, surviving in the first handwritten draft, is worth quoting in full:

Whatever the temporal or legal implications of your beliefs are, you must accept responsibility for them here and now, as well as upon the spiritual, moral, and intellectual levels. Be aware that the actions of a single magician can reflect upon everyone of Our Arte, and if you haven't the honour or the moral sensibilities to cope with the implications of your beliefs then you are not a magician of any sort, you are a coward. As such, you are thus unworthy of any claim to be a True Pagan.

This was followed by the parenthetical statement:

The author accepts full responsibility for every word in this article.

The Hermit

Chaos International No. 16. (1994).

Talking Stick XX: Winter, 1995-96.

At the time of this article's composition, the author referred it as '*...a discussion of solitary practice and group practice, a comparison and analysis.*' It prefigures in many respects the magical considerations of the essay 'Seven Shades of Solitude', which appeared in *The Cauldron* No. 98, November 2000. As much as it is an exploration and synthesis of themes of individual engagement with the path, 'The Hermit' is also a strong admonition against the many character defects that plague occultism.

Hekas

The Cauldron No. 74 (November, 1994)

The Cauldron No. 75 (February, 1995).

Originally published as a two-part essay, 'Hekas' draws together disparate magico-religious strands to illustrate the continuity

of the Sabbath as a trans-aeonic vehicle of sorcery. The work may be considered an expansion and maturation of ideas present in his earlier article 'The Sabazian Torch'. Notably 'Torch' was excluded from the contents section of at least one 1996 essay-book proposal, supplanted by 'Hekas'. In the present version, a number of typographic and formatting errors appearing in the first publication have been corrected.

The Secret Nature of Ritual

Chaos International, No. 18, 1995

Described by Andrew as '*...an essay which deals with the geometry of magical ritual and the manner in which it expresses "Time"*', the article is a robust example of his tutelary style and may be considered a potent primer on many basic aspects of the Art Magical. While not outwardly advancing the premises of the Witches' Sabbat, key concepts such as the Confluence of the Four Roads are present. The present version contains several minor changes as well as corrected typographic errors present in the first publication.

What is Traditional Craft?

The Cauldron No. 81, August 1996.

Widdershins: A Volatile Journal of Magic, No. 5, 1996

One of Chumbley's better-known and referenced articles on Traditional Witchcraft, its North American publication in *Widdershins* was a critical step in the stateside dissemination of his work. Generating high praise in Thelemic and Voudon quarters, it was met with confusion, disdain or outright dismissal amongst many American Wiccans. In a 1996 letter to one prospective publisher of the essay-compilation, Andrew observed: "*There are over a million Wiccans in the States and there is not one book which fully captures the fascinative appetite.*"

The Golden Chain and the Lonely Road

The Cauldron No. 94, November, 1999.

Essentially a taxonomy of initiatic processes known within the Sabbatic Tradition, “Chain” represents a mature magical knowledge and a high exegetical metaphysic hinted at in his essays of the earlier part of the decade.

Initiation and Access to Magical Power in Early Modern Cunning Craft and Modern Traditional Craft

The source of this essay is a lecture given at The Museum of Witchcraft, Boscastle, Cornwall on December 6, 2003; the written presentation more academic in style than previous articles. Andrew produced the essay version, condensed from lecture notes, retaining some of the informal speaking voice, for deposition in the Museum archives. It is herein published for the first time.

The lecture was part of a yearly private event held by the Friends of the Museum, a charitable organisation which aids the Museum in diverse ways. Curator Graham King says of the presentation: *“Friends’ pride themselves on selecting fascinating, well-informed and passionate lecturers. Andrew Chumbley was all of these – his presentation in December 2003 was that of an expert, it was clear, controversial and magical – it will not be forgotten... indeed, the lecture was, in itself, an initiation.”*

An Interview with Andrew D. Chumbley

The Cauldron No. 103, February, 2002.

One of several recorded interviews with Andrew, some of which are included in other volumes of *Opuscula Magica*. The present form of this interview includes two questions not appearing in the first printing, together with an additional paragraph on one answer.